At-home learning resources: District provides materials for preK-2

Supporting the out-of-school learning of all students is a major focus for the Poughkeepsie City School District, particularly that of the district’s earliest learners. “It’s important that the district’s earliest learners receive greater opportunity to learn and reinforce foundational skills that will serve as perquisites to school success outside of the school environment.” said Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, superintendent of schools. “I applaud the ingenuity of Mr. Mott, assistant superintendent of elementary education, and Ms. Cherry, interim executive of community schools, in identifying and making available at-home learning resources for our preK-2 grade students.”

Under the Community School initiative, the Poughkeepsie City School District has purchased Scholastic reading and math activity books for all Pre-K – 2 grade students. Students will have the opportunity to develop their literacy and numeracy skills through engaging in over 300 activities. The Office of Community Schools will be scheduling time next week for parents to pick up their child’s copy of the activity book. A school connect call will be going out to parents of these grade levels notifying them of the location this week.

Students create virtual zoo

When it came time to teach her third graders about animals and animal habitats as part of the science curriculum, Krieger Elementary School teacher Nikki Schmitt wanted it to be more than just having them read a book and answer questions. So, she decided to engage them in the learning process by making them the teachers.

Schmitt separated the students into different groups, each responsible for researching a habitat. The class spent two weeks learning about different animals, their behaviors and habitats. Schmitt provided a list of websites they could use as well as books they could read. Students kept track of what they learned in their organizers. Schmitt taught the students how to create Google Slides and had each student create two. She appointed a team leader for each group. Each group created an overview slide of their habitat together and then worked on their own slides. Schmitt knit them together into a clickable “Krieger Zoo” PDF which she then shared with students on the Wednesday before winter break.

“They had so much fun,” Schmitt said. “They were clapping for each other, because the others didn’t get to see all the slides (before then) just those from their own group,” Schmitt said.

Alex Foster was the team leader for the grasslands habitat. He said he had to help make the project and keep the other students moving along. He chose the lion as his animal. “It was the animal of the kingdom and one of my favorite animals,” Foster said. Much like his role as team leader, Foster said his favorite fact about the lion is that it “protects the group.”
Students were given a rubric to follow for grading, detailing requirements in four areas: Participation/preparation, research ecosystem group slides and animal slides, Schmitt said. Team leaders were responsible for speaking up during class meetings and helping others if they needed support. “They’d ask questions if they felt the other students needed more information on their slides and encouraged conversations about the habitat,” Schmitt said.

Foster said he had never made a Google Slide before but, “it was really fun.” After seeing the entire zoo presentation during class, Foster said he also liked the meerkat, another animal from the grasslands, because, “they go and watch for other predators while the other meerkats are in the den.”

Schmitt said she would like to do one or two more of these virtual trips this year, perhaps for social studies when the class studies South Africa or Canada.

Club advisers undergo training

Extracurricular & Coaching Orientation

December 22, 2020

Activities, Topics covered included financial compliance, programmatic expectations and building level expectations, Director of Special Projects Kristina Giangreco said. “The programmatic expectations will allow us to collect information and data in regards to the district’s yearly goals,” she said.

During the session, advisers/coaches learned that all receipts had to be signed by both themselves and a student representative, vendors couldn’t be paid in cash from event proceeds but had to submit an invoice and that quarterly reports were required to be submitted.

In addition to the advisers and coaches, building and central office administrators were invited to participate in the session.

“Extracurriculars and athletics are an important part of students’ school experience. We want to ensure that students have the opportunity to participate in a variety of experiences during their school year,” Giangreco said.

These activities include:
- Student government
- Multicultural club
- Sister2Sister
- Yearbook
- Pioneer Post (student newspaper)
- Art club
- Math Team
- STEP Team
- Debate Team
- National Honor Society
- Senior Class
- Homework Help Centers

“By providing this training, we are able to ensure that all activities that happen in the Poughkeepsie City School District meet all compliance requirements and staff has the most up-to-date information while they are providing diverse opportunities for students,” she said.

The advisers/coaches who weren’t able to attend will need to complete the orientation prior to starting and making the student extracurricular activity.