

Message from the Spackenkill Superintendent



April 24, 2020

Dear Spackenkill Community,

A week ago we joined together in our Caravan of Stars parade. What fun that was! I was so happy to see our staff and community pull together and celebrate Spackenkill! Thank you to everyone who participated in this event. I especially want to thank the Town of Poughkeepsie Police Department, which served as our escorts.

Last week I mentioned that end-of-the-year grading procedures will be finalized by today. Our secondary principals have a joint grading process, and our elementary principals also have a joint process. They have sent notices to you and I am summarizing those plans below in this newsletter.

On Wednesday, I wrote urging you to support Governor Cuomo's request for more federal aid to New York State. Thank you to those who have written to our federal officials. I encourage you to support this effort, so here is another easy-to-use link to the New York State School Boards Associations Call to Action:

[Click here for the Call to Action.](#)

Finally, my video message (see below) is about gratitude and thanking hospital workers and medical staff who are putting their health and safety on the line daily. Please listen to my message. It's a bit more personal than I normally prefer. Please also listen to Christina Howard, Occupational Therapist in the district, as she offers an idea to salute and recognize our local hospital personnel. Ms. Howard has cleared this plan already with several hospitals.

Thinking of all of you and please stay Spartan Strong!



[Click here to watch a new message from the Superintendent](#)

Letters and Pictures of Hope

Christina Howard, an Occupational Therapist with the district, has spearheaded a project to support our medical and hospital workers and hospital patients. Basically, it entails the students in the community creating pictures and messages of hope, which we will deliver to local hospitals. Please send submissions to Attention: Christina Howard, Spackenkill District Office, 15 Croft Road, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603. We also have a secure mailbox outside the door if you want to just drop off material. The District Office is located behind Todd Middle School (just follow the signs). Thank you so much in advance for your willingness to support patients and thank our medical and hospital workers! If you have any questions, please email christina.howard@sufsdny.org



[Click here to hear Christina Howard's Message Regarding the Program.](#)

4th Quarter Grades at the Elementary Level

Students will have opportunities to engage in and demonstrate learning during the remote learning period. Teachers will provide formal and/or informal feedback to students as deemed necessary and practical. We recognize that there are many variables and circumstances which can impact a student's ability to access instruction. With this in mind, no numerical scores (1-4) will be added for the Fourth Quarter Grading period for elementary students. Expect to receive a comment from your child's teacher as to the level of participation, completion, and progress during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Teacher Comment section of the report card.

4th Quarter Grading Scale for Grades K-5

Report Card Grades will be reported as follows:

Y = Student demonstrated effort to continue her/his learning

N = Little or no evidence exists that the student attempted to continue his/her learning

4th Quarter Grades and the Final Average at the Secondary Level

The Spackenkill District's adoption of a Pass/Fail model for Quarter 4 grading during these difficult and extraordinary times is designed to provide a fair approach to grading that honors the social-emotional well-being of both students and families, as well as the academic traditions of the district. We also know that providing students with accountability for their work, as well as incentives to promote their continued growth, even under adverse circumstances, is a healthy and balanced approach to secondary education. These ideas informed our approach as to how the work completed during Quarter 4 will be reflected in a student's final average for a class.

Teachers will use their professional judgment when evaluating a student's Quarter 4 performance in terms of effort, work completion, and quality of work, as well as the individual household and personal circumstances of each student. A student's final average for a class will be an average of Quarters 1, 2, and 3. If a student's Quarter 4 performance is similar to the first three quarters, the student's final average will remain the same. If a student's Quarter 4 work exceeds the performance of the first three quarters, teachers can add points to a student's final average. If a student's Quarter 4 performance is significantly below the first three quarter's performance, teachers can subtract points from a student's final average.

Survey on Community Use of Track and Field

Thank you to all who have responded to the Survey on Community Use of Track and Field. We will keep the survey open until Monday, April 27 at 12 noon. The Spackenkill Board of Education is updating the facility usage policy. We need to determine if the longstanding practice of allowing use of our track during the school day should continue as is or be updated in some way. The track and field is used as a classroom for our PE Department. Very few, if any, safety problems have occurred, and that is one of the reasons this policy has not been revisited. However, in today's new world, where safety problems seem to occur with greater frequency, the Board has been confronted with concerns and is re-evaluating our current policy.

Students, Staff, and Community Members, please [click here to take the survey](#).

Capital Project Update



The goal posts and four new light towers are up at our new track and field! This is a significant milestone for the district.

College T-Shirt/Virtual Spirit Day



High School Student Government is promoting another virtual spirit day for students, faculty, staff, and community. On May 1, seniors traditionally wear their college gear to school. Since we will not be in school, students wanted to share the schools they committed to virtually. However, in an effort to get everyone involved, we are asking all students to either wear their favorite college gear OR Spack gear and send it to the SPACK NATION Instagram account or tweet it to @Spack Sports. If you do not have Instagram or Twitter, just send a picture to Ms. Girard or Mrs. Oakley at jodi.girard@sufsdny.org or kristin.oakley@sufsdny.org and they will make sure it is posted properly. Thanks again for your continued support! #spackcommits. [More information is on the high school home page.](#)

Best Communities for Education Award

For the eighth consecutive year, the district has earned the distinction of Best Communities for Music Education from the NAMM Foundation. Music teacher Marissa Kaczysnski writes, "Thank you to all the administrators for understanding the impact that music has on our students and our community. Thank you for your support at both the



district and building levels when it comes to staff, schedule, and equipment. Thank you also for understanding the unique issues facing the music department that no other department has to solve. Thank you to all our music teachers, who tirelessly continue to care about, believe in, and value each child and their musical learning. Thank you also to the parents and friends of the Music Boosters, who give so generously of their time and talents and resources to the music community of Spackenkill. We would not have won this award without everyone's contribution to the team effort."

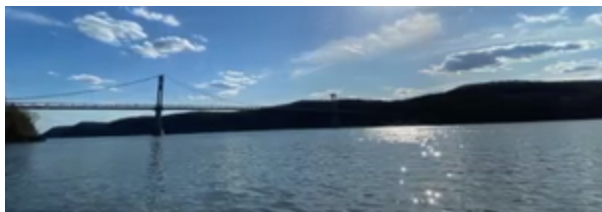
Dollars for Seniors Scholarship Deadline Extended

The PTSA has extended the Dollars for Seniors Scholarship Application deadline to May 15th. Students should call the high school to schedule a time to drop it off. Donations from the community will be accepted by mail until May 8th. In mailing in your donation, please use envelopes provided in our mailing or address an envelope to Dollars for Seniors, Spackenkill District Office, 15 Croft Road, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603. The envelopes can also be dropped in our mailbox outside the District Office, behind Todd Middle School. Thank you to all who have contributed and supported our deserving seniors!

Earth Day News

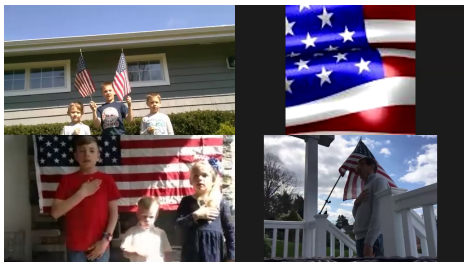


In celebration of Earth Day, the Environmental Club at Spackenkill High School, advised by Donna Franzik, created this fun video to illustrate ways to help Earth and the environment:



[Watch the video.](#)

Patriotic Pause



Todd's morning announcements this week included an inspiring video of school monitor Tom Yurkovic and his grandchildren leading the Pledge of Allegiance. [Watch the video.](#)

Sincerely,

Mark Villanti, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools

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