



State approves art pathway plan



Junior Maelia Vasquez works on a sketch in her art book.

Poughkeepsie City School District's participation in an Individual Arts Assessment Pathway pilot helped provide input which led to it becoming a reality for all New York students beginning next year.

Starting with the Class of 2024, students interested in the visual arts will be able to take a three-unit sequence in the arts and then create a portfolio of work that meets state [learning standards for the arts](#) instead of taking and passing a separate arts assessment test.

"This can open it up to more students who aren't great test takers or are seriously into the arts," Mariya Pushkantser, director of secondary education, said.

Students would complete the four required Regents exams plus the arts pathway to graduate.

The portfolio is cumulative through the year and would contain five creative works, evidence of the student's creative process and a growth statement from the

student indicating their progress, Pushkantser said.

Heather Duncan-Carter, PHS art department chair, said 19 students were involved in the pilot this year and she is planning a fall information meeting to get parental consent forms out to parents so they know what's involved in completing the pathway.

"This is a pretty great start," she said, adding that as a result of the pilot and the state's approval, art offerings are growing.

Next year as part of the district's work to expand arts education as a pathway for self expression, exploration, and learning the district will be hiring an additional art teacher and offering the following new classes at the high school:

- Computer graphics I and II
- Jewelry making I and II
- Stained glass
- Advanced painting
- Advanced ceramics

"This is a major impact. Our art department is stronger for the kids and portfolios are something they can proudly show to colleges," Duncan-Carter said.

Junior Maelia Vasquez likes the opportunity this path provides.

"There is a lot of offerings here. It lets me be more creative and challenge myself," said Vasquez who transferred to PHS from Yonkers. "I don't want to stick with something basic, I want to accomplish something here."

Sophomore Daniela Cruz has attended PCSD since kindergarten and also was part of the pilot. "I feel like this will prepare me for college and give me more experience."



Cruz wants to pursue a career in animation in movies and/or cartoons.

"I want to try the digital arts class next year." Each district would develop its own criteria to evaluate student portfolios, something Duncan-Carter is already looking at. She has a flow chart developed so students can plan, with teachers and their guidance counselor, what they need and she has created a manual.

"There is a strict rubric for it," Pushkantser said.

Next year, students in the program will receive help to create their portfolios. Students who transfer to PHS, will be able to use art credits obtained from other schools. Pushkantser said the visual arts will be the first area of focus for the district, but that she is looking to implement portfolios for music, theater, dance and digital work in the future.



Sophomore Daniela Cruz paints in art class at Poughkeepsie High School.

Student creativity flows at art shows

The main lobby of both Poughkeepsie Middle School and Poughkeepsie High School looked more like a fine art gallery on May 25 during an annual showcase of students' talents.

Poughkeepsie High School

At PHS, photographs, portraits of classic cartoon characters like Bart Simpson and homemade ceramic lamps were just some of the many pieces of art on display. Students could also get their shirts tie-dyed and enjoy a hot dog while listening to senior Joey Roach's soft acoustic music.



Top, PHS students and staff looking at the various art pieces on display at the art show. At left, some of the homemade ceramic lamps on display. At right, students making tie-dye shirts.

the winners of the Art Excellence Awards presented to students during the show and felt a sense of pride when accepting it.

"It's the best of the best," Art Department Chair Heather Duncan-Carter said. "The energy is amazing." While Duncan-Carter checked in every so often on the various stations, the event was largely student run. She credits them and the art teachers for making it a success. "They really show their true colors when they're given these jobs," Duncan-Carter said. "They're just a wonderful, respectful group of students."

Junior Maelia Vasquez was one of the winners of the Art Excellence Awards presented to students during the show and felt a sense of pride when accepting it.

"I really love this award," Vasquez said. "I'm going to cherish it."

Vasquez had colorful Disney inspired flower pots that she initially created for her mother as a gift. Her mother loved the pots and encouraged Vasquez to put them on display at the show.

"She really inspired me to do this," Vasquez said of her mother. "If I know you and I want to give you something, I'm going to make something from my heart."

For Vasquez, the show served as a chance for people to see her work and credits PHS for having many opportunities for artists.

"Seeing people that see something in me is awesome," Vasquez said. "It motivates me to do better."

Junior Raheem Webb perused the various works on display and could not pick a favorite because to him they were all exceptional.

"I like seeing all different types of arts," Webb said. "All art is art, it's expressing yourself."

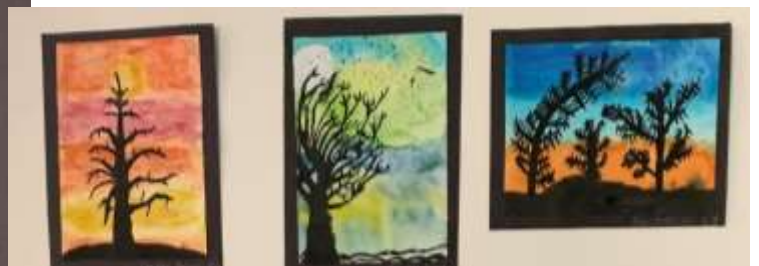
Poughkeepsie Middle School



Disney-themed flower pots created by PHS junior Maelia Vasquez.



Curated by PMS art teachers Donna Lankard, and Mark Klies student drawings, paintings, pottery and other works of art adorned the middle school lobby.



Top Left, Hand drawn student portrait (student artist holding her art). Middle, student pottery. Top Left Right, student collage. Right, various paintings.



PHS AFJROTC present colors at annual Memorial Day event



Poughkeepsie High School's Air Force JROTC cadets were requested to present colors at the Castle Point Memorial Day ceremony, May 18, 2023.

Annually, Castle Point VA Medical Center holds a memorial ceremony in honor of those who have given the ultimate sacrifice, providing an opportunity for local veterans to remember their fallen comrades.

Without error, PHS' AFJROTC color guard presented the colors to all who came together to honor those who have defined what freedom and democracy means to all American citizens and those seeking to become citizens.

PHS AFJROTC cadets present colors at Castle Point's Memorial Day ceremony.



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Upcoming events

- **Monday, May 29:** Memorial Day, schools and offices closed
- **Thursday, June 1:** U.S. History Regents
- **Monday, June 5:** NYS 8th grade Science exam
- **Wednesday, June 7:** Board of Education Regular Meeting, Administrative Building 18 S. Perry Street
- **Friday, June 9:** PHS Awards and Scholarship Night, 6 p.m. PHS auditorium, 70 Forbus St.