

SUPERINTENDENT'S BRIEF

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



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Pre-K program adds locations, classes

In an effort to accommodate the needs of all City of Poughkeepsie parents seeking placement of their pre-K aged children, the Poughkeepsie City School District has expanded its pre-K programming to three locations for this upcoming school year.

School starts Sept. 8, 2022.

Last year, about 40 students were waitlisted at the start of the school year as the district did not anticipate the number of parents who were interested in their children participating in the district's full day pre-K

There's more room for pre-K children in the district's full-day program starting in 2022-23.

programming. "PCSD continues to adjust our approach to meet students' and family needs" shared Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, superintendent of schools. "[The Children's Cabinet's Early Childhood Report and Recommendations](#) clearly articulates the importance of children prenatal to pre-K being exposed to meaningful and enriching academic and social programming prior to entering kindergarten." Eliminating the waitlist and offering more seats to our youngest learners, "strengthens the academic and social-emotional success of children before they are required to come to school for kindergarten." The Board of Education authorized contracts with Day One and Holy Trinity to serve as PCSD pre-K community sites, joining Boys & Girls Club of Poughkeepsie who was previously approved. Each organization is aggressively working to recruit students to fill available seats. Registration will take place as follows:

Boys & Girls Club of Poughkeepsie, 221 Smith St., 845-561-4936

Saturday, August 27, 10am – 2pm

Monday, August 29 through Thursday, Sept. 1, 1pm -6pm

Day One (Reformed Church), 289 Main St. Suite 201, 845-452-5392

Tuesday, August 30, 11am – 1pm and 2pm – 4pm

Wednesday, August 31, 11am – 6pm

Holy Trinity Annex at St. Peter's School, 12 Father Cody Place, 845-472-6600

Monday, August 29, 9am – 2pm

Wednesday, August 31, 8am – 4pm

Thursday, September 1, 8am – 4pm

Registration documents and instructions are available at www.poughkeepsieschools.org/registration or via the accompanying QR code.

Register online! ↓



Administrators learn, share during retreat

Poughkeepsie City School district administrators were brought together Aug. 22 and 23 to participate in the last Administrator's Retreat before the start of the academic year. The retreat took place at the Poughkeepsie Grand Hotel's Starlight Room where district administrators discussed goals for the upcoming year and participated in instructional, student support, and culturally responsive related sessions.

This year's retreat was split into two sessions with one held at the end of the 2021-2022 school year to reflect on progress made. The second one prepared building and central office leaders for new initiatives while introducing them to new programs and partnerships with the chance to collaborate.

“The two main ideas of the retreat are collaboration and continued progress,” Director of Elementary Education Janet Bisti said. “These past two days provided staff with an opportunity to engage in discussion across buildings and build enthusiasm for the upcoming school year.”

Staff received a demonstration of Waverly Labs' Ambassador, a two-way translation device the district will use to improve communications with Spanish-speaking parents. Also on the agenda was a discussion with the Mid-Hudson Regional Partnership Center at Dutchess BOCES about culturally responsive teaching practices, among other topics.

Mid-Hudson's Culturally Responsive Educator Dagmar Luciano noted that educators are more familiar with this type of education and New York State's call of action to promote diversity, equity and inclusion following numerous cases of social injustice nationwide. “We have to be purposeful in our teaching,” Luciano said. “We have to look at the way all of our students come into our classroom and the assets that they bring.”

Bisti highlighted the importance of approaching education with the whole child in mind, which includes addressing each student's individual needs, pathways and opportunities.

“This can only be done through the collaboration and cooperation of multiple stakeholders with a variety of perspectives,” Bisti said. “Through the continued collaboration of our administration, partners, staff, students and families, we will see even more achievements for our students.”

Figuring out ways to boost students' progress and literacy and making learning rigorous with the appropriate support was what Executive Director of Students with Exceptionalities Dr. Iris Goliger was looking forward to hearing about.

“We made a very substantial impact on our programming over the last two years moving students to a less restrictive setting,” Goliger said. “Now, we need to support them with the right tools.”

Poughkeepsie High School's new Assistant Principal of Climate and Culture Barrington Atkins was most eager to learn about the district's culture so he can properly support teachers, faculty and students.

“I want to be able to apply the best support,” Atkins said. “I'm really excited to be back in the City of Poughkeepsie and getting ready for an amazing school year.”



Mid-Hudson Regional Partnership Center's Culturally Responsive Educator Dagmar Luciano talks with PCSD administrators about culturally responsive education.



New hires listen to a presentation during orientation at Columbus Administration Building.

Orientation gets new hires acquainted with PCSD

About 60 new Poughkeepsie City School District employees participated Wednesday in a new employee orientation day. This was the employee orientation in four years.

The district had more than 71 certified positions to fill and about 30 civil service positions, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services Timothy Wade said.

Sixty of the certified positions have been filled and interviews continue to fill the remaining certified and civil service positions.

While many of the positions are existing, seven are new. “There are four new crisis intervention workers, one school caseworker and two school counselors for social-emotional support,” Wade said.

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Superintendent Dr. Eric Jay Rosser kicked the morning off telling the group that PCSD has been experiencing an upward trajectory of success over the past three years. This is due, he said, to the district involving home and community in addressing the needs of the whole child.

The event ran from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., with presentations and activities focusing on different aspects of the district including benefits, in-service, absences and reporting them, breakfast, lunch and information specific to certified and civil service workers.

Before lunch, Executive Director of Community Schools Natasha Cherry took the group on a bus tour to view the communities the school district's student population lives in. The tour also supports the beginning stages of the cultural responsive and trauma-informed work the district is engaging in.

"By the new employees seeing the communities and seeing where each of the district's schools are located, it provides a greater perspective - empowering staff to better connect with the district's students," Wade said.

During the afternoon session, held at Poughkeepsie Middle School, Stan Merritt, the district's personnel administrator, worked with civil service employees while Supervisor of Secondary Education Jennifer Daddino and Supervisor of Elementary Education Patrice Woods provided professional development for certified employees.

"It was very successful," Wade said.



Ninth graders and their parents listen to PHS Principal Phee Simpson as she walks through the auditorium during the morning orientation session Wednesday.

move to one side of the auditorium where a translator provided information in their native language.

There are 313 ninth graders in 2022-23, 10 are new to the district, Simpson said.

"The goal of Freshmen Orientation is to create a welcoming environment that begins to build a sense of community among the incoming class that connects them to faculty, staff and other students," she said.

Simpson and counselor Jason Conrad told parents and students alike that in high school credits count and if a student doesn't attend or pass a class, they have to make it up, they can't just move on.

"We're going to work together," Simpson said, gesturing to Conrad, "and he's the guru who will get them through."

Simpson spoke about reducing class sizes at the school to help students.

She also stressed changes to improve safety.

"We have more security than we've ever had," she said, explaining that all doors are monitored electronically, there are cameras throughout campus and a new position, Assistant Principal for Climate and Culture, was created and filled by Barrington Atkins to oversee these aspects.

Throughout the visit, scholars were given a framework for four years of success.

Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education Charles Gallo spoke to the group about improvements being made to the facility, including upgrades to the restrooms, lighting, venting and the auditorium's sound and lighting system.

PHS staff greet the Class of 2026

New ninth graders and their parents/caregivers spent a little time at Poughkeepsie High School Wednesday, meeting some of the staff, learning about graduation requirements, rules and how things work at the school during two orientation sessions.

"This is the start of a new adventure and I'm excited you came out today," Principal Phee Simpson told attendees at the morning session. Spanish speakers were asked to



"There are a lot of exciting things coming," Gallo said, encouraging parents to stay in touch with their child's counselor and monitor Parent Square and Infinite Campus. He also mentioned the additional social-emotional supports being offered.

"This is your school. This is your community. We want kids to have a great experience."

Student athletes bring their A-games to team tryouts

Tryouts in various sports, including swimming, soccer and tennis, are an exciting time for students, their coaches and the school community as they unofficially kick off the 2022-2023 school year. The first games start in late August and early September, but practice games and the tryouts began this week.

"The hard work and effort from this point forward will develop our young adults to not only succeed on the playing surfaces, but also with their day-to-day life activities," Athletic Director Peter Bianco said. Bianco looks forward to having a great fall season and seeing the student athletes develop throughout the year.

"This year will feel closer to what we see as 'normal' and that is exciting for all," he said. "Best of luck to all our participants and let's make this year the best one yet."

In football, 15 students who played key positions graduated, so many new players will have big shoes to fill. "The new guys are going to have to get up to speed pretty quickly," Head Football Coach Mark Bianco said. "It's going to be a learning curve."

Athletes bringing their heart and soul into every game and being able to work together are the most important characteristics coach Bianco looks for.

"The skills will come, but we want effort day in and day out," he said. "The team chemistry is important."

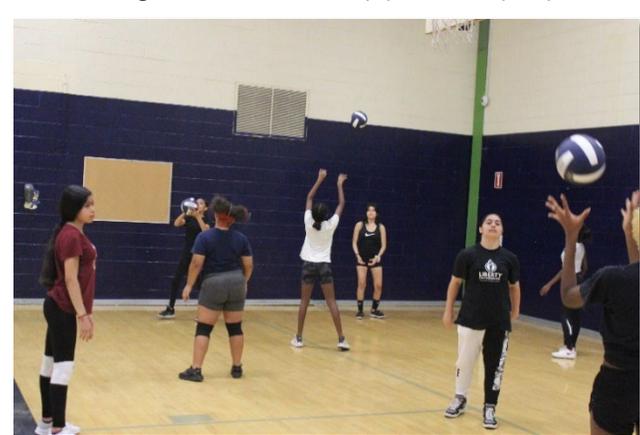
Senior Sharrief Cherry has played football since he was five and loves the feeling when he is on the field.

"When I'm in the field, it feels like nothing else matters," Cherry said.

Once he graduates, Cherry plans to play football in college.



PHS athletes play a practice game of football during the Athletic Department's sports tryout on Aug. 22.



PHS athletes practice spiking a volleyball during sports tryouts.

"It's my dream," Cherry said. "It keeps me out of trouble." Volleyball Coach Victor Izzo is entering his first year as a coach with a positive attitude and was impressed by the girls' efforts during practice.

"I feel there is a large foundation to build on with the upperclassmen," Izzo said. "The girls worked very hard." When it comes to athletes, Izzo looks for hard working and committed players.

"I feel consistency is the key ingredient for success," he said.

Junior Layla Martin, practice was a little different because she was training with a new coach, but overall it went well. She loves volleyball for its interactive nature and constant movement.

"It's fun, it keeps you moving," Martin said.

Upcoming events

Tuesday, Sept. 6, Faculty and staff report back

Wednesday, Sept. 7, BOE meeting, Administration Building, 18 S. Perry St., 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, Sept. 8: School resumes

Saturday, Sept. 10: Back to School Bash, PHS Track and Field, 70 Forbus St., 12-3 p.m.