

# SUPERINTENDENT'S BRIEF

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

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VOLUME 5



## District improves on state assessments



**PCSD students' test scores on state assessments showed modest improvement.**

Poughkeepsie City School District showed modest improvement in recently released New York State Education Department 2022-2023 assessment scores.

### English Language Learning (ELA)

The percentage of students in grades 3-8 who achieved Level 3 and Level 4 proficiency on the ELA assessment increased by 6.1 percent over the prior year with 28.7 percent of students continuously enrolled and tested achieving Level 3 or Level 4 scores of proficiency or excelling proficiency in the standards for their grade level. All schools showed a growth in the percentage of students achieving on these levels.

Krieger elementary school showed the largest combined growth of students achieving Level 3 and Level 4 proficiency on the ELA assessment with an increase of 14.6 percent over the prior year. Warring Elementary School showed an 8.7 percent increase over the prior year, which ranked

second highest among the four PCSD elementary schools whose student population is assessed.

"The data shows gradual signs of growth for our students. The Elementary Department has been intentional in our strategic approach to assessing practices and interventions. We will continue to monitor instructional practices and student progress to ensure all of our students perform to their highest potential," Greg Mott, assistant superintendent for elementary education, said.

### Math

The percentage of students in grades 3-8 who achieved Level 3 and Level 4 proficiency on the math assessment increased by 9.9 percent over the prior year, reflecting a total of 18.6 percent of students continuously enrolled and tested achieving proficiency or excelling proficiency in the standards for their grade level. All schools showed a growth in the percentage of students achieving this level.

Warring elementary school showed the largest combined growth of students achieving Level 3 and Level 4 proficiency on the math assessment with an increase of 16.6 percent over the prior year. Krieger Elementary showed an increase of 13.4 percent, over the prior year. Morse Elementary School, the district's only receivership school, showed an increase of 13.3 percent over the prior year.

Janet Bisti, director of elementary education, said, "Our goal is to accelerate this trajectory of academic achievement through high-quality instruction, curricula, and interventions for students and targeted professional learning for staff."

### Presentation to Board

A presentation of the data to the Board of Education (BOE) this past Wednesday sparked conversation among trustees, Superintendent Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, and other district-level leaders. Topics included, the implications of COVID-19, the implementation of 2021 BOE ELA and math adopted curriculum, academic rigor, supplemental student academic supports, staff professional learning and instructional capacity, teacher, parent, and student expectations, parental and community involvement, student test anxiety, and the social-emotional and wellness of students.

While acknowledging the gains and the district's overall progress under the District's 5-Year Strategic Plan, general displeasure with the high number of students who are still struggling on the state's assessment was evident. "A key component to the district's progress towards our goals is the constant conversations about and presentation of our data," Dr. Jennifer Daddino, director of data, said.

Superintendent Dr. Eric Jay Rosser said that while the scores show improvement over the prior year, there is a greater opportunity for the school community to elevate student performance and success and to show our commitment to our student population in doing so.



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Superintendent Dr. Eric Jay Rosser said that while the scores show improvement over the prior year, there is a greater opportunity for the school community to elevate student performance and success.

"The presentation of this data is not celebratory in any way, we have not reached the mountain top, it does, however, indicate growth but there is a lot more work for us to engage in."

Mott, Bisti, and Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education, Dr Charles Gallo, presented on the various modifications to the district's instructional program that have been implemented over the past three years that have contributed greatly to the district's transformation efforts, citing how the data is being used to drive decisions, assess individual student and group performance, teacher effectiveness and professional learning opportunities, and chart direction.

"While we are not there yet, the data shows that we are moving in the right direction to becoming a high-achieving district. When given the right tools, support, and encouragement, we will see our students succeed," Bisti said.

Lisa Spencer-Perry, executive director of strategic planning and resource stewardship, said that the key is to leverage the data. "By understanding the data and how it reflects work underway, we can support continuous improvement measures designed to increase district capacity and student success overall thus making it actionable and results-driven."

Participation in the 2022-2023 New York State 3-8 assessments was below what is anticipated by the New York State Education Department. It is hoped that more students have the opportunity to participate in this activity, which supports academic rigor, and thus have the opportunity to demonstrate their successful growth this academic year.

## PHS gets new AP for climate and culture

Connecting with the community is a top priority

Kaylin Marrero-Nieves started work Nov. 6 as Poughkeepsie High School's new assistant principal for climate and culture. She desires to build relationships with students and teachers and see them succeed.

Home is where the heart is for Marrero-Nieves, who chose to work in PCSD partially because the area is reminiscent of her old neighborhood of Fordham in the Bronx. She thanked PHS staff and Principal Dr. Phee Simpson for making her feel welcome. "It always felt like home, because it reminded me of home," Marrero-Nieves said. "I feel blessed to be here."

While Marrero-Nieves' most recent job was working as a 5th-grade math and science teacher at P.S. 159 in the Bronx, she has always desired to work with older students, even though it made her mother worry. "She was like, 'they're going to eat you alive, those kids are big,'" she said of her mother. "I want to work with them because my passion is helping students find their way in adult life."

Marrero-Nieves' goals for the year are supporting her students so they can get to college, encouraging teachers when they need it, and building relationships with the community by attending school sports events. She wants students to know that she is here to stay for the long term. "I want to be able to build the trust and be embedded in the community," Marrero-Nieves explained. "If I know the community, I'm able to touch and support the students that live in the community to the best of my ability."

Another goal for Marrero-Nieves is to visit classrooms frequently where she can help students with their math work if a teacher needs a break and de-escalate problems when they arise.

"At the end of the day, I'm still a teacher at heart," Marrero-Nieves said. "I hope students feel comfortable calling on me when they need to."



**Kaylin Marrero-Nieves is Poughkeepsie High School's new assistant principal for climate and culture.**



Marrero-Nieves holds a masters in special education from Concordia College and another masters in School Administration from the College of Saint Rose. While in high school, she was heavily involved in the Jeter's Leaders Foundation, which promotes healthy lifestyles and achievement. "That's what prompted my passion for working with the youth," she said. Outside of work, Marrero-Nieves loves watching movies and TV shows, as well as playing sports with her three sons. She also loves cooking authentic Puerto Rican food, which her boys love best.

## The food service staff has a new look



Food service staff has a new look.

Shameka Watson became the district's food service director in January and felt her staff needed a new look. She ordered new apparel that arrived the second week of September and now the district's food service staff has a unified look.

"I felt this was something we needed," she said.

"Now we look like a team. Everyone looks great. Staff morale is up.

Everyone feels like a team. Everybody is happy to be in their uniforms. It's helped teamwork, working together as one, and team spirit."

Watson ordered white chef coats for cook managers, and short-sleeve, button-up, royal blue shirts for food service helpers. Aprons and hats also were ordered. Poughkeepsie City School District is

embroidered on the chef coats, staff shirts, and hats.

Staff also are asked to wear black pants and black footwear. Food Services has over 30 employees serving students and staff in district schools.

Marina Caraballo is a cook and has been in the district's food service department for 16 years. "I like it," she said of the uniform. "I love the color. The material is very comfortable. "We look more professional and people recognize where we work."

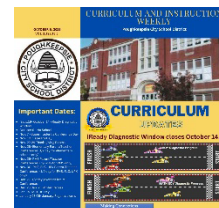
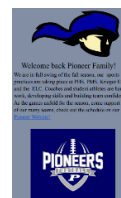
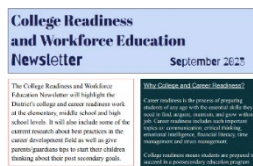
Carmela Calisi has worked in the district's food service for almost 16 years. "They're very nice," she said of the uniform. "I like them. They build morale. The students see we're all dressed alike."

Shamel Tolbert, cook manager, was dressed in his white chef coat.

"The new uniform is a great look," he said. "They make us look together. It is a good look for us in the food service department. "The whole staff does a wonderful job and I'm glad to be a part of it."

## Other newsletters to keep you informed:

Poughkeepsie City School District publishes a variety of newsletters throughout the year. Here are the available ones now:



- [CI Weekly](#): A lesson about time on task; Guide to parent-teacher conferences.
- [Attendance, November 2023](#), misconceptions about absences

## Upcoming events

- **Nov. 22-24**: Thanksgiving recess