

# SUPERINTENDENT'S BRIEF

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

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VOLUME 3



## SABP season concludes with excitement



**Krieger and Morse students watch a free throw.**

The 2021-2022 Student Athletic Basketball Program (SABP) culminated yesterday evening with Krieger Elementary School victorious over Morse Elementary School in the SABP Championship game 26 – 14 at Poughkeepsie High School.

The SABP is an elementary school basketball program provided by the district and city that provides 12 Poughkeepsie City School District elementary students from each school an opportunity to engage in an organized basketball league competing against one another during a 10-week span.

Spearheaded by Council Member Yvonne Flowers and established in 2011, the program provides a positive youth development opportunity for students after school and has served as a way to bring the community

together to support the city's youngest students. SABP was last offered prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Community volunteers support the programming that utilizes PCSD facilities for practice and games. The SABP also provides an opportunity for 12 students from each elementary school to participate as cheerleaders throughout the 10-week season.

The community has been extremely supportive of the games and given the talent displayed throughout yesterday's event, the program has been well received and appreciated by PCSD students.

Yesterday's event began with a Cheer Competition, where the talents of each elementary school's cheerleading team's performance were rated by a group of judges. Morse Elementary School took away top honors. Each of the cheerleading teams were presented with trophies for their performance by Common Council Members Yvonne Flowers, Ward 5; Natasha Cherry, Ward 6; Debra Long, Ward 1; Nedra Patterson Thompson, Ward 7; Lorraine Johnson, Ward 3, and Nathan Shook, Ward 4; and school district representatives Dr. Felicia Watson, PCSD board of education president; Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, superintendent of schools; Mr. Gregory Mott, assistant superintendent of elementary education, and Dr. David Scott, principal of Clinton Elementary School. Mayor Rolison was unable to make it due to a previously scheduled engagement.

The evening's showcase was the interscholastic play between Krieger Elementary School and Morse Elementary School. Coached by Santa Miller and Kenny Herring respectively, each team showed great improvement and talent not seen during the first weeks of the program. The 24-minute competition was primarily dominated by the Krieger Elementary School team but exceptional talent was seen on both teams. That gives reason to anticipate the athletic development of these future Poughkeepsie Middle School and Poughkeepsie High School athletes.

At the conclusion of the Championship Game, Morse Elementary School athletes were presented with trophies for their excellent sportsmanship and talent. Krieger Elementary School athletes were presented with championship rings that prompted wide eyes and smiles when presented to each player.

Certificates of appreciation signed by Mayor Rob Rolison and Dr. Eric Jay Rosser were provided to all volunteers.



## Parents may get data breach notice

Poughkeepsie City School District has been notified that some types of protected student information may have been compromised in the cyberattack on Illuminate Education's applications. There has not been confirmation that any PCSD student's information has been compromised. This is the same breach that affected many New York City schools.

There is no evidence that any information was subject to actual or attempted misuse. No Social Security numbers or financial information were at risk.

The district uses two Illuminate products to track student grades and other data: IO Assessment and Data Driven Classroom. Neither product is for use by the public.

The breach of Illuminate's products and one internal data transfer tool was noticed by Illuminate Jan. 8 and Illuminate took action immediately, notifying law enforcement, securing their systems and starting an investigation of the breach. The investigation concluded March 24, 2022, and determined that certain databases containing potentially protected student information were subject to unauthorized access from Dec. 28, 2021-Jan. 8, 2022. Illuminate has been working to notify the following affected users. PCSD is one of many school districts throughout the nation affected.

As a result of the breach, some PCSD student information may have been compromised.

Such information may include child's name, information about their academics, behavior, enrollment, accommodations, special education and demographics.

Illuminate will be reaching out to parents directly to provide more information. If any PCSD student data was compromised, parents can expect to receive a letter from Illuminate within the next few weeks.

As part of this, Illuminate is offering free access to 12 months of identity monitoring services through IDX, an independent consumer privacy firm, which PCSD suggests parents to obtain.

Parents who have additional questions, should contact Amy Carr, interim director of instructional technology, at [acarr@poughkeepsieschools.org](mailto:acarr@poughkeepsieschools.org).



Oscar Yohel Ceballos-Diaz designed the Warring Elementary School logo (inset) featured on the new shirts.

## Student designs Warring school t-shirt logo

Showing school spirit at Warring Elementary School was made a bit more personal this year as the school held a contest among students to design a shirt featuring the school's mascot, a lion.

Art teacher Kathy Orza said students were invited to draw the mascot and then the entire school voted on the designs which were displayed on the wall (no names were shown). A total of 21 designs were submitted.

"As you can see from the selection of amazing artwork, each student who submitted their design had their own take on what our mascot's face should look like," Orza said.

Second grader Oscar Yohel Ceballos-Diaz's design was chosen as the winner. It features a lion's head and the saying, "Warring school PRIDE Roar." If you didn't know, a group of lions is called a pride.

Asked how long it took him to come up with the design, Ceballos-Diaz held up two fingers, "Two minutes," he said, smiling, adding that he came up with the idea of the saying because lions roar.





**Above left, the 21 student designs submitted as part of the contest. Above right, school staff wear their Warring PRIDE shirts on Fridays to show school spirit.**

Orza said Ceballos-Diaz is very artistic and his design was up against designs from students in grades 2-5. Orza had t-shirts printed up for students and staff and sold them. Every Friday, students and staff don the shirts to show Warring school spirit. All the shirts, but Ceballos-Diaz's are purple with a white lion's head and saying. Ceballos-Diaz's shirt is special because he is the winner and it is reversed, with a purple lion's head and saying on a white shirt.

## PHS grad writes books to educate about rescue dogs

Jason Kraus loved the idea of becoming an FBI or CIA agent when he was younger and attending schools in Poughkeepsie City School District.

So, that's the career he pursued, eventually becoming a special investigator for the U.S. government, doing background checks on people who needed to obtain security clearances. From there, he moved to Ernst & Young where he investigated financial crimes and worked to ensure no money-laundering took place at client banks.

A chance viewing of a Facebook post by his then girlfriend, however, altered his career trajectory.

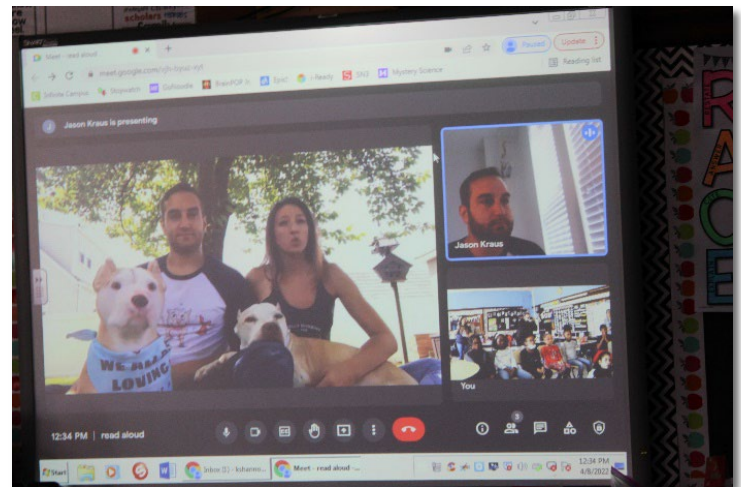
She saw a post about a dog who had thyroid cancer and needed a home for hospice care. "She asked if we could adopt him and I said I'm not home more than one day a week," Kraus said, explaining that he was living in Chicago at the time for work.

But, they adopted Gibson and "he stole my heart and changed everything I had ever heard about pitbulls," he said, adding, "After a couple of months he became like my son."

Sitting on the couch one day with Gibson, Kraus noticed the scars, clipped ears and shaven teeth - signs that the dog had been used in dogfights. "I said to myself, OK, this is never going to stop - the shelters are overcrowded and many dogs have to be put down."

Then something an expert in terrorism while pursuing his master's, popped into his head.

"He said the only thing proven to stop terrorism was education. In this case (with Gibson), where animal abuse/neglect comes from is kids who grow up to adults - it's about education."



**Jason Kraus participates virtually in 2022's Morse Literacy Day.**

After thinking about it for a while, the 6'4" Kraus decided to write a children's book to educate children about the subject. "I was driving home from work and in my head I started writing the book. I got three-quarters of the way through the book by the time I got home and told my wife," he said.

Now, everyone can read about Gibson in two "Belly Rubbins for Bubbins" books.

The first book launched in May 2019 and the day after its release was No. 2 at Barnes and Noble, Kraus said. Since then, he has designed an educational program for schools and conducted in-person or virtual programs in 40 schools throughout the U.S. and reached 6,000 students - including our own Morse Elementary School, where he went. The program teaches about rescue dogs, animal shelters and being kind to animals.

He recalled as a third grader in Poughkeepsie having free creative writing time during which he created his own stories and illustrations. "It was so much fun," he said. He also wrote sports articles for the Pioneer Post before graduating from PHS in 2006. His mother, Lori, teaches in the district.

Kraus encourages students to pursue their interests.

"Anything is possible in the world we live in where information is readily available. If you are willing to put the time and effort in, you can make it happen," he said. "Choose education over entertainment and do things you like."

Kraus lives in South Carolina and when he's not running the company he founded, Design-Build Recruiting, he works on creating partnerships with retailers and getting his books into more schools.

## Girls swim team recognized as epitome of good sports



The girls swim team poses for a photo at the pool.

The Poughkeepsie girls swimming team is making waves in the pool and on the sidelines where they cheer on not only each other, but rival teams as well. This distinction earned them the Section I Good Sportsmanship award.

Poughkeepsie Girls Swimming Coach Galen Franchek said the girls should be acknowledged for the hard work they've put in to keep the swim program afloat.

They encourage each other to do well, no matter their athletic ability, and they are an inspiration to younger students.

"There's no one that feels out of place," Franchek said. "I want this team to leave a legacy as long as they have that pool and that the school keeps it going."

This generous spirit extends to teams they compete against, who are often taken aback by their kindness. Franchek knows that even if the girls don't win, they know they did their best.

"Our girls are genuinely so kind," the coach said. "It is about sportsmanship."

Franchek appreciates the support her team - and the district's other sports teams - receive from the athletic department and administration, including PCSD Superintendent Dr. Eric J. Rosser.

"They truly do support us, there's a lot of applause," Franchek said. "The leadership in the school district has helped with making the team stronger."



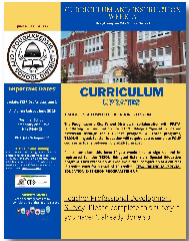
Senior Rosa Celaya-Luis also appreciates the administrative support, especially from PHS Principal Kelleyann Royce-Giron who attended many meets.

"That felt really good because your principal makes time for you," Celaya-Luis said. "We have support from everyone."

While it is great that the team got the award and won competitions, Celaya-Luis believes having fun outshines everything else.

"Life is short, so enjoy it," she said. "If you lose, then you know you have each other."

After swimming for two years, Celaya-Luis loved the team's atmosphere and Franchek, who she went to for support. "Honestly, that's my other mom," Celaya-Luis said of Franchek. "Once you join a sport, you become a whole family."



## CI Weekly: TESOL/Bilingual/Special Education extension

The Poughkeepsie City School District and Poughkeepsie Public Schools Teacher Association are offering to pay tuition for teachers to obtain TESOL/Bilingual/Special Education extensions. Find the link as well as photos from moving up ceremonies in the district and a link to a professional development survey inside. Download [C&I Weekly #38](#).

## Eighth graders celebrate move to PHS

Poughkeepsie Middle School eighth graders are making the move to Poughkeepsie High School following a recognition ceremony Thursday evening at Poughkeepsie High School.

The event began with a processional into the auditorium followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and singing of the National Anthem.

Principal Joe Mazzetti welcomed students and guests and asked Assemblyman Jonathan Jacobson, Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, superintendent of schools, and Dr. Charles Gallo,



assistant superintendent of secondary education, to say a few words before the Poughkeepsie Public School Teachers' Association gave out 10 awards and 48 students received academic outstanding achievement awards, Mazzetti said. The 177 8<sup>th</sup> grade students moving up received a certificate of recognition.

Congratulations Class of 2026, you did it!

At left, Principal Joe Mazzetti welcomes attendees to the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Recognition Ceremony. At top, Assemblyman Jonathan Jacobson speaks to PMS eighth graders and their parents/guardians.

## Upcoming events

June 25<sup>th</sup> – **Poughkeepsie High School Graduation**

Location: Poughkeepsie Athletic Complex • Time: 6 p.m.

June 27<sup>th</sup> – **Poughkeepsie High School summer school registration**

Location: PHS • Time: 9-11 a.m. seniors and juniors; 12:30-2:30 p.m. sophomores and freshmen

July 1 – **PCSD Board of Education reorganizational meeting**

Location: Administration Building, 18 South Perry St., • Time: 8 a.m.