PHS seniors applauded for accomplishments

Wednesday, June 3, 2020 I was fortunate to participate in the Poughkeepsie High School (PHS) Awards and Scholarship Celebration hosted by Principal Kelleyann Royce-Giron. To continue PHS’s celebration of the graduating class of 2020, over 50 PCSD staff members, inclusive of BOE members, central office staff, and the extraordinary staff of PHS, the event was held virtually so that students and their families could safely participate.

Seniors were recognized and celebrated for their excellence. The categories that students were recognized for are as follows: National Honor’s Society; Honor Graduates, Student Government Members, JROTC Members, Teen Closet Volunteers, and Service Awards. Awards were also presented to students for their excellence in English Language Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science, Art, Music, Athletics and multiple special awards made by the Poughkeepsie Public School Teacher Association.

Please join PCSD in celebrating the many accomplishments of the Graduating Class of 2020. To view the awards ceremony, click here.

Superintendent establishes Reopening committees

While decisions have not been made as to when and how schools will reopen in September 2020, Dr. Rosser is establishing “Reopening” committees to help inform PCSD’s comprehensive reopening plan. Determined to guarantee that PCSD is best positioned to meet the academic, social, emotional, and wellness needs of all PCSD students, the following eight committees will be established to inform PSCD’s comprehensive September 2020 Reopening Plan: Communications, Facilities, Technology, PK-12 Instruction, Parent and Community Engagement, Students with Exceptionalities, Physical, Health and Wellness, Social Emotional, and Food Service. Each committee will be led by a district administrator and include teachers, staff, administrators, parents, students, and community members. Dr. Rosser plans to invite members of the community to serve on the committees and will be working with union leadership to identify other committee members. Ms. Natasha Cherry will identify parents to also serve on the committees. Once membership is identified, each committee will begin meeting in late June.

E-Tech students make progress, earn college credits

Thirty-four Poughkeepsie High School (PHS) students earned college credits through E-Tech’s partnership with Dutchess Community College this year, according to Kristina Giangreco, interim director of special projects.

The breakdown of these successes are as follows:
- 12 juniors earned three college credits ELT 107
- 11 seniors earned six college credits ELT 107 and ENG 102
- 11 seniors earned three college credits by completing either ENG 102 or ELT 107

Plus, 22 PHS students will attend DCC full-time next year and more than 20 juniors are registering to spend a half day at DCC next year. There are 66 students in E-Tech this year. The six-year, grant-based school within a school, emphasizes the importance of college and career readiness through partnerships with
DCC and Central Hudson. The focus is on STEM career paths and students work towards an Electrical Technician associate degree, Ms. Giangreco said. The program will run with these students for three more years. Students enrolled in the program begin taking college classes in 10th grade with extensive academic support from the high school and DCC. 11th graders take class with a DCC instructor at PHS several days a week and work with two E-Tech teachers on additional academic needs. Seniors attend classes at DCC in the morning.

Due to COVID-19 all E-Tech students completed their classes online last month, Ms. Giangreco said. In addition, juniors and seniors were assigned a one-on-one mentor from Central Hudson this year to help them develop professional skills, Giangreco said.

"Not wanting to lose momentum during the school building closures, Central Hudson just hosted a webinar on what makes a great website at the request of one of the E-Tech students," she said. "We are so happy to be continuing these partnerships and look forward to planning for our summer program and Fall 2020."

Warring awards honor Tina Wandy’s memory

In memory of a cherished and dedicated, veteran teacher of 30 years in the Poughkeepsie City School District; two fifth grade students will be receiving a special Achievement Award in honor of their first-grade teacher, Tina Wandy. Throughout her 30 years in the district, Mrs. Wandy worked in Krieger Elementary, Columbus Elementary, and most recently Warring Elementary. She coached volleyball early in her career, raised three of her own children, and was an active member of PPSTA - the district’s teacher’s union. In addition, Tina was the “Queen of Fundraising” so students could have life experiences to support their learning. She believed in the potential of each and every student. She was an active participant in Warring’s Schoolwide PBIS program because she knew that learning did not just occur within the four walls of her classroom and students needed to develop their character as well as their minds. Mrs. Wandy was an avid reader and shared her love for reading with her students. Undoubtedly, she has gifted hundreds of students with the foundational skills needed to become lifelong readers and learners.

With this in mind, honorary scholarships will be awarded to two Warring Elementary 5th grade students moving up to the Middle School. These are students that had Mrs. Wandy as a first-grade teacher and have continued to blossom as learners throughout their elementary career. Each scholarship will include a $50 gift certificate to Barnes and Noble bookstore to support the students’ love of reading and learning about the world around them and beyond.

The recipients of Mrs. Wandy’s honorary Achievement Award scholarship are Dorothy Berman and Nicole F. Cummings. “Dorothy has a ‘bubbly’ attitude towards learning and always tries her best,” says fifth grade teacher, Claire Himoun. Dorothy is a helpful and kind student. She is a member of Warring’s ‘Girl Empowerment’ Group, participated in Student Government, and is a member of the Warring Chorus. Nicole F. Cummings is not only receiving this award but has also been awarded the Most Improved Award in her 5th grade class. As per her teacher, Dr. Shanna Didymus, “Nicole is a hardworking and inquisitive student. She is willing to ask questions and go above and beyond to grasp her academic and social skills!”

Sadly, in mid-March of this year, PCSD unexpectedly lost Mrs. Wandy just three months before her scheduled retirement from the Poughkeepsie City School District after a 30-year career of growing minds, shaping characters, and touching hearts. The spark of light that shines in each student that her life as an educator touched will be a tribute to her legacy.

To Dorothy and Nicole, Mrs. Wandy would be so proud of all of your growth, efforts, and achievements. Keep learning, keep reading, and dream big!