Graduation rates rise, PCSD not satisfied

Graduation rates in the Poughkeepsie City School District for those students who entered ninth grade in 2016 and graduated by August 2020 climbed six percentage points from 54 percent to 60 percent, according to data released Thursday from the New York State Education Department. During the pandemic, the Board of Regents and NYSED adopted new rules to ensure students weren’t negatively impacted by events. These included exempting students from taking a Regents exam provided they passed the course. Regents exams for June and August 2020 were cancelled.

While not having to take a Regents exam had a positive impact on graduation rates in all school districts, there is still evidence that the great things our teachers and staff are doing to improve graduation rates among all students is having an impact.

The district’s dropout rate of 19 percent is the lowest in at least eight years, dropping five points from last year’s 24 percent and six points from 2013’s 25 percent.

Of the 309 students in this cohort, 185 graduated. Forty-three received a Regents with Advanced Designation diploma, 142 received a Regents diploma, six received non-diploma credentials, 58 were still enrolled and 60 dropped out.

Last year, PCSD had 346 seniors, 188 of whom graduated.

Broken down by ethnicity, our rates were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>8/2019</th>
<th>8/2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Dutchess County, the overall graduation rate was 88 percent, slightly higher than the statewide rate of 84.8. New York State’s rate was up 1.4 percent compared to the 2015 group and 8 percent higher than it was a decade ago.

While the increase gives us reason to celebrate, PCSD is not satisfied with a 60 percent graduation rate for 2020. Our goal remains that all students have access and opportunity to complete their K-12 education with PCSD.

We are in the process of analyzing the 2019-20 cohort graduation data and exploring the impact of various factors that have contributed to the overall increase in graduation rates.

Through the hard work of administrators, teachers, staff, community members, parents and students, we continue to strengthen our collaborative approach to guaranteeing that this goal is achieved.
Church helps provide supplies for 4th, 5th graders

The Mid-Hudson Church of Christ has been helping out Clinton Elementary School for years, donating clothing and supplies. This year, the church had planned to do several projects, including a library book donation and homework tutoring program. But, with other entities stepping up to help with those efforts, the church started looking for other ways to help the school. “We asked Kristina (Giangreco, director of special projects) what more can we do,” said Michelle Dawkins a church member and the liaison with the school district.

Giangreco said she was in the process of putting together packages of supplies for district fourth and fifth graders and realized she was coming up short.

“I shared the list of supplies needed and I told them that anything they could provide would be much appreciated. They purchased it all!”

Dawkins said the church raised $2,000 from the congregation for supplies - everything from crayons to notebooks to construction paper and rulers, but no book bags.

“Kristina came to my house to pick it all up,” she said.

Because the church is located adjacent to Clinton, “Some of the kids come to our yearly Vacation Bible classes, participate in our services, or we see them at the clothing drives,” Dawkins said, explaining the strong support from members.

And, while the supplies will go to students throughout the district, they will also benefit Clinton students. Dawkins said the church has about $700 left from the money raised and is awaiting word on how it can best be used to help students at Clinton.

Lawmaker teams with PPE4All

Gives away free protective gear

Dutchess County Legislator Barrington R. Atkins is teaming up with PPE4All to provide free PPE for City of Poughkeepsie residents Saturday at locations throughout the city.

“I am proud to announce I will be teaming up with PPE4All and providing free PPE in the City of Poughkeepsie! COVID-19 has transformed many lives in our community, and we want to ensure PPE gets to those who need it most,” Atkins said in a news release.

The distribution schedule is as follows:

- 9 a.m. Martin Luther King Apts
- 10 a.m. - Charles Street Apts
- 10:45 a.m. - Thurgood Marshall Terrace Apts
- 11:30 a.m. - Rip Van Winkle Apts
- 12:15 p.m. - Harriet Tubman Terrace Apts
- 12:45 p.m. - Hudson Garden Apts
- 1:15 p.m. - Walkup Location near 412 Main Street

Organized by Dutchess County Legislator
Barrington R. Atkins and PPE4ALL