

SUPERINTENDENT'S BRIEF

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

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Marist partnership serves students well



Earlier this week district officials met with Marist Liberty Partnership Program officials to discuss the outcome data for the 2022-23 academic year and how collaboratively both organizations can strengthen their impact on PCSD students this current academic year.

Present at the meeting were Dr. Charles Gallo, assistant superintendent of secondary education; Robert Parkes, principal of Poughkeepsie Middle School; Crystal Purfield, Marist Liberty Partnership Program director; and Dwayne Douglas, Marist Liberty Partnership Program assistant director. Established in 1990 and serving as one of 51 across New York, the Marist Liberty Partnership Program (LPP) is a dropout prevention college access program funded by the New York State Department of Education. Across New York, Liberty Partnership Programs offer comprehensive pre-collegiate/dropout prevention programs and services to youth in urban,

rural and suburban communities of Western New York, Finger Lakes, Central New York, Southern Tier, North Country, Mohawk Valley, Capital District, Mid-Hudson Valley, NYC and Long Island.

Last academic year, Marist LPP serviced approximately 399 5th-12th grade PCSD students through virtual and in-person programming and events including, but not limited to:

- After school and summer programming.
- Monthly virtual cooking classes.
- Monthly Family Advisory Board meetings
- Virtual Follow Us to Success mentoring workshops.
- Fall art classes.
- Field trips.
- College Tours.
- Student Advocacy Day.
- Parent painting workshop.
- Junior college prep workshop.
- Empire Youth Summit.
- Marist Pre-College Program.
- Summer middle and high school Transition Program.
- Digital Literacy Leadership Program.

Programming leveraged partnerships with other Hudson Valley and New York community-based organizations. Marist LPP provided a total of 3,260 hours of academic intervention, 3,353 hours of mentoring, 889 hours of family and community engagement and 335 hours of college readiness activities. This equates to PCSD students receiving an average of 34 hours of service throughout the year.

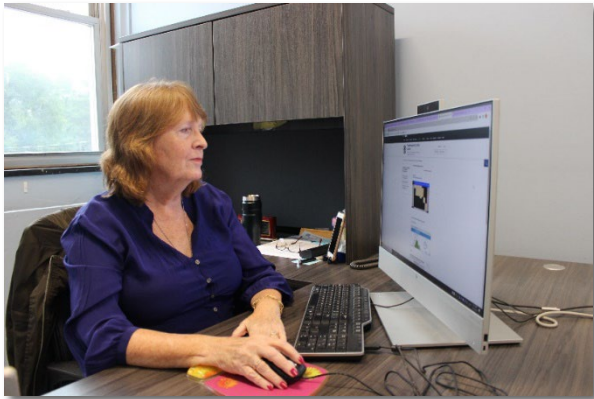
Marist LPP continues to be a staple in the menu of community partners providing meaningful academic, social-emotional, college and career readiness and positive youth development options to PCSD youth. This past year, 100 percent of the seniors participating in the program graduated from high school, which fulfills the goal of the program. PCSD students who participate in Marist LPP are eligible for a 50 percent tuition reduction scholarship upon admittance. I've had the privilege of working with collegiate institutions providing the Liberty Partnership Program both in Buffalo, NY, and here in Poughkeepsie. The leadership of



PMS Principal Robert Parkes, Dwayne Douglas, Marist Liberty Partnership program assistant director; Crystal Purfield, Marist Liberty Partnership program director and Dr. Charles Gallo, assistant superintendent of secondary education, discuss results of the program.



both institutions understood the value in a PK-12 - collegiate relationship. The individual and collective student outcomes speak for themselves. The Liberty Partnership Program is of tremendous value to school districts committed to changing the trajectory of student success in and out of school," said Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, superintendent of schools.



Lisa Spencer-Perry, executive director of strategic planning and resource stewardship, looks at some of the data available on the district's website.

New department helps data make difference

Lisa Spencer-Perry always wanted to make a difference in people's lives.

Poughkeepsie City School District's executive director of strategic planning and resource stewardship, started out pursuing a career in social work but found work in the corporate world as a programmer, corporate trainer and in communications and sales.

"I enjoyed providing customer support and training in the corporate sector, but longed for something more meaningful," Spencer-Perry said. "I care deeply about

students. I originally thought I wanted to be a social worker, but ultimately determined education was the best way to support youngsters in having the best life possible."

Spencer-Perry has worked in education for 19 years. Prior positions include serving as chief information officer and data coordinator in the East Ramapo Central School District, director of instructional technology and science in Yonkers, as well as working as a teacher in both general and special education settings. Her role in Poughkeepsie is key to the district's success. "Data is essential for educational institutions as it provides a lens that supports progress through monitoring and analysis," she said.

In her first year, Spencer-Perry aims to improve systems, operations and organizational effectiveness and data compliance. She is currently reviewing student, staff and compliance data to ensure it is valid, timely and complete for the district and reporting purposes.

Spencer-Perry was drawn to the district after speaking with Superintendent Dr. Eric Jay Rosser. "His vision and systematic approach to improving the district - it is one of my areas of strength and interest," she said. The people she met during the process also made an impact.

"I find it is most important to work with people of integrity, who care deeply about students and improving their education."

She saw the people as one of PCSD's strengths. "The creative and dedicated approach of the staff, and the students - working together we can do great things," she said.

Among the areas she wants to develop at the district include data quality and integrity and increasing the ease of access to data and information, something she has already begun with the launch of the [Strategic Planning and Resource Stewardship page](#).

After work, Spencer-Perry enjoys spending time with family and friends, traveling locally - especially to sites of historical, artistic and musical interest - and reading on the back porch with her cat and dog while watching the birds.

City honors students who created tournament

The City of Poughkeepsie proclaimed July 23 an annual day of celebration and recognition for two current and one former Poughkeepsie Middle School students who created a summer basketball tournament at Malcolm X Park.

Seventh grader William Long and sixth grader Tai'er Amir Dancy were just looking for more summer activities and had played basketball together in the CYO league.

"It was just us making a team with people we know," Long said. But then their friend, Se'Maj Amir Higgs found out. "He said, 'Let's make it bigger, I can make a poster.'"

The tournament, for youth ages 10-13, took off. They began collecting \$1 per player to help pay for jerseys and snacks and began the task of organizing and creating teams. Soon they were up to 50 players. Another 30 showed up the day of the tournament and all were able to play.

Long said learning teamwork in school helped them with the tournament. "It was hard work and stressful," he said, as Dancy added, "People wanted to pay less or didn't want to pay. We let them in any way."

Councilmember Yvonne Flowers worked with fellow councilmember Lorraine Johnson and Brian Laffin of the City Parks Department to help make the tournament a reality.

Dancy's grandfather volunteered to make food and his father, Troy assisted with the tournament along with Higgs' father, James. Two referees also volunteered time and parents helped pay for snacks and food.

Together, the work of the adults and youth, "exemplifies the power of community collaboration," the proclamation says. It also states, "the City of Poughkeepsie extend our heartfelt congratulations and deepest gratitude to William Long Jr., Se'Maj Amir Higgs and Tai'er Amir Dancy for their remarkable efforts in organizing this tournament and for their dedication to improving our community."

Higgs, Long and Dancy said they plan to do the tournament again and even spoke about making the July 23 tournament an annual event.

"We want to do it again, maybe in winter and try to get a gym," Long said.

Next year's tournament will expand, to allow children ages 10-15 so it can capture the students who played in this past summer's tournament as well.

"We got an award from the mayor and that is something and I got to do it with my friends," Long said about the honor.

Dancy said the one lesson he took away from the experience is, "you can't do it by yourself."



Students Se'Maj Amir Higgs, William Long Jr. and Tai'er Amir Dancy hold their proclamations at Monday's City of Poughkeepsie Common Council meeting with James Higgs and Troy Dancy.



CI Weekly: Resources for Hispanic Heritage month

National Hispanic Heritage Month is Sept. 15-Oct. 15 and celebrates Americans who have ancestry in countries that speak Spanish. This week's edition features a link with activities suitable for classroom use and the Elevating Success section features an article on "Formative Assessment in Seven Good Moves." Download [CI Weekly for Sept. 23, 2023](#).

Upcoming events:

- **Saturday, Sept. 23:** Boys & Girls Club of Poughkeepsie Community Day, 12-4 p.m., 221 Smith St.
 - PHS Pioneer football vs. Ramapo, 2 p.m., PHS Sports Complex, 70 Forbus St. (Rain or shine)
 Admission \$2 adults, \$1 students. NOTE: No backpacks will be allowed inside.
- **Monday, Sept 25:** Yom Kippur
- **Saturday, Sept. 30:** Vassar Brothers Medical Center Community Health Day (free screenings and services, winter clothing, school supplies and more), 11 a.m.-4 p.m. at Family Partnership Center, 29 North Hamilton St.