

# SUPERINTENDENT'S BRIEF

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

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## Discussion sessions for 5-year Plan

As the district begins the work of developing its next strategic five-year plan, we're asking everyone to save two very important dates. The district is scheduling two key planning sessions on July 23 and Aug. 11, for which all are invited to come and help shape the district's shared priorities and actions to support student achievement and strengthen our school community.

The first meeting, Tuesday, July 23 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., will kick off the project, solidifying the process that will be followed and connecting around our shared mission, vision and core values.

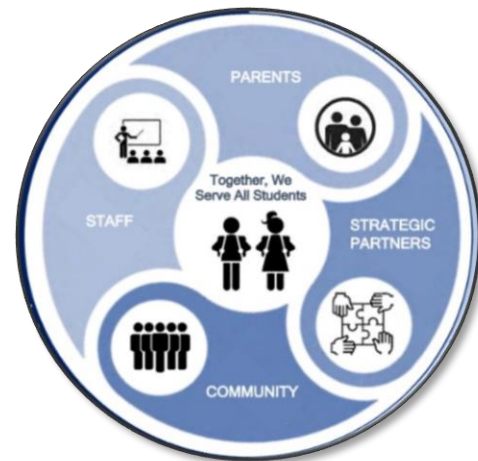
The second, Monday, Aug. 11 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., will focus on collaborative discussion and feedback on the direction of the strategic plan.

The locations of the meetings and a formal agenda will be announced at a future date.

While the Board of Education and District leadership are invited and will be present for both, teachers, staff, and other stakeholders around the district are also invited.

To participate and share your valuable feedback, [visit this site](#).

These sessions will be essential in creating a plan that reflects our collective vision and serves the needs of our students, staff and families. Your voice and partnership are vital to the success of this process.



As we come upon the Memorial Day Holiday on Monday, May 26th, please join the Poughkeepsie City School District in observing the holiday as it is intended, to honor the men and women who died while in service to our country.



# 'I have to show up:' Senior Signing Day special to students

Omari James was resigned to celebrate Senior Signing Day on FaceTime.

A senior in the fashion design and merchandising program at Dutchess BOCES' Career and Technical Institute, James was sitting in a classroom five miles away May 15 when the celebration began inside Poughkeepsie High School's gym.

Senior Signing Day has become an annual tradition for the school. Amid a party atmosphere with food, music and games,

students who have registered their future plans are announced, one-by-one, and given a moment to sit at a table to sign their name and write their next steps into an official book while friends gather around them to take photos of the moment.

When James' turn came, a friend, South Carolina State-bound senior Colby Newman, carried him up to the table through her phone, and classmates cheered. But, it wasn't the same.

Ten minutes before the end of the celebration, he showed up in person. When College and Workforce Readiness Counselor Kelly Semexant announced his name again and he walked toward the table, his classmates roared.

"I was just like, 'This is my last year here. I'm going to only have one signing day. I have to show up,'" James said while wearing a Norfolk State University shirt, the HBCU where he'll be continuing his fashion design and merchandising education. "This (event) shows where I'm going and my next steps. Poughkeepsie High School, they built the foundation."

James encapsulated what was, again, a special day for the school. Roughly 110 students signed Semexant's book, which includes the names and plans of every class since 2022. Most who took part are college-bound, though some announced they would join the military or attend a trade school.

Prior to the signings, the students spent about an hour eating breakfast and visiting face painting, photo booths and game stations. Da'Ron Wilson, the district's executive director of school engagement, served as DJ. The twist this year was the location; while past signing days have been held in the cafeteria, it was moved to the gym, which gave students more room to roam and then sit on the bleachers to watch the signings.



Omari James signs his name and plans during Senior Signing Day.



Some students ran from the stands to the table to sign while friends kept pace holding cameras up to record video and take photos.

The gym also may have ratcheted up the energy. Early in the signing period, one group of around 10 students who were situated just to the left of the table began charging to the table each time a friend's name was called. More than simply surrounding and creating a perimeter to take paparazzi-style photos, the group cheered and





Temple-bound Lydia Davis posed for her friends after signing.

at Pittsburgh's Johnstown campus in the fall, called the event "bittersweet," noting "it's a big step for us. We're moving on in life."

She acknowledged, she hasn't heard of another high school that holds a similar celebration of the future. "I'm glad that my school does. It gives everybody a chance to know where everybody's going to move on to and where we're going," Lopez said. "We all grew up together. Seeing us all move into the next step of life, I really enjoy it a lot."

banged on the table like a football team working itself into a pregame lather. Some other friend groups soon followed suit.

Dutchess Community College-bound Nasim Duncan was among the group and one of the first names called.

"At first I thought it was just going to be a couple friends" taking photos, he said. "When I heard everyone cheering I was just like, 'Wow, this feels nice.' I wish to do that for everyone because I want them to feel special, like me."

A full livestream of the event, as well as a short collection of clips highlighting the day, are available on the district's Facebook page.

Natalia Lopez, who will attend the nursing program

## Spring Festival delights families

The fifth annual Community Schools Spring Festival brought hundreds of students and families to Poughkeepsie High School Saturday for food, games, music and entertainment. Attendees were treated to a petting zoo, hayrides, and performances from the AFJROTC and cheerleading squad, and were able to visit with community-based organizations to learn more about resources available to families.



Left: Families enjoyed a horse-drawn ride around the field. Center: School Resource Officer Jonathan Geuss posed with kids; Above: Krieger first grade student Cecilia Ransom had her face painted.

## Other newsletters to keep you informed:

Poughkeepsie City School District publishes a variety of newsletters throughout the year. Here are the available newsletters: [College Readiness and Workforce Education](#), May 2025; [Poughkeepsie Pioneer Athletic and Wellness](#), May 2025.

## Upcoming events

- **May 23-28:** Schools and district offices closed in observance of Memorial Day and giveback days.
- **June 4:** Board of Education meeting: 6:30 p.m. at the Jane Bolin administration building, 18 S. Perry St.