



## Church purchase will expand arts education

Wednesday evening the Poughkeepsie Board of Education (BOE) approved district leadership to move forward in acquiring the Changepoint Church property as a multiuse facility that will serve the needs of the Poughkeepsie City School District, the Board of Education, student music and arts programming, and community programming and functions.

After the board's approval Superintendent Dr. Eric Jay Rosser shared with the community that the space will be used to house the district's central office functions, Board of Education meetings, and community functions. And as part of PCSD's continued investment into Arts Education, the facility will also be used to expand opportunities for K-12 students, including of performance spaces and student learning spaces (Learn more in "[School district shares Arts education vision](#)").



PCSD wants to buy the Changepoint Church property, 260 Mill Street, for use in arts education programs and as its new administrative building.

### Student performance spaces

As part of the district's vision for Arts Education, the district is making significant investments in expanding arts programming and opportunities for all pre-K-12 students and engaging the arts community to support this important work. To date, that investment totals over a half million dollars. In collaboration with members of the arts community and the Public Arts Commission, the district plans to develop a comprehensive strategic arts education plan this upcoming fall, where the performance space at Changepoint will be instrumental in supporting the execution of this vision. Recently, elementary school art productions, including [Annie Jr.](#) and the PK Strings Summer Concert (see following story) have received strong support from staff members, community members, and parents. They all support PCSD expanding arts education opportunities to students well before they reach middle and high school. At the middle and high school levels, the [Fine Arts & Music Festival](#) and [Hip Hop Theater 2022](#) have also garnered a strong interest in the school district investing more into arts education.

### Student learning use

[The Poughkeepsie City School District's Pathway Transformation Initiative](#) is designed to provide students with multiple career and occupational pathways that lead to post-secondary success from skills developed through participating in K-12 instructional programming. As part of the initiative, students will be provided with greater opportunities, in collaboration with community partners and businesses, to explore occupational interests that provide them with experiences and skills that will expand career opportunities beyond high school graduation. The Changepoint theater will provide students with hands-on experiences with theater production management during district and community events in the theater. This will naturally be a part of the district's workforce development efforts and expanding the pathways that students can achieve high school graduation.

### Community programming and functions

The Changepoint facility is well known as a state-of-the-art facility offering opportunities for local and civic organizations to host events and meetings in the space. Under the Poughkeepsie City School District the theater space will still be made available to the community for use. Revenue generated from community use and programming will be reinvested into the Poughkeepsie City School District Arts Education program, further benefiting PCSD students. **See Changepoint Page 4**



## Jazz Band tops Music in the Parks

Emotions were high in the PHS band room as members of the Jazz Band reflected on their first place performance at Music in the Parks 2022. The June 3 competition came on the heels of the band's performance the evening before at the Poughkeepsie High School Fine Arts and Music Festival. They had to wake early to board a bus to the competition in Agawam, Massachusetts. Students perform and then spend the afternoon at nearby Six Flags New England.

The band was planning to compete in the 2020 competition, but then COVID-19 struck.

This was the first full year of in-person band lessons and practices since the pandemic and it, along with a change in meeting time from first thing in the morning to after school, made a difference.

"People became more excited and we had more people," said junior Ariel Dandridge who plays trombone and had her first solo at the event - which was also her first competition. "The first time I practiced at school, it was nerve-wracking, but then it became pretty easy," she said.

For Tijon Johnson, it was his first and last year in the band as he is graduating along with four other members of the band.

"I wish I would have done this as a freshman," said Johnson who has played the trumpet since fourth grade. "This was a great experience one I will always cherish," he said.

Looking around the room at his bandmates, he said, "We are like family," his voice cracking. Tears welled up in the eyes of several students.

"I couldn't be more proud of them," he said, adding that he wants everyone to come back and enjoy it. Joe North, band director and music chair, said it was emotionally challenging for him and the students to not make music together for two years.

"To come back with purpose to do the things and show that we can put on a high-quality performance. Everyone was into it."

Sophomore Jalen Lee soloed on the piano, playing "Cantaloupe Island" and capturing Best Soloist honors. When North first asked Lee if he wanted to solo, Lee hesitated as he hadn't played with a band before when performing.

"I was very nervous and when he asked me if I wanted a full or partial solo I said partial, but then I started soloing and I kept going and he gave me a full solo," Lee said.

Lee said he joined Jazz Band late but plans to continue. "Since I came to the group I noticed a big difference in playing - there is a lot of growth in everyone."

Congratulations to the entire PHS Jazz Band (Soledad Antonio-Santizo, Tashana Ashley, Schuyler Birrittella, Jayden Chambers, Grace Clifford, Anthony Cordova, Ariel Dandridge, Charles Dandridge III, Edward Gabriel-Martinez, Sonia Gutierrez-Mendoza, Guadalupe Hernandez-Mejia, Abigail Hernandez-Ortiz, Tijon Johnson, Marvin Juarez Espinoza, Nacyeli Lascars-Ruiz, Andrea Martinez-Lopez, Saanie Moodie, Temple Moody, Jessica Neville, Ryan Ojeda-Perez, Linsay Perez-Lopez, Lynsey Price, Mary Prindle, Julia Quezada, Sandra Rojas-Martinez, Marlene Santiago-Cuevas, Amir Shell, Malik Williams and Jalen Lee) on its fantastic year. We look forward to hearing more from you in the years to come.



## Students enjoy fun-filled field day

On Tuesday, June 14, 2022, the Clinton Elementary School faculty and staff organized the 2022 Clinton Elementary Field Day for the school's students. Field day is a fun-filled event that typically occurs during the Spring, which schools celebrate the year-long accomplishments of the school and more importantly the school's children. Under the leadership of Dr. David Scott, principal of Clinton

Students participate in a relay race during Clinton Elementary School's Field Day.

Elementary School, the field day provided students the opportunity to have fun while engaging in the following activities:

- Bounce House
- Parachute activity
- Playground activity
- Hoop Shoot Relay
- Egg Race
- Leaky Cup Race
- Snow Cone Station
- Gym time
- Kickball games
- Farm Project activity
- Cotton Candy Station

"I became instantly envious when I saw Clinton's Field Day setup, and wanted to escape my superintendent responsibilities and be a kid one again", shared Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, superintendent of schools. "Dr. Scott and the entire Clinton Elementary School staff and faculty are commended for the fun-filled opportunity they provided to children."



Students await their turn at some of the inflatables set up for Field Day.



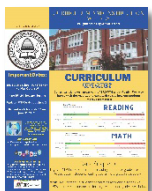
PCSD elementary school students perform at Vassar College as part of the PK Strings group.

## PK Strings performs at Vassar

Yesterday evening the PK Strings, the Poughkeepsie After School Strings Program provided through Stringendo, a local nonprofit organization, presented its Spring 2022 Concert. The concert, held at Vassar College, featured 36 students from Krieger, Morse, and Warring Elementary Schools as a year-end event to the afterschool program (see the [May 20, 2022 Superintendent's Brief](#)).

Supported by a number of benefactors, the goal of the program is to provide access to instruments, instruction, and performance opportunities and working to get instruments in the hands of all students who wish to learn regardless of any financial obstacles the families may face. Thursday evening's performance was attended by parents, district staff, and community members vested in arts

programming for students. The students performed several pieces led by their PK Strings Music Teacher Cassity Warnecke and were treated to a performance by the Stringendo Strawberry Hill Fiddlers & Vivace Orchestra, which has membership from students attending Poughkeepsie High School. At the closing of the program, Danielle Sundberg, Stringendo executive director, made an announcement that every participating PCSD student would have access to continue their engagement during their summer program where scholarships were being made available by benefactors for students to attend. For more information about PK Strings, watch the "[Stringendo: Because Music Matters](#)" video or see this article on the district website.



## Curriculum and Instruction: iReady shows success

This week's edition gives a quick look at students reading and performing math at or above grade level based on the iReady assessments. It also speaks to educators about sharing the history of Juneteenth and empowering students to be advocates for change. [Download CI #37](#) for yourself.



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### Impact on district finances

The purchase of the property comes at a really good time for the district programmatically and financially. PCSD is no longer stressed for financial resources, which once served as a major impediment to the district providing basic services, supports, and resources to children as experienced three years ago. Given the district's three-year focus on resource stewardship, the district is not only providing for students' basic needs but is able to go deeper in its support for students, staff, and parents. Evidence of this is realized through the successes of the 5-year Strategic Plan and the additions to the instructional, student support, and operational programs reflected in the 22-23 budget ([see 22-23 budget additions here](#)). Major issues associated with the district facilities are being addressed through the \$98 million Capital Improvement Project and additional funding that the district has secured to expand on the original capital project. Student supplies and materials are being provided at elevated levels in comparison to previous years. Curriculum materials and additional student resources are being provided at higher levels than before.

### Taxpayer impact

Purchase of the property will have **no tax impact** on the city's taxpayers or take away from student programming. Funds will come from a Capital Reserve account developed to support the purchase of another administrative building and future capital projects. You may recall the former administrative building sustained major damage in spring 2019 and forced central office functions to occupy instructional space that students no longer have access to. The Columbus building currently serves as Central Administration and will need to be converted, in part, for potential swing space for student instruction as the \$98 million dollar capital project progresses.

When asked about the district acquiring the Change Point facility Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, superintendent of schools shared, "The vision for the use of Changepoint has been greatly led by the community's vision for what the Poughkeepsie City School District should be and offer Poughkeepsie City School District students, as well as the emerging opportunities and partnerships with organizations and members of our communities. Parents, organizations, and community members continue to help shape the Poughkeepsie City School District through thought partnership and concrete action."

He further stated that, "For too long the Poughkeepsie City School District has had a tarnished image, those days are over. Through the strategic planning, partnerships, and evolving opportunities in our community, the school district is beginning to shine in so many ways. What is most important to note is that, none of what we are achieving benefits those of us who are hard at work every day to create and expand opportunities for PCSD students, it all benefits the current students of PCSD and those who will come after."

## Upcoming events

June 14<sup>th</sup> -23<sup>rd</sup> – **Elementary and Middle School Moving Up Day Ceremonies**

Dates, Locations, and Times Varying

June 15<sup>th</sup> – **Workshop/Regular Board of Education Meeting**

Location: Columbus Building • Time: 6:30pm

June 15<sup>th</sup> – **Start of Regents Testing (Secondary)**

June 20<sup>th</sup> – **Juneteenth (All Schools and District Offices Closed)**

June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> – **½ day of instruction (Elementary Schools)**

June 24<sup>th</sup> – **Last Day of Instruction (All students)**

June 25<sup>th</sup> – **Poughkeepsie High School Graduation**

Location: Poughkeepsie Athletic Complex • Time: 6:00pm