Families enjoy Bridge 2 Poughkeepsie event

Children played games and jumped around in bounce houses while parents learned about programs, services and resources available to them during Saturday’s second annual Bridge 2 Poughkeepsie event.

Designed to introduce families new to Poughkeepsie to all that is offered directly by the district or through its many community partners, the event featured two bounce houses, a DJ, tattoo artist, bubble table and tables from 28 community-based organizations and several from the district. There was also food, popcorn and refreshments.

Every child attending also received a backpack filled with school supplies and books, courtesy of the Marist Liberty Partnership and Staples.

Event coordinator Julie Maserjian, who works in the Community Schools department, said it took about four months to pull the event together.

“Everything is free for the families,” she said.

According to Natasha Cherry, executive director of community schools, about 450 new families registered children for school this year. About 350 attended the event.

“This is like a new family orientation where we talk about the district and let them know about all the programs, services and resources they can take advantage of,” Cherry said, adding that the Early Learning Center had the largest concentration of new families, likely because of the expanded full-day pre-kindergarten program.

Luis Maces graduated from Poughkeepsie High School in 2016 and attended the event with his nephew, Dylan Alonzo, and Alonzo’s grandmother, Irene Garcia.

“They just started a new dual language program and that is something I didn’t have. It is a pretty good program for him because it is bilingual so he has a better experience learning,” Maces said.

Alonzo enjoyed playing a ring toss game at the dual language program booth but was more excited about getting to the bounce house across the field.

Sabrina Brown spent time coloring a butterfly at one of the booths. She said her favorite colors are blue, pink and purple. She even held up a necklace with a sand-filled charm in those colors.

“My dad helped me make it,” she said, pointing to Everton Brown who was standing behind her.

For Melodie and Kamal Minus, the day was exciting as it was their chance to introduce Mack Minus to school.

“Mack is very ready to learn,” Melodie Minus said, adding, “I’m very excited to see what projects they get into and how Mack learns.”
Thank you to everyone who showed up to learn about the district and support our students. Together, we are the champions for children in Poughkeepsie City School District!

**Board sets objectives for coming year**

During the annual Board of Education Retreat this summer, the Board of Education and Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, superintendent of schools solidified the 22-23 Performance Objectives, which will be used to advance the goals of the 5 year strategic plan on improving student outcomes.

A few of the new performance objectives this year are:

- Revised and new curriculum adoption.
- Expanding Arts Education programming K-12.
- Increasing student social emotional supports districtwide.
- Implementation of a Dual Language Program at ELC (K-1).
- Extending athletic opportunities for students with exceptionalities (i.e. basketball, bowling, tennis, track).
- Developing Mindfulness/Sensory Rooms in 3 PCSD buildings.
- Upgrading student furniture as part of the district’s 4 year student furniture restoration plan.
- Developing and implementing a staffing lattice model that provides internal mobility for employees.
- Establishing Community School liaison positions in each elementary school.
- Developing college and career readiness standards and expanding activity for grades 6-12.
- Increasing programming through Community School programming.
- Installing new interactive boards in instructional spaces.
- Finalizing collective bargaining agreements with PPSAA, PPSTA, PPSPA.
- Expanding community partnerships.

This year’s performance objectives, which amount to more than 150, are designed to continue the forward momentum of the transformational efforts of the Poughkeepsie City School District. Quarterly, Dr. Rosser will provide updates to the Board of Education and community on the district’s progress in achieving each objective. View all the 22-23 performance objectives.

**Maintenance team makes districtwide improvements**

While many people may think all school staff take off for the summer, Poughkeepsie City School District Facilities Director Marcos Rodriguez and his team have been working hard to give the buildings a much needed facelift.

At Poughkeepsie Middle School, drop ceilings and new lighting were installed in the hallways and cafeteria, while one of the basement wings was abated for asbestos and received new flooring and ceiling work.

The duct work in both the PMS’ gym and auditorium received a new coat of paint and a thorough cleaning. Visible amounts of dirt along the sides of the vents at the auditorium caused concerns.

“People were thinking it was mold,” Rodriguez said. “It was just dirt from so many years of not cleaning the ducts.”

Poughkeepsie High School’s gym and the ceiling of its auditorium were also cleaned extensively, while new flooring was laid down on the second story and new carpeting was installed in the library. The Early Learning Center also received new flooring and Krieger is anticipated to receive minor flooring work.
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“Flooring is pretty much never ending,” Rodriguez explained. “You have to keep on them.”

In Clinton Elementary School’s music room, waterproofing and drywalling are occurring, while fencing is being constructed to close off the field at Krieger and at ELC around the dumpsters.

Further work includes transitioning the lighting from fluorescent to LED, as well as installing new ceiling grids and unit ventilators which will help with air quality. “The idea is to have the air quality much improved to what it is right now,”

Rodriguez said regarding the unit ventilators.

Rodriguez said that every grant and source of available funding is being used. For Rodriguez and his team, it is vital to complete the work without interrupting students’ learning. “The students are always the number one priority,” Rodriguez said. “We try to do everything behind the scenes.”

While the work can be challenging at times, Rodriguez noted that it is all for the good of the district. “It’s always worth it when you see the improvement and you see things headed in the right direction,” he said.

Superintendent panel discusses preparing students for future jobs

Wednesday, August 17, 2022, four Dutchess County superintendents were invited to serve as panelists at the Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce to provide information and remarks on how the respective school districts are helping today’s students find tomorrow’s jobs.


Each panelist outlined the importance of school districts’ efforts to connect their students to in-school opportunities to be prepared for career opportunities beyond high school graduation.

Dr. Rosser shared the framework for the Poughkeepsie City School District’s Pathways Transformation Initiative, highlighting the progress that the Pathways Transformation Taskforce has made in the identification of career pathways that K-12 students would have access to explore as part of instructional and programmatic delivery. The aforementioned career pathways were identified, in part by a student and parent survey that yielded the following occupational areas by order of interest: Arts, Health Sciences, Business and Entrepreneurship, Computer Science, Communications, Construction and Trades, Human and Public Service, Aviation & Engineering, Hospitality & Tourism and Manufacturing.

Several local businesses and organizations expressed interest in supporting the initiative. “Community partnerships will serve as a backbone not only to the implementation of the initiative but also to the establishment of the initiatives foundation, Rosser said responding to a question about the need for community partnerships.” The Taskforce is comprised of Dutchess BOCES, Dutchess Community College, Marist, Family Services, Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce, IBM, Poughkeepsie Alliance, Poughkeepsie Children’s Cabinet, Catskill Hudson Area Health Education Centers, CPL and Triton Construction. Dr. Rosser shared that Wednesday’s presentation yielded additional community partners that will be added as members of the Taskforce this September. Learn more about the Pathways Transformation Taskforce here.

Upcoming events

Tuesday, Sept. 6, Faculty and staff report back

Wednesday, Sept. 7, BOE meeting, Administration Building, 18 S. Perry St., 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, Sept. 8: School resumes

Saturday, Sept. 10: Back to School Bash, PHS Track and Field, 70 Forbus St., 12-3 p.m.