Vendor issue causes statewide ballot delays

As of Monday, June 1, 2020 the absentee ballots for the annual school district election had not been mailed to our voters due unforeseen delays by NTS Data, the company that the District engaged to print and mail the District’s ballots. School districts throughout the state have been having similar issues due to supply shortages. On Friday, May 29, the District received the following information from NTS Data:

“There is a significant supply issue with envelopes, very similar to what happened with toilet paper and hand sanitizer in recent months but on a commercial level. We were set to receive a delivery of millions of envelopes prior to the Memorial Day weekend that did not show up. We had prepared by printing all the components of the absentee ballot packs we had in stock including ballots for every school district. When the delayed trucks arrived on Wednesday, they were missing the bulk of the supplies that had been ordered 2 weeks prior. We spent the day triaging the situation and reaching out to State Assemblymen and Senators asking for help. We had a call with someone connected to the Governor’s office last night in an attempt to resolve the issue. The current legal deadline to mail ballots is June 3rd. We are working to deliver everything before the deadline. It is an awful situation and unfortunately totally out of our control. Your district is not the only District affected. We are doing everything we can to fix the problem. We are hoping to have some information today. We will continue to mail ballots as the missing component supplies arrive and can be inserted.”

Early this afternoon PCSD was informed that the absentee ballots have been mailed as of today, Wednesday, June 3. Once ballots are received by voters, we are asking voters to complete the ballot and return in the prepaid envelop. PCSD is also making available opportunities for voters to drop off ballots to a secured ballot box located at the Columbus School, 18 South Perry Street (where the office of the District Clerk is located), during the following times:

- Monday, June 8, 2020 – 8am – 4pm
- Tuesday, June 9, 2020 – 8am – 5pm.

All ballots must be received by 5:00 p.m. on June 9.

Due to the delay in absentee ballots being mailed, districts across the state have reached out to the Governor’s office to request an extension of the ballot submission deadline to ensure that voters have sufficient time to return absentee ballots. We are waiting to hear if there will be any changes.

Covid-19 changes school registration

PCSD’s Central Registration website page has been updated with instructions for registering students for grades PreK-12 during the Covid-19 pandemic. Instead of it all being done in person, the process will begin electronically, using the fillable PDFs available on the page.

The district provided instructions on using the forms on the page. Once the district receives the initial packets via email or mail, parents will be contacted to schedule appointments to finalize the process. PCSD encourages all parents to take full advantage of Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten registration for the 20-21 academic year. A link to the site can be accessed here: poughkeepsieschools.org/registration.
Caravan delivers for PHS Class of 2020

Lead by PHS Principal Kelleyann Royce-Giron and Superintendent Dr. Eric Rosser, a caravan of vehicles decorated in Poughkeepsie blue ribbons, streamers and more drove through city streets, stopping at the homes of seniors throughout the day Monday and part of Tuesday.

Board of Education President Felicia Watson, Vice-President Debra Long, board member Doreen Clifford, State Senator Sue Serino, City of Poughkeepsie Mayor Rob Rolison, School Resource Officer Karen Zirbel, other school district staff and police officers participated in the caravan at various times. The caravan started at 9 a.m. and went until 8:45 p.m. Monday.

At each home, Royce-Giron and Rosser delivered greetings and presented a Class of 2020 lawn sign and information packet on end-of-year events.

“In the midst of so much change that we didn’t see coming, shifts and sadness I wanted to bring joy to the community and celebrate,” Royce-Giron, herself a PHS graduate, said. “I wanted the students to see how proud we are and that we support them and make sure they understand that.”

About 60 district teachers and staff members participated throughout the two days, delivering about 200 signs, she said. Originally, the caravan was planned as a single day, but the team went out again Tuesday from noon to 2 p.m. to attempt deliveries to students who either weren’t home or who had an address change. Royce-Giron said calls will be made to missed students later this week to arrange for pickup.

“Students reacted with joy and tears and just plain excitement,” she said. “For some, it was shock - they couldn’t believe we pulled into their street with decorated cars, honking, waving and with Pioneer Pete for them,” she said.

In some neighborhoods, people came out of their homes to clap and, by the end, “people were cheering and banging on pots with spoons to support them. It brought joy to my heart to see that Pioneer Pride.”

Royce-Giron had nothing but thanks for all those who made the caravana possible.

Donations, grant provide fun, relief

Thanks to DonorsChoose and Poughkeepsie Middle School staff, 22 families have games to keep them occupied and snacks to munch on during school closure.

Michelle Bleakley, an 8th grade special education teacher, secured a $1,000 grant from DonorsChoose to create 10 kits which contain board games, puzzles, art and crafts supplies and snacks for families. PMS faculty and staff donated additional funds to create 12 more kits, French Teacher Kimberly Popken said. The Teen Closet provided hygiene products for the families as well.

Staff members nominated students to receive the kits and School Counselor Ann Marie Tucker spoke to each family about their wants and coordinated with Bleakley.

Staff met at the school to build each kit and distribute them to homes.

An additional DonorsChoose grant obtained by Samantha Rosario, an 8th grade special education teacher, will provide 12 more Family Care Kits to different families, Popken said. The dynamic Middle School team expects delivery to occur June 9. Thank you to everyone who helped make this possible and bring smiles and joy to our families, including all those who made deliveries: Mrs. Buccheri, ELA teacher; Mrs. Hayen, Special Education Teacher; Mrs. Popken, French Teacher; Mrs. Garvey, School Psychologist; Mrs. Stewart, Social Worker; Ms. Besko, Math Teacher; Ms. Messick, Special Education Teacher; Mr. Conrad, School Counselor; Mrs. Tucker, School Counselor; Mrs. Murphy, ELA Teacher; Mr. Murphy, Asst. Principal; Ms. Jarc, Administrative Asst. and Mr. Wilson, Executive Director of Student Engagement.