



School board association honors district

The Poughkeepsie City School District was recently honored with the New York State School Boards Association *Champions of Change* award for the City Connects Initiative. City Connects is a nationally renowned program from the Boston College Lynch School of Education that, through an innovative data tracking system, allows the district to connect an individualized success plan to each student to address the out-of-school factors that impact learning. The three-year pilot program is funded by Dutchess County and is an outcome of work done by the Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet, co-chaired by Superintendent Dr. Eric Jay Rosser and City of Poughkeepsie Mayor Rob Rolison.

In correspondence to the district, Robert S. Schneider, NYSSBA executive director, wrote "We understand there are many incredibly meritorious programs and projects throughout the state, and NYSSBA is celebrating yours!" Mr. John Redman, NYSSBA Area 9 Director presented a colorful banner to the Poughkeepsie City School District in recognition of the school district's implementation of the program. Accepting the banner were Jakira Kellogg, PCSD's City Connects coordinator, Da'Ron Wilson, executive director of school engagement, and Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, superintendent of schools. Absent from the photo was Karmen Smallwood, Dutchess County's assistant commissioner youth services, who was unable to join due to a scheduling conflict.

The banner has been hung on Kellogg's office door at Poughkeepsie Middle School.



Superintendent Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, NYSSBA Area 9 Director John Redman, Executive Director of School Engagement Da'Ron Wilson and City Connects Coordinator Jakira Kellogg show the banner at the board of education meeting.

Institute helps grow ENL team knowledge

English as a New Language teachers in the district recently completed a four-day professional development course designed to strengthen the program, which serves 640 students in grades K-12.

Shirley Feldman from WestEd brought the Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL) Institute to 15 ENL teachers and one Spanish teacher starting last week and concluding Tuesday. **See ENL page 3**
Shirley Feldman speaks to teachers during the training.



Students celebrate moving up to new schools



Thaily Cruz-Segura receives a hug from Warring Elementary School Principal Julliet Coxum while Assistant Principal Nicole Penn gives a round of applause.

Kindergarten and fifth grade students from the Poughkeepsie City School District are now officially ready for elementary and middle school respectively after ceremonies celebrating their achievements during the weeks of June 13 and 20. Director of Elementary Education Janet Bisti is proud of students' accomplishments after overcoming a challenging year which included returning to full in-person learning. Reading and math scores improved across the district after the implementation of Ready Reading and Ready Classroom Mathematics curriculums.

"Having an aligned ELA and Math curriculum helps to prepare students for the upcoming grade level and allows teachers to see students' progress from year to year," Bisti

explained. "We are excited to see their continued success."

Warring Elementary School held its first in-person ceremony in two years on June 17 where over 60 fifth graders were presented their certificates to cheers from their families. Principal Julliet Coxum congratulated the students' achievements, while noting that this occasion was just as much for parents and guardians as it was for them.

"It's a very important day for all of us," Coxum said. "You have succeeded and you are ready for the next stage of your life."

Ameila Yeargin loved her teachers at Warring and while she is nervous to start 6th grade, she is also ready for it.

"I don't know how it's like in the middle school, but I'm also excited at the same time," Yeargin said.

At the Early Learning Center celebrations, Principal Nadine Dargan encouraged parents to work with their children on math and reading packets the school sends home for the summer.

"We want to avoid the summer loss that most young children experience due to lack of exposure over the summer months," Dargan said. "I am thrilled to celebrate with our families as their children begin the next chapter in education."

At Morse Elementary School's ceremony, 125 children moved up with over 400 family members in attendance. Principal Samantha Velez-Mitchell praised the students for



Julissa Estrada Clavel reads the Pledge of Allegiance at the podium with Dr. Shanna Didymus.

overcoming challenges they endured during COVID, as well as the staff who assisted in meeting their academic, social and emotional needs.

"I am very proud of their hard work and dedication," Velez-Mitchell said of the students.

Moving up ceremonies have also occurred for fifth grade students at Clinton and Krieger Elementary Schools. The final moving up ceremony, celebrating a class of pre-K students moving to kindergarten and eighth grade students moving to ninth grade, are scheduled for tomorrow.

Congratulations to all the students who are advancing. Your new school staff and students look forward to meeting you in the fall.

ENL from Page 1 - Four key aspects the program stressed are:

1. Sustaining academic rigor.
2. Holding high expectations.
3. Engaging students in quality interactions.
4. Sustaining language focus.

Along the auditorium wall in the Administration Building, large sticky notes adorned the walls with these items and thoughts about each.

"Every lesson with ELL means that every lesson, regardless of subject area, becomes a language lesson to some extent," is one that stuck out.

Feldman said QTEL is designed

to engage teachers with actual lessons that have been done with students across the country "so they can get a better understanding of what it feels like and think about how they can adapt it and change it for the students they work with."

While English and social studies were the primary focus of the four-day program here, the techniques can and should be used across all subject areas, Feldman said.

Participants also received a scaffolding book which incorporates all the ideas and principles discussed so teachers can reference it going forward.

Following three days of training, teachers spent Tuesday developing their own lesson plan using what they've learned, stressing the three parts of a lesson: Preparation, interaction with the text and extending understanding.

"They'll take their learning back to their buildings and share it with the teachers they collaborate with," Feldman said.

ENL Coordinator Tracey Bleau enjoyed the program.

"This program has been incredible in teaching us new strategies and new ways to teach lessons. It gave us hands-on experience we can bring back," she said.

Director of Secondary Education Mariya Pushkantser said the techniques taught, "address the needs of all students and can support all students because the focus was on best practices."

Teachers will use what they learned during the institute to develop lessons for their classes next fall.

"We wanted this to be special for them. It sparked the passion we know our teachers have for supporting our students," Pushkantser said.



Teachers discuss a social studies lesson involving a map of the world.