



Needs assessment aids support efforts



The New York State Department of Education defines Community Schools as “public schools that emphasize family engagement, strong community partnerships and additional support for students and families.” Designed to provide opportunities and support that address factors that impede student success in and out of school, community schools leverage school and community resources to deliver essential services to students and their families increasing the chances for student success in and beyond the school environment.

As part of the Poughkeepsie City School District's efforts to better understand the factors that interfere with PCSD families, a family needs survey has been developed to help inform the district's community school strategy and provide Community School's staff with critical information to better meet the needs of the district's families and elevate student success.

“The survey was created to identify external factors that are impacting our families as a Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet report found that 80 percent of a child's time is spent outside of the classroom,” Executive Director of Community Schools Natasha Cherry said.

The survey seeks information about food, housing, medical, childcare and employment insecurities and seeks to better understand how the district might support parent educational aspirations, student after-hours programming, and student academic help. Information gathered via the assessment is confidential and will be used to provide programming and support to elevate student success.

“Community Schools should reflect the needs and strengths of students, families and community. As we continue to strengthen our approach to involve home and community into the equation for student success, it is imperative that we understand the varying and evolving needs of our families. This survey will aid in doing so,” Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, superintendent of schools, said.

The [Family Needs Assessment](https://bit.ly/pcsdfamilyneeds22) is available online in English and Spanish and can be accessed at bit.ly/pcsdfamilyneeds22.

Cheers for cheerleading

Poughkeepsie's cheerleaders finished the fall season having never scored lower than second place in local competitions, JV coach Za'ire People said. In October the team earned 1st place at an event hosted by Walter Panas High School in Cortlandt Manor, NY.

This is one of the squad's most successful years, and coach Lynnece Edmond attributes it to a number of factors:

- Having the right resources and support from the athletics department.
- The creation last fall of a junior varsity squad.
- Bringing Pioneer Pete, the district's mascot, into the routines, which brought some extra points.

“We hadn't had one (JV squad) in six or seven years so this year when we had an injury or something we were able to move the girls up instead of having to shift routines,” Edmond said.

People, Edmond's daughter, has volunteered with the team since 2017, but this is her first year as coach. She does a lot of the choreography.



Members of the PHS cheerleading team practice at the Early Learning Center gym before sectionals.



The PHS cheerleaders pose for a team photo after a fall competition.

At the statewide competition the team had scores similar to its other competitions, but faced more teams, placing eighth in Division B. Edmonds said the team, “takes losses and use them for gains.” So, People looked at what could be done for the sectionals the following week.

“We made some changes to stunting and choreography to use at sectionals to make our routines even stronger,” People said.

Senior Kerice Salmon is one of the 16 squad members. She has been on the team since seventh grade and likes having the younger cheerleaders participate.

“They work hard to make varsity and it

makes me be a mentor,” she said, adding that being on the team is like family and teammates help each other.

Just being on the team helps with personal development.

Salmon said she has gained jobs because of her work on the team. When asked how, she explained: “You have to have teamwork on a job.”

At the sectionals in the first week of November, the team placed fifth. Individually, Salmon and teammate Autumn Bland earned All League and All Section while Gabriel Anderson earned All League. To do so, each competed individually with about 200 other cheerleaders in Section I, Edmond said. Congratulations to the squad and we’re looking forward to the winter season, which Edmond said will have more competitions.

Art Effect honors foundation director, PHS graduate



G. Angela Henry

The Art Effect’s annual Art After Dark event honored G. Angela Henry, executive director of the Poughkeepsie Public School Foundation, which works to help strengthen programs and offerings in the Poughkeepsie City School District. This year’s Garden of Wonder Gala helps raise money for The Art Effect’s arts education programming, much of which involves students from PCSD - including summer programs. In 2021, PPSF provided three summer scholarships to district students.

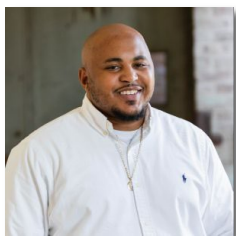
One of the district’s planned career pathways is the Arts and G. Angela Henry has her own connection to artistic endeavors.

She is a former chair of Arts Mid-Hudson and also works in the arts. Using the stage name Grace Angela Henry, she voices audio tours for Berkshire Botanical Garden, Historic Huguenot Street and on audiobooks for Cornelia E. Davis and Condoleezza Rice among others. She narrated, “A Sculpted Life” which will air on PBS and is known locally for her portrayal of Sojourner Truth, according to her provided bio information.

Henry was one of three honorees this year. The others were PHS graduate Shakur Peterson and the Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Peterson runs Assemblymember Jonathan Jacobson’s Poughkeepsie office. He served our nation as an Army Specialist in Iraq and then returned home to

Poughkeepsie after five years. He participated in the Children’s Media Project, now Spark Media and earned his bachelor’s degree from Marist College and a master’s in social work from Adelphi University.



Shakur Peterson

Marist's Upward Bound esports program entertains, educates

The Marist College esports program had the pleasure to host its first Upward Bound tournament at Poughkeepsie High School. The 32 students that attended the event were new to a very competitive learning environment. The program's goal is to bring a diverse group of students together to learn how to problem solve and work as a team while improving their communication and social skills. Participants had to overcome nervousness, anxiety and move out of their comfort zones in order to progress through the tournament.



Upward Bound esports participants watch a competition during the tournament held at Poughkeepsie High School.

The video gamers learned quickly that esports competition is a structured learning environment that is highly interactive, mentally stimulating, and challenging.

In the U.S. more than 200 colleges now offer esports programs & scholarships for students, with many more on the horizon. Marist College offers a bachelor's degree in Digital Media. Esports organizations like TESP, RSAA & CSL offer tournament prizes in the form of scholarships to help students pay for college. "The Marist College UB program has brought to the center stage the opportunity for students to showcase their "hidden" talents and give them the chance to forge new friendships and build greater respect among their fellow classmates," Stanley Martinez, Upward Bound program coordinator for PHS said. "We want to create that motivational spark for all students to see that Marist College esports is a new emerging gateway that can lead to exciting careers in computer programming, marketing, project management, animation, video game development, information technology, graphic design, digital arts, and computer science."

Martinez further commented that "Most parents overlook video games as a waste of time. They do not know that their son or daughter is developing skill sets that will carry them through life and possibly make it into the multi-billion dollar gaming industry on a professional gaming team and tournament. Nowadays people can make a full-time living just by playing videos and streaming their talents online... Who knows the next big star can come out of Poughkeepsie High School."

Gamer Kamari H. said, "I did not know so many students were so good at Super Smash Bros, I can't wait for the next tournament!"



Teachers, staff and families dance together at the Clinton Elementary School Harvest Festival.

Families enjoy food and fun at Clinton Harvest Festival

It was a fun-filled evening at Clinton School when Clinton families, faculty, and staff gathered for a Harvest Festival, organized by the school's PBIS team. Everyone enjoyed pizza and snacks, games, crafts, a cake walk, and dancing to music by a DJ Wisdom. "I got my face painted, played a beanbag toss game, and won a cake", said Journey Hunt, a third grader in Suzi Sullivan's class. "My favorite thing was making the lollipop ghost. It was amazing!"

"It was wonderful to gather together, lighten up, and have some fun", said Tracey Lysko, a reading specialist at the school. "We are grateful to the parent and staff volunteers for helping us make it all happen. The PBIS team has been working hard and we look forward to providing more positive experiences for our Clinton community."