

# SUPERINTENDENT'S BRIEF

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

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## Esperanza honors two PCSD members

Two members of the Poughkeepsie City School District were honored Saturday, Sept. 24, 2022, at Esperanza Dutchess County Hispanic organization's 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Community Service Awards Brunch. The brunch recognizes individuals and businesses for their dedication, commitment, and contributions to the political and social climate in their communities.

Fatimah Carmen Luisa Martinez Santiago, PCSD Board of Education vice president and Becky Torres, PCSD clerk of the board, were among the seven honorees recognized at the event. The others were Austin Flores, Tapas Restaurant & Bar restaurateur; Javier Gomez, manager of real estate development for Hudson River Housing; Tom Lewis, State Farm Insurance Agent; Elizabeth O'Raffity, STEM educator; and Lilia Perez, grants and programs manager at Arts Mid-Hudson.

Martinez Santiago was recognized for her long-standing work in communities located in Costa Rica, New York City, Dutchess, Ulster and Orange Counties. In 2008 her service was recognized by the Outward Bound National Network when she received the most prestigious recognition a staff member could receive, the Joshua L. Minor award. The Joshua L. Minor Award is given to those whose commitment and contributions to Outward Bound have improved the lives of students and staff and enhanced Outward Bound's ability to fulfill its mission. In 2017, she was awarded the Compass Award for embodying the mission and exemplifying the Core Values of NYC Outward Bound Schools. Currently, Martinez Santiago is Astor Services for Children and Families first adult health and homecare manager and provides care coordination to adults.

Torres was recognized for her long-standing service to others in New York City and the Mid-Hudson Valley. Beyond her service to the district in her capacity as clerk of the board, Torres is a devout Christian, serving others through her involvement in her church. She sings in the choir, is a member of the worship team, serves as one of the in-house musicians and has served as a worship leader for youth - cultivating their talents and supporting their positive youth development. One of her favorite mottos is: "Dale al mundo lo mejor que tienes y lo mejor volvera' a ti." (Give the world the best you have and the best will come back to you).

The brunch was held on the ninth day of Hispanic Heritage Month, an annual recognition of the contributions of Hispanic Americans to the United States and a celebration of Hispanic Heritage and culture.

Esperanza is a local nonprofit organization committed to the betterment of the Latino community. Norma Vicarrondo founded the organization in 1995 after noticing that the Latino population was growing in Dutchess County and were falling through the cracks of the American system due to language and cultural barriers.

Board members Tom O'Neill, president, and Bob Creedon attended along with Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, superintendent; Dr. Charles Gallo, assistant superintendent for secondary education; and Mr. Gregory Mott, assistant superintendent for elementary education.

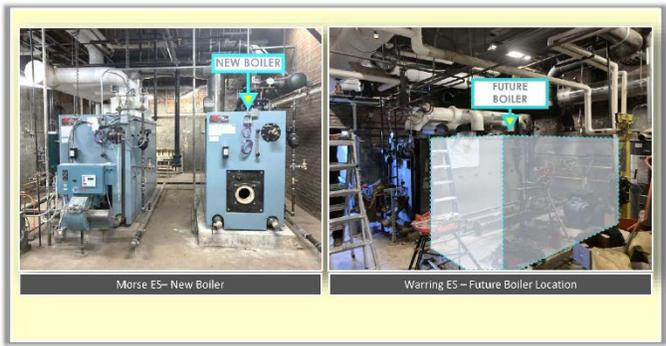


Fatimah Carmen Luisa Martinez Santiago and Becky Torres proudly display their Hispanic Heritage Committee Service awards from Esperanza Dutchess County at the event.



## BOILER REPLACEMENTS – SUMMER/FALL 2022

Boiler Replacements
<b>Poughkeepsie Middle School</b> Equipment Postponed - Dec.'22
<b>Warring Elementary School</b> Equipment Postponed - Dec.'22
<b>Clinton Elementary School</b> Equipment Postponed - Dec.'22
<b>Morse Elementary School</b> On Schedule
<b>Smith ELC</b> Equipment Postponed - Dec.'22



# Update shows construction progress

At Wednesday's Board of Education Workshop meeting, the quarterly Construction & Design Progress Update was provided to the Board of Education and Community. Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, superintendent of schools and Kevin Sawyer, vice president and project executive for Triton Construction led the

presentation outlining the status of the district's \$98 million Capital Improvement Project. Sawyer shared the status of the project's summer 2022 work noting that roof renovations have been completed at Poughkeepsie Middle School, Warring Elementary and Krieger Elementary. He shared that a significant portion of Poughkeepsie High School's (PHS) roof renovations was completed with the remainder of the district's largest school to be completed in 2023. Once the remaining portion of PHS' roof is completed, all schools will have roofing systems that maintain the integrity of each facility against weather elements that have disrupted the normal flow of the school environment for years. The presentation also highlighted the status of the restroom renovation work, boiler replacements, and electronic school marquees:

- **Restroom Renovations:** Planned Summer '22 work is completed at the PHS and 90 percent complete at Smith Early Learning Center. The renovation work resulted in 16 student/group restrooms and 14 single user restrooms being completed. Sawyer noted that the remaining restrooms at PHS, Smith ELC and all district schools are slated to be completed in summer 2023.
- **Boiler Replacements:** Significant work transpired this summer to prep Poughkeepsie Middle School (PMS), Warring Elementary, Clinton Elementary, Smith ELC, Krieger Elementary, and Morse Elementary to receive new boiler systems. Each system is slated to be received and installed before January.
- **Electronic School Marquees:** The electrical work for the district's remaining three schools to receive electronic marquees has been completed and each school marquee is slated to be installed in November.

The presentation concluded with Rosser sharing that the remaining \$46 million dollars of the Capital Improvement work will be based on the following project priorities.

1. Security (entrances, external doors, internal doors)
2. Remaining restroom renovations
3. Select ADA components
4. Educational Programming inclusive of Innovation Labs at the elementary schools and reimagined learning spaces at both PHS and PMS
5. Building Components/systems necessary for dependability

Rosser shared that district administration had begun meeting to define the specifics of the next major phase of the work.

## RESTROOM RENOVATIONS – SUMMER '22

Restroom Renovations
<b>Poughkeepsie High School</b> Summer '22 Work – Complete <small>*Remaining restrooms scheduled Summer '23</small>
<b>Smith ELC</b> 90% Complete <small>*Remaining bathrooms complete by October '22</small>
<b>Total Restrooms Renovated (Summer '22)</b> ✓ STUDENT/ GROUP = 16 ✓ SINGLE USER = 14



Sawyer noted that beyond the remaining \$46 million left in the \$98 million dollar project the district has secured other funding to support the priorities.

View the [Construction & Design Progress Update here](#).

## Training informs on plans for students with special needs

District and building leaders, administrative interns, psychologists and psychology interns joined together last week to refresh their knowledge and familiarity with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the body of legislation that assures that students with special needs and covers any conditions that limits daily activities.

Presenter Kate Reid of Bond, Schoeneck and King, presented the similarities and [differences](#) between Section 504 and "504 Plans" and Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that govern special education. 504 plans aren't part of special education but have the same goal of helping students thrive in the school environment.

Case law, professional case studies and experiences, and challenges in the interpretation of regulation were discussed with vivid examples. Through discussion of case law and real-world examples from her professional experience, Reid illustrated how staff can arrive at eligibility decisions and plans that are meaningful and appropriate for students and manageable for schools to implement. She also answered specific questions from staff.

Executive Director for Students with Exceptionalities Dr. Iris Goliger said the clarification provided by this review of Section 504 was especially helpful for all staff in clearing up misconceptions about 504 plans being "IEP Life" and assuring that all staff understand the legal implications of accommodation plans and students having access to their education in a manner that is level with peers.

Under IDEA, students are eligible only if they have disabilities that fall within the 12 categories of educational disability outlined in the regulations, and in which students require "specially designed instruction" in order to make progress leading to promotion.

Attendees left with a greater understanding of the requirements of Section 504 and the specificity of IDEA regulations.

A major point of the training concerned fidelity of implementation and the review of progress. District staff were encouraged to carefully review the use of and effectiveness of accommodations, and come to 504 review meetings with data available for discussion regarding consideration of continuing or discontinuing any specified accommodation. Additionally, staff gained insight into the problems presented by writing 504 plans with "canned" accommodations, and were encouraged to think about each individual child to word accommodations with enough specificity and clarity that all staff interpret them and implement them consistently. Building level team meetings with staff involved in plan implementation were suggested as a means of making sure that all staff involved in providing accommodations for a student, understand what is intended in the written accommodation and how to fulfill it.

Finally, the meeting reviewed the responsibilities of building leaders as those responsible for daily oversight of 504 plans and student receipt of accommodations. The Office for Students with Exceptionalities staff is responsible for the coordination of Section 504 referral and eligibility meetings and annual reviews, in accordance with the regulatory requirements of prior written notice to the parent and a minimum annual review of the ongoing need for a plan.

504	VS	IEP
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973	Governing Law	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act amended 2004
U.S. Department of Education: Office of Civil Rights	Overseeing Agency	U.S. Department of Education: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services
Entire life	Ages Covered	Birth through age 21
Student must have a disability AND the disability affects the student's ability to access the curriculum.	Eligibility	Student must qualify in one of 13 categories of disability, AND disability affects the child's ability to access curriculum.
Does not require written plan.	Written Plan	Does require a written plan.
Law does not specify evaluation procedures. Simply states "periodic" evaluation.	Evaluation	Initial evaluation using standard assessment tools. Student must be reevaluated every three years.
School must get permission to evaluate. School can create a plan without parent participation.	Parent Involvement	Parents are required to be part of the IEP team.
Curriculum is not customized for the student. The student completes the same curriculum as students without disabilities.	Customized Curriculum	The IEP must be an individualized plan that meets the needs of the student.