

SUPERINTENDENT'S BRIEF

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



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Summer packs, programs help students

Poughkeepsie City School District is providing opportunities for students in all grades to advance their academics through a series of summer programs and academic activity packs. An academic intensive program is scheduled for individuals contacted by the district to help them prepare for the next grade level, which will start in July, Director of Elementary Education Janet Bisti said. July and August also bring a variety of recreation and enrichment programs open to all, including camps, open gym and mentoring programs.

Meanwhile, High school students can take advantage of a credit recovery program so that if they are missing credits to graduate or advance to the next grade, they can earn them over the summer, Bisti said.

All elementary school students will receive Summer Slam Packets to help them avoid summer learning loss.

- Pre-K and kindergarten students will receive a pack with manipulatives, whiteboards and pens, activity lists and workbooks for English and math.
- Grades 1 and 2 will receive English and math workbooks, five reading books, pens, pencils and support materials for families along with a bag to carry it all in so students can take it wherever their family goes.
- Grades 3-5 receive a pack with reading materials.

Summer Slam packs will be distributed at each school during the last few days of school or at moving-up ceremonies, Bisti said. Pre-K students will get their packs at their Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning (DIAL) screening.

In-person programs

Enrichment and recreation offerings include Make Poughkeepsie Bloom, a gardening program at district courtyards and green spaces; Sports clinic and open gym to help students prepare for the upcoming athletic season; Summer Lights at Camp Nooteeming for grades 2-12 (transportation provided) and an Extended School Year program for Students with Exceptionalities. See all programs as well as some offered by district partners on our [Summer Opportunities page](#).

Enrollment is on a first come, first served basis.

There are also three orientation type programs happening over the summer.

- RiseUP! Is for upcoming sixth graders and will be held Aug. 29-Sept. 1 from 9 a.m. to noon. Building principals will be sending invitations.
- New School Orientation is taking place at all buildings for students entering a new school. These will happen the week of Aug. 15 from 4-6 p.m. Registration links will be provided to all upcoming Dual Language, pre-K, kindergarten, 1st, 6th and 9th grade students.
- Bridges to Poughkeepsie is an event for families new to Poughkeepsie City School District. It will be held Aug. 13 from noon to 3 p.m. at the Poughkeepsie High School Football Field. Details to come.

We hope all parents and guardians will help their children take advantage of the programs, orientations and Summer Slam Packs so that when fall arrives, students are prepared.



Summer Slam packets provide learning materials and activities based on grade



Staff leadership program graduates first class



Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services Dr. Timothy Wade addresses Aspiring Leadership Academy graduates (at table with flowers) Catherine Bryson, Tracey Bleau, Anne Formato and Richard VanScoyk (Michele O’Gara is not pictured) Saturday, June 4, 2022. Also in attendance were, Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, superintendent of schools, Dr. Felicia Watson, BOE president, Natasha Cherry, executive director of community schools, Kristina Giangreco, director of special projects, Dr. Charles Gallo, assistant superintendent for secondary education, and Peter Bianco, executive director of physical education, health, recreation and athletics.

Five district staff members completed a year-long program designed to help develop them as leaders - and the results are already impacting the district in a positive way.

Tracey Bleau, Catherine Bryson, Anne Formato, Michelle O’Gara and Richard VanScoyk were chosen to participate in the Aspiring Leadership Academy, attending monthly sessions in which different leadership topics - including planning, mission and vision, law, curriculum and instruction - were discussed and shared through hands-on activities.

“They all applied for consideration which included a statement on what they hoped to get out of the program,” Director of Special Programs and organizer of the program Kris Giangreco said. “It is for people who want to expand their leadership skills. Some aspire to an administrator capacity, while others want to take a teacher leader role.”

In addition to the sessions, participants had to develop a capstone project which they presented to central office staff.

- VanScoyk explored the link between school culture and climate (specifically homecoming) and increase in attendance at Poughkeepsie High School. His recommendation was to expand and grow opportunities for student engagement.
- Bleau provided updates and shared the process of creating a Dual Language Program which grew from the capstone project to a district initiative that is being implemented next school year.
- O’Gara created a Professional Electronic Portfolio to highlight her career and leadership experiences.
- Bryson explored the need for instructional supports around the area of instructional technology. Proposal aligned and was supported by district performance objectives, data, enrollment needs, and research into other successful models.
- Formato created a Professional Electronic Portfolio to highlight her career and leadership experiences

For their projects, participants drew on their own experiences and expertise along with what they learned during the academy and through regular feedback sessions with Giangreco and Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services Dr. Timothy Wade.

"They are getting to effect change in the district already," Giangreco said, noting that Bleau's Dual Language project is already underway and district leaders are discussing Bryson's proposal later this week. "This program opened my eyes to all of the challenges and responsibilities that administration has to deal with within the school community," Bryson said, explaining they she didn't have aspirations to go into administration but rather wanted to move into other responsibilities such as a department chair or coach. "It helped me to understand some of the decisions of the district and my building leaders when I was frustrated by them as a teacher. I am forever grateful for this experience," Bryson said.

She pitched a new technology liaison position she felt was needed. Bryson said Giangreco and Wade helped connect her with people to help with research and encouraged her along the way. "They made me feel confident in my work and helped ease my mind."

During the Capstone Celebration Saturday, June 4, 2022, Superintendent Dr. Eric Jay Rosser announced that each participant would be receiving a \$750 innovation grant to help them expand their work in their classroom or department, Giangreco said. Congratulations to all of the ALA graduates.

Applications for next year's cohort are being accepted now. Learn more from the [Aspiring Leadership Academy application](#).



ELC students help stack Blankets of Hope outside Webster House Tuesday, June 7, 2022.

Students deliver gifts of hope to City of Poughkeepsie shelters

Residents of the Webster and Hillcrest Houses were happy to receive 360 soft blankets with kind messages from Poughkeepsie Middle School and Early Learning Center students during a visit on June 7.

The project was completed through a national nonprofit program, Blankets of Hope, that provides schools with free blankets for students to give to local people experiencing homelessness along with a handwritten note. Additionally, the program provides a virtual workshop walking students through an exercise designed to help them see how a person

experiencing homelessness might feel. The [Blankets of Hope project](#) began in March and culminated with students seeing some of that experience up close and personal on a tour inside Webster House where they were taken to the room where residents sleep and shower.

Hudson River Housing Executive Director Christa Hines spoke to the students about how Webster and Hillcrest operate and thanked them for their generosity.

"These letters are so beautiful," Hines said. "I know our guests are going to be so, so thankful,"

ELC kindergartner Amaya Morgan felt good about helping the residents. "I liked making people feel happy," Morgan said.

PMS 6th grader Skyler Jenkins was happy to participate in the program, as well as to show the residents that she and her classmates appreciate and care for them.

"I hope they enjoy the presents that we give them," Jenkins said. "I feel like it's a good program to do for the homeless."

Hillcrest resident Robert Armstrong was touched to receive a blanket because a small gesture like this means a lot.

"It shows that there's still kindness in the world," Armstrong said. "Any little act of kindness is a big deal."

At right, sixth grader Skyler Jenkins stacks Blankets of Hope on a table outside Hillcrest House in Poughkeepsie on June 7. Jenkins was one of about 25 students who helped deliver the blankets.

