

SUPERINTENDENT'S BRIEF

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

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Elementary iReady test scores rise

Students reading at grade level has increased by 27 percentage points from the start of the 2022-23 school year to the end, according to the latest data from Curriculum Associates via the iReady Diagnostic. Of the students who took both the fall and spring diagnostic, 95 percent of students made growth in math and reading. "We noticed significant growth at the primary grades in reading because of Foundations (a literacy curriculum from Wilson Language Training). When we build foundational reading skills at the primary levels it will impact the amount of growth

we will see in the upper levels in coming years," Director of Elementary Education Janet Bisti said.

This year, Foundations is being extended into the third grade; the hope is that next year fourth graders will also perform higher in reading as well, Patrice Woods, supervisor of elementary education said.

As an example of the growth the district has seen, Bisti pointed out that the number of second graders scoring below grade level dropped from 58 percent in the fall to 22 percent in the spring assessment.

Students also showed growth in math, with the number of students testing at or above grade level rising from 22 percent in the fall to 29 percent by spring.

"These scores help determine the professional development needs of our teachers, such as small group instruction so teachers can provide targeted support for students who are performing below grade level," Woods said.

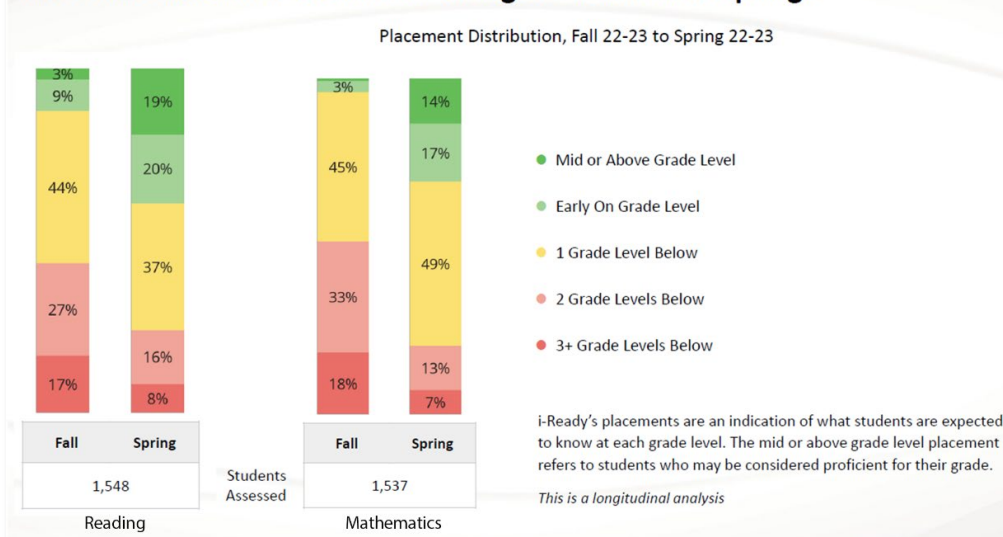
Bisti said they are encouraging teachers and students to push for "stretch goals" this year - growth needed to close the gap to proficiency - because to catch up when students are several grades behind requires more than one year of advancement.

The iReady program helps by assigning lessons itself based on students' performance on the diagnostic and teachers can also assign specific lessons based on a student's needs and upcoming curriculum.

Research shows that the more time students spend on individualized instruction within iReady, the more they grow their skills. The recommended time is 30-49 minutes average weekly usage in each subject area (reading and math).

According to district metrics, there is 129 percent median typical growth achieved with 30 or more minutes of instruction and 70 percent of lessons passed in reading and 115 percent median typical growth in math. Parents and caregivers can help their children by encouraging them to participate in and focus on their

How Have Relative Placements Changed From Fall to Spring?



Data from Curriculum Associates' iReady Diagnostic shows score improvement in reading and math throughout the district's elementary schools for the 2022-23 school year.

iReady instruction time. Some strategies may be to ask them about what they learned through iReady that day/week and, if available at home, encouraging them to sign-in and do some lessons out of school. Students throughout the district are taking the iReady Diagnostic now through Oct. 14, so staff can analyze results and determine the impact of the summer learning loss. Once that is done, strategies will be implemented to help move the students forward.

Parent group starts 2023-24 sessions

On Saturday, Sept. 23rd the Parents Advisory Committee to the Superintendent (PACS) held its first meeting of the new academic year. The PACS was developed in 2021 by Superintendent Dr. Eric Jay Rosser as part of the district's on-going efforts to strengthen its relationships with parents and caregivers. The PACS advises the Superintendent on strategies and solutions toward the district and parents forging a strengthened partnership in addressing the academic, social, and emotional needs of PCSD students. With the PACS being organized to:

- Mutually develop goals that address student success through strong collaborative partnerships with parents and caregivers.
- Identify common needs and goals among the parents of students enrolled in Poughkeepsie City School District and facilitate strategies to increase parent involvement and engagement.
- Provide the superintendent with feedback and insight from the parent's perspective on school process, policies and initiatives to ensure that the needs of parents and their families are included as decisions are made in the district.
- Bring to the superintendent's attention existing and emerging issues expressed by parents at the school they represent.
- Serve as an advisory, not a decision-making body, that makes recommendations, encourages brainstorming and provides opportunities for parent involvement.
- Facilitate communication between and among the parents and parent organizations from district schools and serve as a forum for sharing innovations and best practices from around the district.

At Saturday's meeting ([download PACS presentation](#)), Rosser provided an overview of the importance of PACS and spent a great deal of time discussing the [23-24 Performance Objectives](#) that focus on engaging, educating, and fostering empowerment among families and engaging and expanding partnerships with community stakeholders. Rosser also shared various districtwide committees (i.e. Shared Decision Making, Community Schools Executive, School Residential Rezoning, Transportation Feasibility, and Facilities and Capital Projects) that are seeking parent participation. The meeting concluded with parents and caregivers having an opportunity to share with Rosser and Natasha Brown, executive director of community schools, questions they had about various happenings throughout the District. At the next meeting, PACS will identify monthly meeting themes and also identify goals it would like to set to accomplish this year.



Members of the Parent Advisory Committee to the Superintendent met with Superintendent Dr. Eric Jay Rosser Saturday, Sept. 23, 2023, to discuss its role and get a sense of the district's goals.

Program brings free phones to district families



Thanks to a tip from a community member, qualified Poughkeepsie City School District families can get a free phone and service from T-Mobile/Assurance Wireless.

"A grandparent worked for the company and said they wanted to provide free cell service to Morse families. I told him he would need to go through Natasha (Brown, executive director of community schools) and he did and they worked it out," Morse Elementary School Principal Samantha Mitchell said.

Dubbed "Dial It Up," by the district's Community Schools

department, the program will provide a free Android phone and a year of unlimited talk, text and data to families who meet the qualifications. Those qualifications include:

- Receiving free or reduced lunch.
- Veterans pension.
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
- Medicaid.
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

"Now you have to be connected and we want to ensure all families are connected," Amber Reid, T-Mobile/Assurance Wireless' connectivity manager for Albany, Connecticut, Hudson Valley, Westchester and The Bronx, said.

Reid explained that after one year, the plan is renewable so long as the family continues to meet the qualifications.

Pre-registration is required at <https://bit.ly/pcsddialitup>. Those meeting the qualifications can call the PEC at 845-451-4900 ext. 1425 with questions.

"This is a prime example of how community schools brings the community, school and parents together to help bring needed resources to our families," Brown said.

Phones will be distributed Tuesday, Oct. 3, from 4-6 p.m. at the Parent Empowerment Center at Poughkeepsie Middle School, 55 College Ave.

"We did it the first week of October because it is Digital Inclusion Week," said Julianna Lindquist, an American Connection Corps fellow in the Community Schools Department, who is leading the project. To help parents stay in touch with their child's school and the district, the community school liaisons will be pre-installing the Parent Square and Infinite Campus apps on the phones.

"By providing phones to our families, we are removing another barrier to reciprocal communication," Brown said. "We hope this will not only increase school-home communication, but make it easier for students to access 21st century learning programs such as the MyOn reading platform and iReady math and reading tools."

Lindquist is already working on the second phase of the program during which she will work to identify families who don't have broadband service at home and help connect them to the federal Affordable Connectivity Program which provides discounts to help families afford such service.

Athletics this week:

- **Today:** Modified Cross Country vs. multiple schools at Union Vale Middle School, 4:30 p.m.
 - JV boys soccer vs. Arlington at Arlington, 4:45 p.m.
 - Girls varsity swimming/diving vs. Brewster at PMS, 5 p.m.
 - Girls varsity volleyball vs. Mount Vernon at PHS, 5 p.m.
 - Girls JV volleyball vs. Mount Vernon at PHS, 6:30 p.m.
- **Thu., Sept. 28:** Girls varsity soccer vs. John Jay E.F. at John Jay East Fishkill High School, 4:45 p.m.
- **Friday, Sept. 29:** Boys varsity soccer vs. Mahopac at PHS, 4:45 p.m.
 - Boys JV soccer vs. Mahopac at Mahopac, 4:45 p.m.
- **Saturday, Sept. 30:** Varsity cheerleading tournament at PHS, 11 a.m.
 - Varsity football vs. Peekskill at Torpy Field, 6 p.m.