

# SUPERINTENDENT'S BRIEF

Together, We are the Champions for Children in Poughkeepsie City School District

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VOLUME 5



## Lieutenant governor pays visit to PCSD



Kindergarteners Izaya Starkay and Hazel Granados-Perez meet Lieutenant Governor Antonio Delgado during a math tutoring session with Ian Wickham.

Lt. Gov. Antonio Delgado visited the Early Learning Center at Smith School, Poughkeepsie City School District's pre-k and kindergarten school building, on Nov. 28 to observe the implementation of [Ampact's](#) tutoring programs in the Poughkeepsie City School District.

Poughkeepsie is the first school district in New York State to launch Ampact's tutoring programs.

Ampact, a nonprofit organization started in the early 2000s, operates in 10 states in the United States, offering Math Corps, Reading Corps, and Early Learning Corps programs. In Poughkeepsie, students in pre-K through third grade are receiving services from the Early Learning and Math Corps. Ampact's mission is to transform lives.

"The visit by the lieutenant governor of New York was tremendous and successful by recognizing the work being done here in the Poughkeepsie City School District," said Gregory Mott, assistant superintendent for elementary education. "We're hoping this will be the first of many visits and recognitions. It ultimately is about ensuring our students build their skills and as they progress through the grades, they're progressing grade-level ready."

Delgado was introduced to district board members and administrators as well as representatives from Ampact in the school library before observing a math tutoring session with two kindergarten students in the library and a pre-K classroom.

"To think that this is the first type of program of its kind in the state is incredibly encouraging because that means we have nowhere to go but up," said Delgado in a debriefing session after observing the tutoring session and the pre-K classroom.

"The lieutenant governor understands the importance of high-dosage tutoring and programs that benefit our young children, especially in early learning and universal pre-K," said Katrina Gobins, Ampact's executive director for the New York programs. "I'm feeling optimistic that we can expand programming in the future."

Nadine Elting-Dargan, principal of the Early Learning Center at Smith School, has seen growth in students.

"Some of our children come here in kindergarten, and they have had no schooling at all," she said. "Having the tutor has been a wonderful piece to accelerate their learning and bring them up to where some of the other children are, who have been in preschool from two years old."



Lt. Gov. Antonio Delgado observes a pre-K class at the Early Learning Center at Smith School with, left to right, Dana Segul, Ampact; Nadine Elting-Dargan, principal of Early Learning Center at Smith School; and Janet Bisti, director of elementary education for Poughkeepsie City School District.

Elting-Dargan believes the program will benefit students throughout the state and encourages other districts to add the program. "Don't think too much, just go for it," she said. "It's a program that benefits children and as educators, we are here for the benefit of children. There is never a second thought about giving a child something more."

To learn more about the Ampact program or those interested in becoming an Ampact tutor should contact Fran Andrade, Ampact program manager, at [fran.andrade@ampact.us](mailto:fran.andrade@ampact.us) or call 845.748.5103.



**The 2023 Dylan's Wings leaders.**

## Dylan's Wings expands

Omari James participated in Dylan's Wings of Change for a second time and plans to return for a third year. The Poughkeepsie High School junior was one of 22 members of the student government to participate in a two-day retreat at Vassar College during which they learned team building and communication exercises.

The 22 participants is an increase from 16 in the 2022 program, and this year's group expects to visit more classrooms compared to last year, to share the exercises.

Visits are expected to start before the holidays.

The program was founded in 2015 as a youth-led social and

emotional learning program for all children.

"I wanted to do it again because it's a program that's needed in Poughkeepsie High School," said James. "I had a really fun time rolling out the programs in my high school last year, communicating with my peers and just doing the activities with them to bring them together."

"I really hope people could be more aware of how they treat others in our school and how they could be more respectful. You don't know how just being nice could impact someone's day."

This is the second year Paul Donnelly, faculty advisor for student government, scheduled Dylan's Wings to run this program with students.

This was the first time Poughkeepsie offered members of student government to participate in the program at an off-campus site. Donnelly also arranged for Vassar students, who graduated from Poughkeepsie, to join the high school students for lunch on the first day.

"I wanted to make it a little more special to the students, and give them a treat by going off campus to have that retreat experience," he said.

"I hope being on campus inspires them. I want them to understand they can be part of this campus as well and inspire them beyond Poughkeepsie High School."

Ashley Brant and Robb Armstrong represented Dylan's Wings at Vassar and led the group discussions and exercises.

"I hope they get a sense of community with each other, and spread it through their school by going into their classrooms and doing some team building and activities with them," said Brant.

Armstrong said Dylan's Wings would visit about 55 schools in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut with most of the visits coming in the fall so students could roll out the program throughout the remainder of the school year. "It's to make school the culture and community they want to belong to," said Armstrong.

## Students pilot composting

A panel of environmental experts gathered in Poughkeepsie High School's small cafeteria earlier this month to discuss expanding composting in the community in the form of curbside pickups. Composting is the managed decomposition of food waste and paper in piles, which is often used in gardening. Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies scientist Jane Lucas is interested

Marist College junior Elizabeth Kunze demonstrates how her school's composting system works, while freshman Kristen Vinciguerra looks on.







in the science behind composting and how to make it successful, so less waste goes into landfills.

"Composting is a type of recycling to then create a product that we can grow new food in," Lucas explained. "It takes things out of the trash and makes them into something useful."

PHS science teacher Christine Pizer asked students if they would be interested in taking home a bucket for composting materials and then seeing whether a curbside pickup option every other week is feasible. Several students expressed interest in trying it out.

"We can offer several solutions to the city," Pizer said.

"You want to keep it on the reasonable side."

Marist College junior Elizabeth Kunze, an environmental science major and Campus Sustainability Advisory Committee member, brought a black bin and compostable items like avocado skins and egg shells to show how her school composts. Students and college dining hall staff fill up bins and dump the contents into a larger bin that is brought to Greenway Environmental Services for composting.

"They save all their food scraps from preparation," Kunze said of dining hall staff. "Students will clear their plates and they go in the back where they're separated into bins of food waste and organic waste."

The panel was a kickoff to Pizer's environmental science unit, which is working with Cornell Cooperative Extension's Dutchess No Child Left Inside program to test out curbside composting and then bring that research to the City of Poughkeepsie Common Council for consideration. Currently, if Poughkeepsie residents wish to compost, they have to take it to facilities in Red Hook or Kingston.

"If I'm going to drive it and take it somewhere, the chances are much less that that's going to happen," Pizer said. "That's why we're working on this initiative."

Pizer understands that not everyone can be out protesting, so these in-school initiatives, such as asking the cafeteria for food scraps, are a good first step.

"We can each do a little piece," Pizer said. "If you turn off the water when you're brushing your teeth, it could snowball for one, but at least you're doing something and thinking about it."

Senior Joshua Pinder agrees with the idea of bringing a composting program to both the school and the wider community.

"Composting is beneficial without a doubt," Pinder said. "We don't have any type of composting program." Sophomore Mayah Roseman is willing to volunteer her time composting because she loves science and wants to see a cleaner Poughkeepsie.

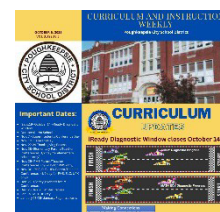
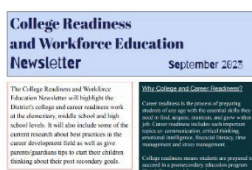
"They need to start cleaning up a little," Roseman said. "Composting can help with that."



Environmental science teacher Christine Pizer addresses students and the expert panel.

## Other newsletters to keep you informed:

Poughkeepsie City School District publishes a variety of newsletters throughout the year. Here are the newsletters that are available now:



[CI Weekly for Dec. 1, 2023](#)

[College and Career Readiness, November 2023](#)

## Upcoming events

- **Wed., Dec. 6:** BOE regular meeting, 6:30 p.m., Administration Building, 18 S. Perry St.  
**Superintendent Report:** Year-to-Date Student Attendance Report Presentation
- **Wed. Dec. 20:** BOE Workshop Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Administration Building, 18 S. Perry St.  
**Scheduled Presentation: Safety and Security Project Update**