

# SUPERINTENDENT'S BRIEF

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

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**Poughkeepsie City School District and its partners visit Ampact headquarters in Minnesota.**

## Visit highlights new academic support

Last week, Poughkeepsie City School District leaders (Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, superintendent of schools; Gregory Mott, assistant superintendent of elementary education; Nadine Dargan-Elting, principal of ELC; Natasha Brown, executive director of community schools; Janet Bisti, director of elementary education; and Kimberly Popken, PCSD teacher & PPSTA president); and representatives from the Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet, DAY ONE Early Learning Community, Astor Services, the Boys & Girls Club of Newburgh & Poughkeepsie and Lead for Poughkeepsie spent several days in Minnesota meeting with representatives from [Ampact](#) and

[AmeriCorps](#) to observe their Early Learning Corps and K-3 Math Corps in action.

Poughkeepsie was selected as Ampact's first New York location, thanks to Rob Watson Jr.'s reaching out through his Lead for Poughkeepsie/Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet affiliations. PCSD is moving forward with plans to launch the two programs this fall to provide additional support for district students.

"[Ampact](#) is excited to partner with Poughkeepsie City School District this Fall to launch Early Learning Corps and K-3 Math Corps (two AmeriCorps educational programs) that will recruit local community members to provide supplemental support to students through evidence-based literacy and math tutoring. We have spent more than a year working with district leaders and the City of Poughkeepsie community to understand how we can support the vision its leaders have for student success in school and life," Lindsay Dolce, Ampact's chief advancement officer, said.

Ampact will establish an office with about five staff members in Poughkeepsie and coordinate about 30 Ampact members who will serve PCSD as well as partners Day One, the Boys and Girls Club of Newburgh and Poughkeepsie, Community Family Development, and Astor Services.

Lizzie Morris Vogt, director of partnerships and expansion for Ampact, said the Early Learning Corps serves all students ages 3-5, providing early literacy and numeracy tutoring to help prepare students for kindergarten while Math Corps serves students in grades K-3 who have been identified based on teacher recommendations and assessments. It targets students who are performing below grade level with additional support in a small group setting, she said.

Ampact has been in existence for 20 years and has demonstrated success with its interventions. Morris Vogt said that while the grant is for the 2023-24 school year, she hopes to be able to continue the program and increase the number of tutors, who commit to working for one school year.

As AmeriCorps members serving with Ampact, local residents can receive a number of benefits including:

- A paid stipend every two weeks
- Money for college tuition or student loans. Tutors 55 and older may gift the award to their child, grandchild, stepchild or foster child.
- Free health insurance and child care assistance for those who qualify.

Community members interested in serving as Ampact tutors can apply [at this link](#).

In the coming week, Sonali Nijhawn, the state and national director of AmeriCorps will be visiting Poughkeepsie to discuss AmeriCorps as an opportunity for our community with the Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet and other community leaders.

# Student concerts bring music to community



The sun and warm weather is a perfect time to enjoy student theater and music performances, and that is exactly what is happening throughout the district as spring concerts and musicals fill school stages.

Poughkeepsie Middle School's Spring Concert kicked things off last week,

followed by the Poughkeepsie High School Spring Concert Monday and the All District Elementary Concert yesterday and the all-elementary performance of "Aladdin," June 14 & 15 at 6 p.m. at Krieger Elementary School, 265 Hooker Ave.

The district's focus on arts education and the arts pathway to graduation has led to increased student involvement and more performances. In fact, the All District Elementary Concert was a first for the district. PMS' 6<sup>th</sup> grade orchestra with 14 students led the program, followed by the 13-member 7<sup>th</sup> grade orchestra, 8-member 8<sup>th</sup> grade orchestra, 6<sup>th</sup> grade band (12 members) and the combined 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade band with 31 members. Teachers Brandon Codrington and Michael Colucci conducted. PHS senior Marvin Juarez Espinoza opened the PHS concert with an introduction on violin. It featured 27 students in Jazz Band, 29 in the Concert Band and 22 in the Wind Ensemble all conducted by Joe North. The 17 students in the Orchestra were conducted by Brandon Codrington and the 27 chorus members were led by Neal Grover.

The jazz performance featured solos by Temple Moody, alto saxophone; Sonia Gutierrez-Mendoza, tenor saxophone; Bryan

**At top, Poughkeepsie High School students perform during the PHS Spring Concert. Above, PCSD's first All District Elementary Concert featured fourth and fifth graders from all four elementary schools. At right, Poughkeepsie Middle School's Spring Concert.**





Ramirez, baritone saxophone; Edward Gabriel Martinez, clarinet; Amir Shell, trumpet; Derek Sellers, trombone; Jacob Lewis, drums; and Saanie Moodie, Vocals.

Wind soloists were Grace Clifford, flute; Naiya Garvin, flute; Edward Gabriel Martinez, clarinet; Ivana Waite, alto saxophone; Christina Stone, trumpet; Saanie Moodie, trumpet; and Malik Williams, trumpet.

Fourth and fifth grade students combined from all four district elementary schools to form a band, chorus and string group. Harriet Luongo, part of the chorus, had a solo.

Teacher Jay Lynch directed the band, Stacy Kalbfus the orchestra and Stacy Grady, Victor Izzo and Sangwook Park the choir.

"It was great seeing a full house last night at the All District Elementary Concert," Superintendent Dr. Eric Jay Rosser said, adding that he is happy to see the progress the entire community has made in expanding opportunity and access to music education and expression for all students. "I look forward to seeing the community at more events, including 'Aladdin,' in the future."



Attending the MBK Symposium were, L-R, Jason Conrad, faculty mentor; Peter Sealy, Jameel Richardson, Abass Na-aata, Keenan Wood and Jonathan McPhee, mentor.

## PHS represents at state MBK Symposium

Students and staff involved in My Brother's Keeper attended the [2023 New York State My Brother's Keeper Symposium in Albany](#) last month held to recognize current members, induct new members and offer encouragement and skills. With a theme of "Better is Expecting," workshops included "What's Possible for You," "Living and Learning" and a variety of networking opportunities for PHS seniors Jameel Richardson and Keenan Wood (current fellows) and juniors Peter Sealy and Abass Na-aata who were inducted. The four were accompanied by mentor Jason Conrad, PHS's ninth grade counselor and Da'Ron Wilson, executive director of school engagement, and Jonathan McPhee an MBK mentor.

Each MBK fellow is matched with a mentor from the state network and given a fellowship opportunity. They also

develop and execute a service project related to the initiative.

Keynote speaker Dr. Eric "ET" Thomas, spoke about the importance of education to all the scholars with three principles:

1. Education is not an option - it's a necessity.
2. Critical thinking is marquee.
3. Winners win - and they surround themselves with other winners.

Keith L. Brown held the session on "Not Possible/I'm Possible" which focused on advocating for oneself by learning how to communicate effectively and connect with colleges and universities, building relationships while still in high school, as well as procuring career readiness skills through connections with local stakeholder for the purpose of closing the opportunity gap. He also spoke about reversing negative stereotypes and toxic masculinity, which condemn young men of color for showing their human side and other negative messages that dehumanize young men of color, all of which lead to mental health issues.

In her June 2 communication, Betty Rosa, commissioner, of the New York State Education Department, wrote that this was the first time students were back in person for the event since the pandemic.

"The students' personal stories were moving, and their energy and enthusiasm were truly inspiring," she wrote. Poughkeepsie's delegation was a small part of the hundreds of students, parents and educational leaders who attended the event.

## Upcoming events

- **Wednesday, June 7:** Board of Education Regular meeting, 6:30 p.m., 18 S. Perry Street
- **Friday, June 9:** PHS Awards night, 6 p.m., PHS auditorium, 70 Forbus St.
- **Saturday, June 10:** Saturday Morning Lights, Poughkeepsie Middle School, 55 College Ave.