

# SUPERINTENDENT'S BRIEF

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

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## 'Read the World' encourages literacy

This year's "Read the World" motivational reading program wrapped with a Jeopardy-style competition in which students showed off their reading comprehension and retention skills. The second-year program aims to enhance students' reading abilities, strengthen comprehension skills and ignite excitement for reading. The fourth grades from both Clinton and Warring elementary schools took part.

The students all read the same book, "Amari and the Despicable Wonders," over the course of roughly three months. Through the program, the students' reading comprehension was monitored through weekly quizzes and teachers assessed areas of strengths and improvement. Dr. David Scott, Clinton principal, noted the program and the promise of a competition at the end of it, increased engagement in the book and encouraged everyone to complete it.

"We found a way to hide literacy and sneak it in there," he said. "This is a beautiful opportunity to get them together to compete over academics."

Five students from each school were selected to take part in the competition held at Clinton. The host school ended up winning on a final tiebreaking question; Alani Oliver, who answered the winning question, earned the highest individual score of any competitor and earned the grand prize, an iPad and a gift card. Two other students, one from each school, also won gift cards.

Oliver said it was fun to answer questions about the book in front of her classmates, and proudly ran through the entire premise of the book when she was asked about the competition. Though, her favorite part was obvious: "I liked that I won the prize," she grinned.

Prior to the competition held May 16, program lead and co-founder Sheba Abrahaim welcomed both schools and spoke to the students, as did Bill Duke, the Poughkeepsie-born actor, director, humanitarian and author. A conversation between Duke and Abrahaim was the inspiration for the program. The program

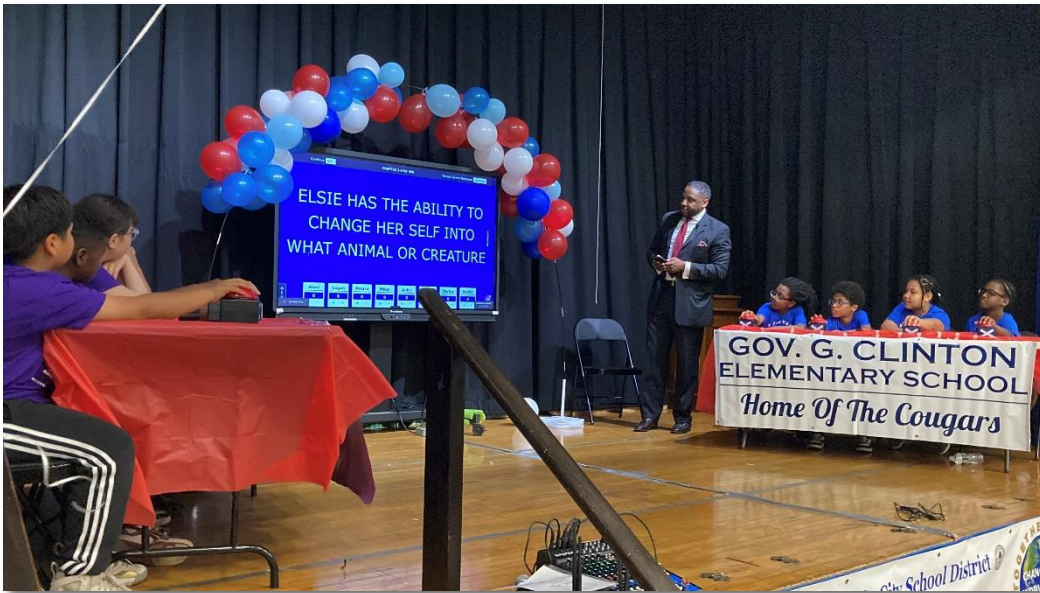


**Student competitors in the "Read the World" finale event post on stage with principals Dr. David Scott and Nicole Penn.**

### Instruction in Action video series

Instruction in Action is a new video series hosted by Director of Teaching and Learning Patrice Woods. Each installment will look at the creative ways Poughkeepsie City School District faculty teach students, and the professional development offered to the staff to help them find those creative routes. The Read the World program was featured in the series recently and each installment is available on the [district's YouTube page](#) and other social media channels.





**A Jeopardy-style event completed the program, which also included weekly comprehension quizzes and tutoring while reading "Amari and the Despicable Wonders."**

began with Clinton's fifth-grade students, only, reading last year, but was expanded to multiple schools for the second edition. Duke told the kids the program is "about more than reading, as you know. It's about encouraging you to become the best human beings you can possibly become." Poughkeepsie City School District Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education Gregory Mott, who will take the reins as superintendent

July 1, also spoke to the students, as did Assemblyman Jonathan Jacobson. Mott referenced both Duke and Jacobson in his comments, noting the kids should understand their presence should make them feel as "special" and "important" as they are. "Many of you will be standing here with a microphone one day. Many of you will have a script or you may be stars one day on TV. Many of you may be politicians," Mott explained. "The foundation of all of that is the ability to comprehend information, synthesize texts, analyze texts and reading." The program this year was supported by Mayor Yvonne Flowers, Jacobson, Councilwoman Ondie James, Heritage Federal Credit Union, the City of Poughkeepsie PBA and Marist University.

## History comes alive for students in Philadelphia

Senior social studies students on May 22 took a day trip to Philadelphia to see historic sites and artifacts. The 27 students engaged in a guided tour of Independence Hall, where they extended their knowledge of social studies by learning about the foundations of our government, the founding of our country, and the events that led to the Declaration of Independence, the creation of the Articles of Confederation, and ultimately the signing of our Constitution. They also enjoyed "generous portions" of Philly Cheesesteaks, chaperone and program lead Dr. Sankung Susso said.



**The students took a guided tour of Independence Hall as one of several activities during a day trip to Philadelphia.**



Susso, a social studies teacher and debate club adviser, said trips such as these are “important because it allows students to connect what we learned in the classroom to actual historic venues where those events took place.”

He noted in their Participation in Government class, students “learned about the foundations of our government, where they considered how governments are established and maintained by exploring integral characteristics such as power, authority, legitimacy and sovereignty. They learned about the development of democracy in ancient Athens and Rome, European monarchy, early political philosophy and events that led to the founding of our nation. Thus, bringing them to Independence Hall where the founders debated and signed the Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, and the Constitution, and to watch them actually interact with various artifacts made it special to have taught the lessons in the first place. Susso said the group also visited the Liberty Bell and National Constitution Center, “where they had additional opportunities to learn, connect and reflect upon the people, places and our national symbols we have talked about in class.”



**Roderick Porter was among the students who stopped to read about the Liberty Bell during the visit.**

## Warring Festival of Cultures teaches tolerance with fun



**Through music, face painting and other crafts, Warring students learned about other cultures in a festival atmosphere.**

Warring Elementary School on Friday afternoon hosted its first Festival of Cultures on the blacktop behind the building. The event, financed with a grant through TRANSART, featured live musical performances, African storytelling, a performance from the Tighten Ups drill team, activities, face painting and culturally themed crafts. Students could learn to create lavender sachets, Japanese koinobori fish kites, beaded bracelets and more. TRANSART's Renee Boyd, who helped facilitate the grant, was among the volunteers and building and district staff guiding the craft tables.

The snack table included a snow-cone machine, where Principal Nicole Penn was among those handing out treats.

“We have to teach students tolerance,” Penn said of the importance of such cultural events. “We have to teach them to accept everyone, regardless of where they're from and what they look like and all of the different cultures, and all of the different religions and all of the different personalities. It grows the individual. They have to be well-rounded individuals.”