Restrooms, roofs get capital treatment

High School and ELC students will return to improved restrooms thanks to the capital improvement project voters approved in fall 2020. Work began this summer to repair and make improvements to about half the restrooms at PHS, restrooms at the Early Learning Center and roof projects at Poughkeepsie High School, Poughkeepsie Middle School, Warring Elementary School and Krieger Elementary School. Boiler work is also being done at PMS, Warring, Clinton, Morse and the ELC under the project.

Gabrielle Marcigliano, project manager for Triton Construction, said restroom work at PHS will be completed before school starts - including the addition of a new restroom located off the weight room. While supply chain issues are causing delays for some work, other items arrived early, allowing work to continue. One example is the tiles for the PHS restrooms, which arrived 1½ weeks early.

“We were able to start that. We’re gaining in some areas,” she said, adding, “I have no major concerns at this point.”

While materials were delayed for portions of the PHS’ roof work, Marcigliano said that those areas where materials are delayed patch work to fix leaks until the project can be completed next year.

The boilers scheduled for replacement this summer won’t be available until October, but that hasn’t stopped work to replace them from beginning, Marcigliano said.

“All the demolition and abatement work is done and we’re running pipe over the summer,” she said. As soon as the boilers arrive, they’ll be installed at PMS, Warring, Clinton, Morse, Krieger and ELC.

City, District share bilingual position

Poughkeepsie City School District Superintendent Dr. Eric Jay Rosser and City of Poughkeepsie Mayor Rob Rolison announced today the hiring of L. Julee Molina as a bilingual Public Information Officer, a new shared position between the school district and the city.

Molina brings with her considerable experience, having served as communications and marketing manager in various capacities. She is a former Communications Manager at RUPCO, Marketing Manager at Gasko & Meyer Inc., and Communications Manager at the Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce.

In this new position, Molina will be a liaison for the school district and City government with the Latino
Together, We are Champions for Children in Poughkeepsie City School District
www.poughkeepsieschools.org

Community. She will help prepare informational materials, and will meet and participate with various community organizations working on projects throughout the city.

“We have identified this as an extremely important position for the school district. For the past several years the number of Spanish speaking students has increased; it is important as a parent and community engagement strategy that we continue to transform the district to be able to meet the needs of the City’s growing Latino community,” said Dr. Rosser. “We are excited to bring Julee on board and believe this is another positive step in developing our partnerships with all members of the community.”

Dr. Rosser pointed out that of the more than 4,100 students enrolled in the School District, 38 percent are Hispanic or Latino, and 8 percent are multiracial.

Mayor Rolison said, “Having more Spanish-speaking staff has obvious benefits, and, in this case, we have been able to work with the school district to create a position that focuses on a growing population. Building trust in all our communities is essential to carrying out our work as public servants.”

The Mayor said working with the school district to solve longstanding challenges has been one of his priorities as mayor.

In 2020, Mayor Rolison and Superintendent Rosser created the Poughkeepsie Children’s Cabinet that includes college presidents, nonprofit partners, philanthropic and foundation members, community stakeholders and others. These decision makers, leaders and community representatives have come together to work to improve the lives of youth and families in the city. The Cabinet was formed in recognition of the fact that children spend 80 percent of their time out of the classroom and in the broader community.

Molina said, “I am eager to start this position, and I am grateful the school district and the city government have identified this need and are looking for creative ways to address the Latino/Hispanic communities we serve.”

A public “meet and greet” event with Molina and other school and city officials will be scheduled for September.

The public can reach Molina at 845-451-4241, email lwhalin@cityofpoughkeepsie.com or lmolina@poughkeepsieschools.org

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**Pre-kindergarten program expands, registration open**

Poughkeepsie City School District’s full day pre-K program is expanding in 2022-23 to help meet the needs of the community and registration is ongoing. Visit poughkeepsieschools.org/registration to begin the process.

With the district’s new partner, the Boys & Girls Club of Poughkeepsie, classes will be offered at the club, 221 Smith St. and at the Early Learning Center, 372 Church St. A total of nine classes will be able to accommodate about 152 students, Director of Elementary Education Janet Bisti said.

“The Boys & Girls Club is getting licensed for five classrooms so we can expand the total number of students,” she said, adding that a second request for proposal has been put out, “so we may have even more spaces.”

Last year there was a waiting list for the seven classes.

Bisti said class sizes are being kept to 18 or less.

Scholastic’s “PreK On My Way” curriculum will be utilized at both locations.

“PreK teachers are working this summer to align the curriculum with state standards and training for new and existing teachers - including a bilingual specialist for the dual language program - will begin in September,” she said.
ELC Principal Nadine Elting-Dargan encourages parents of pre-K and kindergarten students to get them registered as soon as possible.
“This is my first full school year at ELC. It will be an interesting challenge to see our youngest students come in - some with no experience at school and others with very little. I’m excited to travel the journey with them,” she said.

Elting-Dargan is joined by Assistant Principal Paul Weir, who will be at the school three days per week.

New to the ELC in 2022-23 will be the pre-K/K dual language program, an Innovation Lab and an expansion of the Mindful Mornings program which helps students develop social and academic skills.

Bisti said the goal is to expand the Mindful Mornings into Mindful Afternoons as well, with hour-long sessions to reach more students.

Families new to the district are invited to the Bridges to Poughkeepsie event Aug. 13 from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at the athletic field across from Poughkeepsie High School, 70 Forbus St., in addition to an orientation that will take place sometime in August, Bisti said.

One final note to parents and guardians on registration is that Central Registration has moved from Poughkeepsie High School to the Columbus Administration building, 18 South Perry St. Call 845-437-3480 for information.

**PHS students help pilot National Park Service archeology program**

Three Poughkeepsie High School students are part of a pilot program designed to help the National Park Service monitor and identify threats to archaeological resources at National Historic Sites. They will also help develop training for future volunteers.

Joshua Armstrong, Kevin Hernandez-Gomez, and Malika Oszip are working on projects in the region with the National Park Service’s Urban Archeology Corps (UAC).

A shortage of resources to monitor archaeological resources in our nation’s parks brought about this opportunity for nine Dutchess County students. Students work for three weeks doing field work at a number of locations in the area, all designed to help support our parks and teach students about archaeology. During that time, they learn about cultural resources, site management and preservation in the National Parks, receive instruction on basic excavation techniques and use their newfound skills in field work and to monitor and document archaeological site conditions and disturbances.

“The goal is to bring underrepresented youth without a great deal of experience with national parks into our parks,” said Claire Horn, who works at the Public Archaeology Facility at Binghamton University and oversees the two college interns who supervise the high school students. The UAC is partnering with Binghamton on the project.

On July 19, the UAC students (including Armstrong, Hernandez-Gomez and Oszip - all juniors) were at the Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site seeking evidence of the original rose arbor that led from the garden to FDR’s home, Jacob Bouffard, one of two Binghamton University graduate students overseeing the interns said.

Students carefully created a square hole that at first was only 10 centimeters deep and then got deeper as the day wore on. They were looking for post molds, a dark circular stain that could indicate that is where a wooden post had been located. Bouffard, fellow B.U. student Kristin Clyne-Lehmann and Rachel Bowen, a
National Park Service archaeologist, oversaw the work, offered suggestions, techniques and encouragement. The work reinforced skills learned in school such as measuring, geometry, writing and following directions. Students also got to tour a variety of historic sites and learn about them.

The field work could help inform the Park Service about the actual location of the rose arbor as they seek to put in a historically accurate recreation, Bouffard said. By day’s end, they had found what they were looking for and that information will be submitted to NPS. Oszip and Hernandez-Gomez had never been to a national park before this program.

“I always liked archaeology and I wanted to experience participating in some of the things an archaeologist would do,” Oszip said about why she applied for the internship.

Hernandez-Gomez said he applied so he could visit sites, learn and do something with friends for the summer.

Later in the week, students traveled to the Martin Van Buren National Historical Site where they were tasked with exploring the trash middens (piles of trash that decomposed) to see if they could locate non-Native American items from the historical period, Bouffard said. Other projects are located at the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historical Site and Vanderbilt Mansion National Historical Site. Though only at the midpoint, the program has already had an impact on students. Armstrong said he had been unaware of the dangers that exist at some sites.

“For example, there are some brick walls that are falling apart and animals are burrowing underneath,” he said.

Learning about what archaeologists deem disturbances and how to deal with them is one thing that struck Oszip.

“It makes you appreciate history more because you see things (vandalism) happen to historic places. We need to preserve them so other generations can learn from it,” she said.

Clyne-Lehmann said the pilot is “going very well so far.” Students took quickly to the Volunteer Archaeological Monitoring Program (VAMP) process at the start of the program and she was looking forward to having the students discuss the program in the projects they turn in at the end.

“Their experience will help other people in a tangible way,” she said.

Students’ end projects will be used to help NPS staff design a volunteer archaeological monitoring framework for use in parks throughout the North Atlantic Appalachian region.

And, since it is a paid internship, the students will each receive $15 an hour for up to 120 hours of work, so they can have some spending money for the rest of the summer or money for college.

“If people have a spirit of volunteerism and want to help the parks, the VAMP program provides an easily understood and fun way to help the parks,” Clyne-Lehmann said.

## Bridges event welcomes families to district

It’s always challenging when you move to a new area or enter a school. That’s why the Poughkeepsie City School District created an event to help acclimate people to the district.

“This year, the district is excited to welcome more than 450 new families,” Executive Director of Community Schools Natasha Cherry said. The second annual Bridges to Poughkeepsie is set for Saturday, Aug. 13, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the district Athletic Field across from Poughkeepsie High School, 70 Forbus St. This event, for families with children in grades pre-K through 8, will connect attendees with the district’s family advocates and other resources available to them in the community.
“This is a pre-orientation event,” Cherry said. “Attendees will have the opportunity to meet district staff, learn about our community schools and the internal and community-based supports.”

There will be family bonding activities and information about attendance, school orientations, school bus schedules, upcoming job fairs and the Parent Empowerment Center will be provided.

Plus, there will be plenty of fun and food. Free school supplies, including backpacks, will be provided and there will be a free barbecue lunch and the Poughkeepsie Farm Project will be distributing vegetables.

Summer provides leaders time for professional development

Poughkeepsie City School District leadership spent a week in July at a Central Office Retreat designed to help build the team and look ahead to the coming school year.

The retreat, held at the Henry A. Wallace Center at the FDR Presidential Library and Home in Hyde Park provided time for discussion about leading change, gave members of departments time to talk to each other and then meet with other departments to see how they might work together to help the district reach its goals and objectives.

There was discussion and training about Multi-tiered Systems and Supports, Change Management, and other department-specific sessions.

Separately, Director of Special Projects Kris Giangreco was among regional leaders who participated in a Harvard University conference on Children’s Cabinets. City of Poughkeepsie leadership also attended the Harvard Conference, as the Poughkeepsie Children’s Cabinet is co-chaired by Superintendent Dr. Eric Jay Rosser and Mayor Rob Rolison.

At the Summer Retreat for Harvard’s By All Means initiative, the conference brought together Children’s Cabinet teams from a select group of communities nationwide, including Oakland, California; Louisville, Kentucky; and Providence, Rhode Island.

Poughkeepsie is one of only nine communities nationwide that have been accepted into the Harvard initiative, which provides support to mayors, superintendents and community leaders building Children’s Cabinets.

Speakers at the conference included national leaders and practitioners from organizations such as StriveTogether; Results for America; Harlem Children’s Zone; and the Children’s Funding Project — as well as prominent Harvard faculty including Professors Paul Reville (former Secretary of Education for Massachusetts) and Cornell William Brooks (former President and CEO of the NAACP).

“We learned a tremendous amount. The national organizations and our peer communities highlighted proven, evidence-based programs that we’re eager to explore further for Poughkeepsie,” said City Administrator Nelson.

“There is clearly a national movement growing around Children’s Cabinets and, as a member of this select group at Harvard, we have an incredible opportunity to benefit from a wealth of resources, connections and supports.”

**Upcoming events**

**Saturday, Aug. 13:** Bridges to Poughkeepsie, Athletic Field, 70 Forbus St.

**Thursday, Sept. 8:** School resumes

**Saturday, Sept. 10:** Back to School Bash