

SUPERINTENDENT'S BRIEF

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

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VOLUME 5



Students, staff welcome return to school



Joanna Sullivan's first grade class at Clinton Elementary School show excitement after reciting the last of three class rules, "Have fun," on the first day of classes, Thursday, Sept. 7, 2023.

[SEE MORE PHOTOS ONLINE](#)

the school. "One, two, three, eyes on me," Yolanda Wright, the assistant principal said from the front of the room. "One, two, eyes on you," the group of students responded. Wright explained that if they hear that expression it means they should stop what they are doing, pay attention and respond.

Clinton Elementary School's Joanna Sullivan, who is teaching first grade for the first time this year, had three simple rules in her class: "Be fair. Be safe. Have Fun!"

Students in Sonia Brown's third grade class spent part of the afternoon creating their own "First Day of 3rd Grade" headbands which they colored and cut out.

"Today was exciting because I learned new things," student Angel Ortiz said, adding that he is excited about math.

Krieger Elementary School's new principal Carolyn Fields said a life skills orientation was held with parents between 9-10 a.m. She visited Michele Mancuso's 4th grade class as they were working on an "All About Me" assignment to help Mancuso and their classmates get to know them.

"Reading is probably my favorite subject," said Carley Wood, adding that the Junie B. Jones book series was her top pick. She looks forward to "making some more friends."

Superintendent Dr. Eric Jay Rosser spent the morning and part of the afternoon visiting each school building to welcome staff back, check on construction work completed over the summer, and support administrators with opening day tasks. To help first graders learn how to get around the school, Warring Elementary School Principal Nicole Penn and her team put together a scavenger hunt for the classes. They posted stickers on key rooms/locations around the building and classes walked the halls seeking them out.

From the youngest students to the oldest, Poughkeepsie City School District students returned to classes September 7, 2023 at all seven schools.

"I'm looking forward to playing with friends," kindergartner I'yarah Wells said after exiting the bus at the Early Learning Center and being met by her mother, Ivorey and sister, I'yahna. She also liked her backpack, which was pink and had "LOVE" in blue glitter stitched to it.

Mom, Ivorey, said she is looking for I'yarah, "to grow, learn and meet new friends. She's very excited to meet new children her age." Common among many schools and classes was starting instruction and establishing expectations.

At Morse Elementary School, for example, first and second graders gathered in the cafetorium to review the expectations of



I'yarah Wells (front) is excited about her first day of kindergarten at the Early Learning Center at Smith School on the first day of classes, Thursday, Sept. 7, 2023. She is escorted from the bus by her sister and PHS graduate, I'yahna, and her mother (back), Ivorey.

Secondary schools

At Poughkeepsie Middle School and Poughkeepsie High School, students moved through halls and, for those who needed help finding their way, there was a student, monitor or teacher there to help guide them. Seventh grader Oriah Morgan said her first day as a seventh grader at PMS, "has been good. The teachers are nice." Asked what classes she liked, she said math "I like the teacher, he is nice and we watched a video today" and Home and Careers, "cooking is my favorite," she said. PMS' Home and Careers classroom underwent a total renovation over the summer, with new cabinets, flooring, ceiling and appliances installed.

Interim Principal Robert Parkes praised everyone for a good first day back. "The staff has been outstanding, welcoming our scholars back and our scholars are doing a great job entering in the morning and jumped right into the classrooms and are working with the teachers on learning."

Tenth grader Bryan Antonio said the first day back went better than last year's first day.

"It was pretty relaxed and they didn't put a lot on us the first day - they just talked to us about what we were going to do this year," he said.

"I'm looking forward to all my classes and learning new things," he said, adding that English is his favorite class.

Principal Phee Simpson said she was, "looking forward to a productive school year. It started well and I hope it ends well."



Above, PMS students enjoy a break for lunch on the first day of classes, Thursday, Sept. 7, 2023. Left, Bryan Antonio, a tenth grader at PHS is "looking forward to all of his classes and learning new things" this year.

Board receives opening of school update



On the evening before the first day of school for district students, Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, superintendent of schools, provided the Board of Education and community with the annual opening of school update. The update covered the academic and social emotional supports that will be provided to PCSD students this school year. Rosser noted that the same level of supports that were infused into the menu of existing supports a year ago would still be in place with additional supports being added for this year. He spoke about Ampact, a new evidence-based academic support at the ELC and elementary

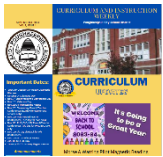
schools that will provide greater supports to the district's struggling students. He also talked about the increased arts programming at the ELC (previously students had access to a part-time art teacher, this year a full-time art teacher is budgeted), increased career technical education seats at BOCES for high school students, and upgraded student furniture in many of the schools.

Rosser provided updates on the district's \$3 million Smart Bond Safety and Security Plan noting that the plan was approved this summer and work is underway to further strengthen the district's security and safety posture. His update on the Strong Schools Equal Strong Communities Capital Improvement Project highlighted the more than \$20 million in facility upgrades that have been made this summer, with some of the projects continuing into the fall.

He concluded his presentation by noting that the district's advancements in providing innovative, high-quality educational opportunities that prepare all students to achieve success in and out of the classroom can be largely attributed to the district's [5-year strategic plan](#). He referenced examples of the ['23-'24 Performance Objectives](#) that will be goals for this year. [View the '23-'24 Opening of Schools presentation](#). Prior to the start of the meeting, some members of the teacher's union assembled to express their concerns about entering into a sixth year without an updated contract. Judge Thomas O'Neill, board of education president, issued a statement prior to the meeting to local media stating "Union labor contracts are not always easily resolved. The inability to reach an agreement is not an indication that the Poughkeepsie City School District is not extremely interested in finalizing a successor agreement with those that are recognized by the teacher's union."

As a result of BOTH sides being unable to reach an agreement, an "impasse" has been declared and a New York State Public Employee Relations Board mediator has been appointed. The first mediation session is scheduled to commence on September 19, 2023.

Both sides are hopeful and optimistic that with the assistance of a trained mediator, an agreement will be reached."



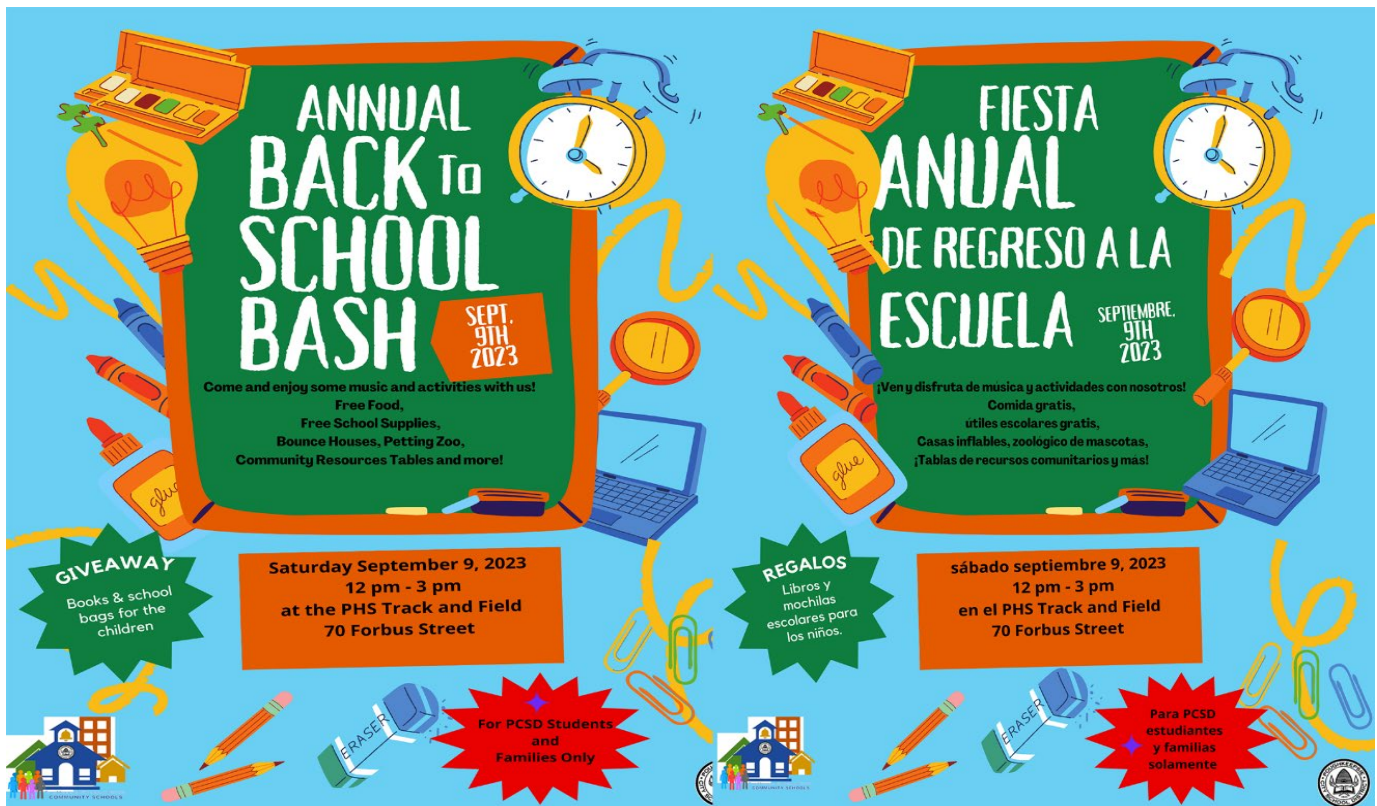
CI Weekly: Morse, Warring pilot new reading program

Third through fifth graders at Morse and Warring elementary schools are piloting a new reading curriculum, Magnetic Reading, this year. Learn more about it and gain insight into classroom management. Download the [CI Weekly for Sept. 8, 2023](#).

Upcoming events

Saturday, Sept. 9: Back to School Bash, 12-3 p.m., PHS Track and Field, 70 Forbus St.

Sunday, Sept. 10: Free public ice skating, McCann Ice Arena, 14 Civic Center Plaza. Pre-registration required. Call 845-454-5800.



ANNUAL BACK TO SCHOOL BASH
SEPT. 9TH 2023
Come and enjoy some music and activities with us!
Free Food,
Free School Supplies,
Bounce Houses, Petting Zoo,
Community Resources Tables and more!

GIVEAWAY
Books & school bags for the children

Saturday September 9, 2023
12 pm - 3 pm
at the PHS Track and Field
70 Forbus Street

For PCSD Students and Families Only

FIESTA ANUAL DE REGRESO A LA ESCUELA
SEPTIEMBRE 9TH 2023
¡Ven y disfruta de música y actividades con nosotros!
Comida gratis,
útiles escolares gratis,
Casas inflables, zoológico de mascotas,
¡Tablas de recursos comunitarios y más!

REGALOS
Libros y mochilas escolares para los niños.

sábado septiembre 9, 2023
12 pm - 3 pm
en el PHS Track and Field
70 Forbus Street

Para PCSD estudiantes y familias solamente