SUPERINTENDENT'S BRIEF

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



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VOLUME 4

Community approves 23-24 budget



2023-24 vote results

Proposition 1 (Budget): Total Votes: 359 YES: 274 (76.32 percent), NO: 85 (23.68 percent) Proposition 2 (Capital Project authorization): Total Votes: 355 YES: 289 (80.50 percent), NO: 66 (18.38 percent) Proposition 3 (Capital Project Bond): Total Votes: 357 YES: 275 (76.60 percent), NO: 82 (22.84 percent) Proposition 4 (2023 Capital Reserve Fund): Total Votes: 355 YES: 286 (79.67 percent), NO: 69 (19.22 percent) Board of Education (2 seats): Thomas O'Neill (Incumbent), 294 votes (3-Year Term) Bob Creedon (Incumbent), 267 votes (3-Year Term) City residents approved the 2023-24 Poughkeepsie City School District budget, capital project propositions and the election of trustees to the board of education Tuesday by the second highest approval rating in the past 11 years. It was the single most citywide community involvement event of the 2022-2023 school year.

At an approval rating of 76.32 percent, the \$135.9 million budget was approved, supporting the school district's momentum in elevating student success under its 5-year strategic plan. Voters also approved two propositions enabling the district to continue improving the infrastructure of all schools through the Strong Schools Equal Strong Communities Capital Improvement Project. The creation of a Capital Reserve fund, which will help the district with future capital expenses, was also approved by the voters. Capital reserve funds are established to pay the costs of construction, reconstruction, renovation and acquisition of district property. Capital reserves help to offset future expenditures, reducing and sometimes eliminating any impact on taxes. In addition, voters re-elected Thomas O'Neill and Bob Creedon as school board trustees for three-year terms. Both trustees' new terms begin July 1 and end June 30, 2026. "Our community's support of Poughkeepsie City School District students is immeasurable. By

School District students is immeasurable. By supporting the 2023-2024 budget, the community allows us to build upon the momentum and successes of our collective

impact on student success. Our school, home and community approach is yielding great results for the positive youth development of our community's youth. On behalf of all PCSD students, staff, and families, I thank the voters for your support," shared Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, superintendent of schools.

The board of education met this morning to officially accept the results of the election. Board President Thomas O'Neill, Esq., said after the meeting that he was, "extremely grateful for the support provided to the district, especially with regard to the ongoing capital project." However, he was disappointed in the low voter turnout.

"Those who follow us and understand what we are doing are extremely supportive. We hope to see this number increase as we continue to move the district forward."

At the end of the meeting, board members thanked Becky Torres, clerk of the board, for all her work on the election and throughout the year.



Dual language classes publish book

Not every pre-K and kindergarten student will be able to say they co-authored a book. But, students in Poughkeepsie City School District's inaugural dual language classes can! Each student is writing (or dictating) something they've learned or enjoyed at school and drawing it.

Once complete, the stories and drawings were sent to a publishing house where they are being made into hardcover books. Each student's family will receive a copy of the book at a special celebration in June.

The idea came from Lorraine Boughton, a bilingual Community Schools liaison, who wanted to do something special for the dual language program. She spoke with the four teachers: Maribeth Smith and Kristina Parker at the kindergarten level and Joy Marino and



Dual language kindergarten teacher Maribeth Smith (L-R) works on book pages with students Serena Chambers, Quintan Andry, Brianna Wissmann and Josiah Myers.

Marsha Cotten at the pre-K level and then received a grant from the Community Schools Foundation and the ELC PTA to help them fund the project.

Kindergartener Quintan Andry knew some sight words in Spanish and his favorite one is, "puedo," which means "I can."

To illustrate his favorite word, Andry drew a picture of himself jumping over flowers.

"I can jump," he said, explaining that he drew a picture of himself being happy with his arms up.

As for the book project, doing the drawing was his favorite part and he said he can't wait to read the book, "We Love Learning," to his family.

In Cotten's class, the approach was slightly different because of the age of the students. She explained that her students started with drawing their responses to what they love about school.

For Mia Arreola-Quiroz, her favorite part of being in school is playing with blocks with her friend, Daniella. When asked about the book she was writing, Arreola-Quiroz said, "It's beautiful."

Classmate Austin Snead's favorite part of working on "What I Love About School" was drawing the shapes



Dual language pre-K teacher Marsha Cotten speaks with students (L-R) Mia Arreola-Quiroz, Austin Snead, Kaylani Herman, Atreya Ward and Dereck Canales about their illustrations.

on his piece of art. Asked what he liked best about school, he said, "I like to play with my friends."

Smith said she and Parker work with the students to read their pages in English and Spanish.

"The goal is to have them be able to read it to family members or classmates," Smith said.

Boughton said she wants to have the students produce a book each year. "As they get older, they can work on it as a team project, create a chapter book," she said, adding that she and the teachers contributed to help make the book work. The district is purchasing additional copies to place in each of the school libraries, at central registration and in other administrative offices.

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"This initiative is great, as it supports student's reading and writing engagement, which aligns with district's approach to literacy development and the Science of Reading. What is equally exciting is that as students move from grade to grade, they will be able to take their book from the library shelf and show it to classmates. It will be a resource that will encourage and inspire other students to create text," Superintendent Dr. Eric Jay Rosser said.







Scenes from PHS' 2023 mocktail pre-prom reception show students having fun, sipping mocktails and showing off their keen sense of fashion.

PHS mocktail event draws crowd

Prior to the 2023 Poughkeepsie High School Junior-Senior Prom, Heather Martino and Diane Moore senior class advisors and PHS teachers, organized a mocktail reception for the evening's attendees. Mocktail receptions are pre-prom gatherings set in an elegant setting to provide opportunity for students and staff to marvel over students' prom attire, take pictures, socialize, and enjoy hors d'oeuvres and nonalcoholic beverages. Students were dressed in the latest prom fashions with many taking their fashions to new heights (See photo

above of the young man with butterflies on his evening coat's sleeve). More than 200 students attended this year's prom, the most in recent years. **(See related story below)**

Free dresses make prom accessible to all

Junior and senior students at Poughkeepsie High School were able to pick up a free gently used or new prom dress during a drive between April 27 and May 1.

Community members, students, as well as the <u>Shoppe Girl Boutique</u> in Red Hook, a consignment style store, donated dresses to be worn at the prom on May 11.

A district parent suggested having a drive to PHS School Counselor Takiyah Ingram, who was immediately onboard with the idea. She and colleagues helped turn the counselors' office area into a mini boutique complete with dressing rooms for students to try on the dresses.

"We're all helping make these kids make their dreams come true," Ingram said. "Being a product of this school district, it's a passion of mine."

Ingram considers this initiative just one of many ways the Poughkeepsie community comes together to support students, some of whom may not be able to afford to attend the prom.

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Poughkeepsie High School students peruse the many dresses donated for a prom dress drive.

pleased with the pedicure she received.

"They came out exactly how I wanted them to," Brodhead said. "They match my prom dress perfectly."

The experience was a fun one for Junior Kayla Cummings who loved the nail design she received.

"She painted my nails really nice," Cummings said of Campone. "I love the design she did."

While Ingram hoped more students would stop by, she said the drive was beneficial regardless.

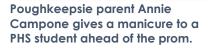
"If I could assist one girl here, I'm doing my job," Ingram said. "Our main goal is to try to remove any barriers that our students may have."

In addition to the dresses, School Counselor Keira O'Loughlin arranged to have Annie Campone, a PHS parent and instructor from <u>Capri Cosmetology Learning Centers</u> in Newburgh visit the school on May 7 to give 15 girls manicures just in time for the prom. Campone had four of

her nail tech students assist on the job, as a way of giving back to the community.

"When I reached out to her about possibly doing nails for the girls she didn't hesitate to say yes," O'Loughlin said of Campone. "The ladies loved socializing and listening to music while getting pampered."

Junior Jahzell Brodhead was





Cadets attend Military Ball In the tradition of military exercises, the 5th Annual

Poughkeepsie Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps annual Military Ball began with a presentation of colors by the NY-20141 Color Guard.

Under the leadership of Dr. Phee Simpson, principal of PHS, the Poughkeepsie AFJROTC Program was established in 2014 and has grown each year providing PHS and other local schools with leadership development opportunities. JROTC prepares high school students for leadership roles while making them aware of their rights, responsibilities and privileges as American citizens. Throughout the country, instructors who are retired Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard officers and enlisted personnel lead JROTC

Cadets sit at the dais.

programs and teach young men and women the kind of self-discipline, self-confidence, and leadership skills that prepare them for adulthood.

Cadet Major Sealy, squadron commander and 12th grade PHS student, led the event, held at Revel 42. It was overseen by Chief Mary Wagner and Master Sgt. Malachi Carmichael and was filled with many rituals and recognitions. Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, superintendent of schools, provided brief remarks before dinner. Also in attendance were representatives for the American Legion, Yvonne Flowers, Poughkeepsie Common Council member, Dr. Felicia Watson, board of education trustee, Dr. Phee Simpson, PHS principal, PHS parents, former AFJROTC students and other community members.

After dinner, attendees danced to music played by DJ Smooth.

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