

SUPERINTENDENT'S BRIEF

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

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VOLUME 2



District receives \$500K IBM cybersecurity grant

Poughkeepsie City School District's cybersecurity is getting a boost from a \$500,000 in-kind grant from IBM.

The district is one of six nationally (and the only one in the tri-state area) to receive the IBM Education Security Preparedness Grant that will bring a team of IBM Service Corps volunteers to the district for four weeks this year to help PCSD prepare for and respond to cyberattacks. Services can span everything from password hygiene and implementing strategic communication plans, to creating an incident response plan, according to IBM.

In December 2020, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency and the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC) issued an advisory indicating that cyberattacks against K-12 educational institutions were increasing. "The percentage of reported ransomware incidents against K-12 schools increased at the beginning of the 2020 school year. In August and September, 57 percent of ransomware incidents reported to the MS-ISAC involved K-12 schools, compared to 28 percent of all reported ransomware incidents from January through July."

PCSD experienced this first-hand. On Feb. 25, 2020, the district experienced a ransomware attack that blocked access to a particular drive, resulting in the loss of access to documents stored there. Thankfully, personal and student data was not compromised. The district replaced the server and took additional steps to secure the system.

"As cyber-attacks become more frequent, having a company like IBM, with its expertise, give us recommendations on how to become more secure is a great advantage," Timothy Wade, the district's assistant superintendent of administrative services, said.

Nadine Dargan, interim director of instructional technology, echoed that. "IBM can point us in the right direction and point out any flaws that we need to address quickly."

More than 250 other school districts applied for the grant, representing more than 7,800 schools and over 4 million students, according to IBM.

"We'd like to congratulate Poughkeepsie City School District on being selected for the IBM Education Security Preparedness Grant," said Christopher Scott, Director of Security Innovation, Office of the CISO, IBM. "With ransomware attacks against schools on the rise, it's important, now more than ever, that schools take proactive steps in securing their cybersecurity posture."

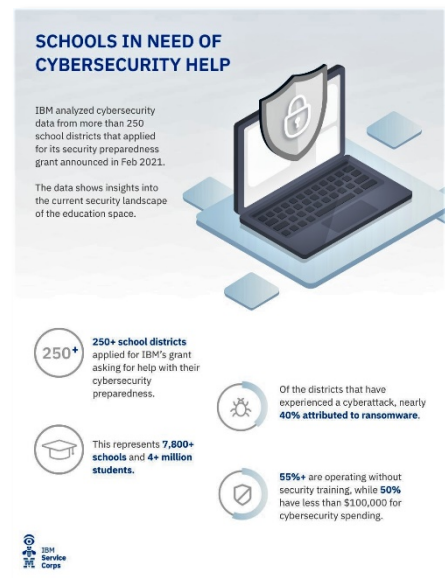
Selection was based on cybersecurity needs and experiences, community resources and potential risks, IBM said.

Superintendent Dr. Eric Jay Rosser is grateful for the opportunity.

"The Poughkeepsie City School District is extremely excited to be one of six organizations to be selected to receive the IBM Education Security Preparedness Grant. As school districts across the country have seen a spike in school district cyberattacks that have immobilized operations, the benefit of the Poughkeepsie City School District being selected is enormous. PCSD looks forward in IBM's support in strengthening our cybersecurity posture," Rosser said.

The other school districts receiving grants were:

- Brevard Public Schools – Viera, Florida
- KIPP Metro Atlanta Schools – Atlanta, Georgia
- Sheldon Independent School District – Houston, Texas
- Newhall School District – Valencia, California
- Denver Public Schools – Denver, Colorado.



Caravan carries PHS graduation excitement

Yesterday, a caravan of Champions for Children, including PHS principal Kelleyann Royce-Giron, PHS staff, Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, superintendent, Dr. Felicia Watson, BOE president, and Poughkeepsie Police Department, visited the homes of approximately 150 graduating seniors. As the caravan of 20 vehicles paraded through the streets of Poughkeepsie, community members joined in the celebration by honking their horns, waving, and cheering as the caravan stopped at each house to present the soon-to-be graduate with a lawn sign and communication on what to anticipate in the coming weeks.



Above, Rosser and Royce-Giron celebrate with senior Ricardo Christie. At right, Royce-Giron hugs Tyonna Morgan after giving her a sign and graduation information.

Various Poughkeepsie High alumni commented on how wonderful it was for school staff to visit student's homes and celebrate them as the caravan made its way through the city. When asked about the event Royce-Giron commented, "It was amazing to show our Pioneer Pride throughout the streets of Poughkeepsie during the Caravan. The smiles, the joy, the tears, the excitement - all worth the time spent to celebrate our PHS seniors. I love to see the community applaud our youth and represent if they too, are a Pioneer! Now, it is time for students to finish strong so we celebrate together at the graduation ceremony."

Poughkeepsie High School's graduation will take place Thursday, June 24, 2022, in the PCSD Sports Complex. Click [here to see more photos](#) online.



Above, clockwise from left: PHS Principal Kelleyann Royce-Giron, Superintendent Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, PHS teacher Heather Martino, her graduating son, Kevin, and Board of Education President Dr. Felicia Watson pose for a photo.



Chicks bring lessons to life at Early Learning Center



Sky Milton and Arianna Matias play with a chick on the floor. Photos courtesy/Sue Ammon

ELC students had a chance to learn science, Math and English skills by watching chicken eggs hatch, thanks to the efforts of veteran teacher Sue Ammon.

"I wanted to do something new and exciting," Ammon said, explaining that she started doing this each spring about three years ago.

This year it was even more important as field trips to farms and elsewhere were canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ammon brings in eggs in, sets up an incubator and then invites all the ELC classes in to watch.

"They saw it from egg to birth," she said.

Students learned about life cycles, wrote and drew pictures about what they witnessed and counted the number of chicks as they hatched. They started with 24 eggs, 14 of which were fertile and 10 yielded chicks.

Maliyah Monroe was able to say the eggs stayed in the incubator and Quinn Le added that it "keeps the eggs warm."

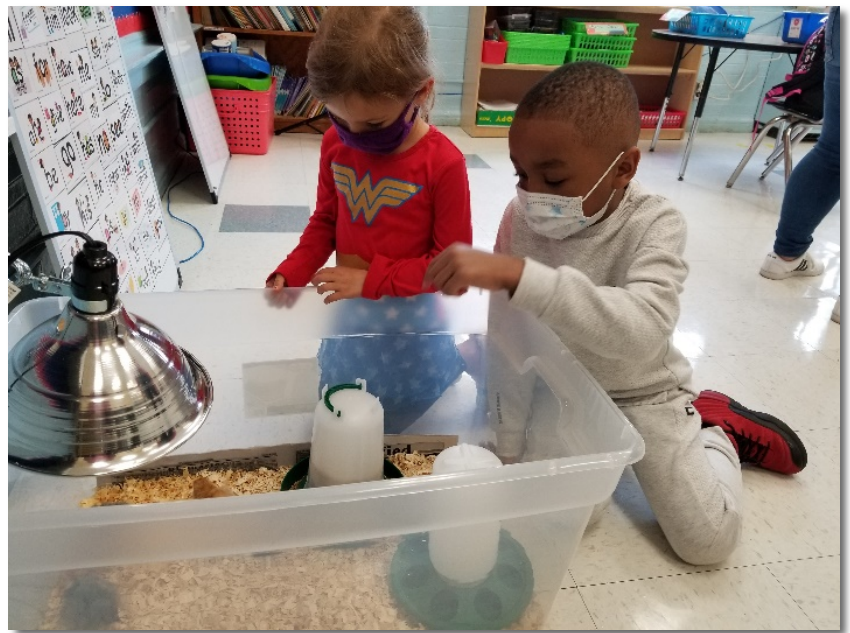
Asked what noise the chicks made, Avia Stewart was quick to imitate them:

"They went cheep, cheep, cheep, cheep," Stewart said.

Most students found it exciting to watch the chicks eat, drink and, eventually, go to the bathroom. They also get to feel the chicks and watch them run around the room. Students also learned that, like humans, chicks can be different colors, shapes and sizes.

There were black chicks, yellow chicks, orange chicks, white chicks and a gray one. For Ammon, this type of lesson brings a lot of joy, as it can help in unexpected ways. For example, she related how students who came in from a self-contained special education class, who are normally reluctant to talk, engaged when they came in to watch the chicks.

And, there was one teacher who was "terrified" of the chicks, according to Ammon, but overcame it and was holding a chick at the end.



Selina Harris and Jar'Quez Dancy observe chicks in the incubator.

Board to receive Capital Project update



The Poughkeepsie Board of Education will receive an update on the \$98.7 million Capital Improvement Project this evening. Approved by voters in the Fall of 2020 (see story [here](#)), the project will bring needed infrastructure improvement to all school buildings and support the district's efforts with transforming its schools into 21st century learning environments. Tonight's presentation led by Robert McDow, interim chief finance and business official and leadership from Triton and CPL, will outline the work that the team has engaged in to prepare for the first phase of the project set to begin this summer. The team, which has been meeting monthly, has created a construction schedule that will be shared this evening. The schedule, which concludes in 2027, charts the construction projects slated to occur at each building and when each project will be completed.

Focused on protecting the interiors of three schools that have significant roofing issues, Smith School (ELC),

Morse Elementary School, and Clinton will undergo major roofing restoration and replacement this summer. Other district schools will receive minor roofing restoration this summer to strengthen the roofing systems until they will undergo major replacement in the summer of 2022.

Other minor Capital Improvement Projects that will be underway this summer include, cosmetic bathroom upgrades at PHS, restoring the ELC gymnasium, and installation of digital signage at some schools.

ROOFING IMPROVEMENTS
RENOVATE TOILET ROOMS
REPLACE BOILERS

PHASE 1A & 1B

PHASE 1A & 1B Summary



Phase 1A

Restore / Replace Roofing Summer 2021:

- Smith School ELC
- Morse Elementary School
- Clinton Elementary School

Current Status of Phase 1

- Projects submitted to SED via 3rd Party review
- Comments received by CPL on 5/23, Addendum in progress
- State contract proposal for roofing to be received after SED permit issued.
- Start work after school is out

Phase 1B

Roofing/Bathrooms & Boilers Summer 2022:

- High School
- Warring Elementary School
- Smith School ELC (- Roofing)
- Columbus School (- Roofing)
- Clinton Elementary School (- Roofing)

Bathrooms & Boilers Summer 2023:

- Morse Elementary School
- Middle School (+ Roofing)
- Krieger Elementary School (+ Roofing)