

# SUPERINTENDENT'S BRIEF

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

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## Warring recognized for progress



During a recent breakfast event, Principal Nicole Penn spoke to the staff of Warring Elementary School to recognize their achievements.

"Every year we work hard, so to be recognized for a big achievement like that for our building is huge and appreciated immensely," said first-grade teacher Tanya Holk.

"It was a collaborative effort of every grade level and teachers pulling together, using data that we harvest and making smart choices for our children to advance them as much as we can and as quickly as we can."

The library, which served as the site of the breakfast, had tables decorated in white and purple tablecloths. Silver and purple star-shaped balloons were at each table.

Staff heard brief talks by Principal Nicole Penn and Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education Gregory Mott before enjoying breakfast.

"We wanted to celebrate our faculty and staff this morning by providing them with recognition and use this opportunity to show them some appreciation," said Mott. "The last few years have been very challenging, but this staff has come together and they've rallied under the leadership of Nicole Penn. We're excited for them."

Penn has been the principal of the school for two years and previously served at the school as assistant principal. "I'm gleaming with pride," she said. "Everyone who works in our building knows that their job is to educate the children before them. I'm exceedingly proud that all of our staff members are educators of children."

Dr. Eric Jay Rosser shared, "This event was intended to celebrate and acknowledge the entire Warring School community for this major accomplishment. The action of the entire community to achieve this accomplishment required passion, commitment, and simply a love for children. "

The Warring Elementary School staff was recognized by the district with a breakfast for being designated by the New York State Department of Education as a School in Good Standing. The breakfast kicked off Superintendent's Conference Day on Nov. 7 ([See Superintendent Brief Issue 4](#)).

"Everybody here works so hard with the kids," said school librarian Jessica Sapper. "We have come back from COVID and hit the ground running. We worked together as teams, separate teams, and one big unit to all benefit the kids. It's all about the kids."

It was the first time in 13 years the Warring was designated as a school in good standing by NYSED.



Above Warring Elementary receives award from District for being recognized as a Good Standing school by NYSED.

# PCSD to rollout the 7 Mindsets framework

## 7 MINDSETS

The Poughkeepsie City School District will launch the first of the seven Mindsets – everything is possible – next week at district schools.

The Seven Mindsets program is an evidence-based learning system that is based on the

assertion that success depends more on what a person thinks and less on what they know.

"I'm just hoping it becomes a language from the top down," said Christine Smack from the Office of School Engagement. "It's a whole new way we speak to each other. It is a whole new way we get the kids to think of themselves. It's resetting your mindset to think at a positive level."

District staff were introduced to Seven Mindsets at Superintendent's Conference Day on Nov. 7, and students learned of the program following the conference day.

The seven mindsets are:

- Everything is possible.
- Passion first.
- We are connected.
- 100% accountable.
- Attitude of gratitude.
- Live to give.
- Time is now.

"We had a lot of positive feedback," said Smack. "A lot of people were saying this is great, this is what we need, so overwhelming, the response was awesome all around."

The goal is to present one mindset per month.

## Mr. "I'm Possible" entertains, educates PCSD

The principal-driven professional development session at Clinton Elementary School on Nov. 7 was truly one to remember. Staff were able to meet Mr. "I'M POSSIBLE", Keith L. Brown.

Brown is an award-winning author, coach, trainer, and founder of the "I'M POSSIBLE" Institute.

He spoke throughout the district to students and staff Nov. 6-7. During his time at Clinton Elementary School, he taught us about implicit bias. Sharing with us the acronym BIAS - Belief Increases All Stereotypes (when belief is misguided). Staff were encouraged to continue the work that they do in every area of the school. He included the teachers, support staff, kitchen staff, and custodians.

Mr. "I'M POSSIBLE" reminded us that, "We motivate! We elevate! We educate! They graduate!"

He was mighty in his approach as a motivational speaker. We danced, we laughed and we bonded together through this unique approach.

During that time, we were fortunate enough to have Angel Kelly with us, who is famously known as the voice behind POWER. She poured into the staff singing, "You are so beautiful to me." Her voice was beautiful and the reminder that we too are beautiful was very uplifting. Mr. "I'M POSSIBLE" and Ms. Angel Kelly had the opportunity to speak to the scholars at Clinton Elementary School on Nov. 6, 2023. The scholars said, "He was hilarious. One scholar remembered a direct quote that he said, "I don't eat chocolate but I drop some bars."

Some Clinton teachers said, "This was one of the best superintendent conferences PD sessions in a long time." Others said, "He is just great!"

The Clinton staff was pleased to have such a wonderful experience and wanted to thank Clinton Principal Dr. David Scott and Da'Ron Wilson, executive director of school engagement, for the opportunity.



Above Keith Brown - Mr. "I'm Possible"



# Training puts focus on de-escalation in crises

Learning how to de-escalate situations in which a student is in a behavioral or emotional crisis is what 20 district administrators and staff spent an intensive week learning recently.

From Oct. 23-27, they participated in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Schools (TCIS) training.

TCIS was developed by Cornell University through the Residential Child Care Project (RCCP) in the 1980s and is updated regularly based on research and evaluations. The aim is to reduce physical restraints and practices that can lead to inadvertent injury to children or misuse of interventions. The TCIS program emphasizes that all physical interventions have risks and dangers, and the best way to protect against those, is by having a staff that is well-trained and regularly certified in evidence-based strategies to de-escalate crises and establish immediate safety for children and adolescents. TCIS' goals are:

- Create a trauma-sensitive environment where students and adults are safe and feel safe.
- Proactively prevent and/or de-escalate potential crises with students.
- Manage a crisis therapeutically, and, if necessary, intervene physically in a manner that reduces the risk of harm to students and staff.
- Process the crisis event with students to help improve their coping strategies.
- Effectively deliver in-house TCIS training.

Several PCSD staff members were trained as TCI trainers by having them attend a weeklong program through Cornell University. Those TCI-trained PCSD trainers can provide training for staff in the district who complete the TCIS course and pass a series of written and physical tests to demonstrate their understanding, knowledge, and safe practices. Trainee certification is for one year and requires updates and refreshers every six months.

"Our TCIS participants learned a broad range of verbal and nonverbal crisis management and emotional regulation strategies to assist students, how to assess a potentially violent situation and minimize risk, and the safest physical intervention procedures to utilize with youth to keep them and others safe," Iris Goliger, executive director of students with exceptionalities said. "Additionally, staff learned how to intervene therapeutically, restore relationships with students who have been through behavioral and emotional crises and needed intervention, and practice more adaptive skills with students so their return to their normal school routines is successful."

Poughkeepsie has committed to providing this training to at least 40 additional staff members during this school year and training new groups in future years, Goliger said. Regular one-day refreshers to maintain the training and certifications of our TCI-trained staff will be occurring approximately every six months to maintain our certified staff pool's skill level.

"Feedback of staff who have taken the TCIS course has been overwhelmingly positive, despite the length of the training," Goliger said, adding, "Staff who have become certified have requested that this training and the many verbal and nonverbal de-escalation strategies and interventions contained, become available to all teachers and service providers across the district."

The Therapeutic Crisis Intervention System has a parent module, and the district may be able to offer additional support to families by training staff as TCI for Parents trainers in the future.



Above Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Schools