

SUPERINTENDENT'S BRIEF

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

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VOLUME 5



Documentary features PMS' Aria Martin

Poughkeepsie City School District's Aria Martin is a humble student-athlete now starring in a movie about herself with dreams of one day representing the United States at the Summer Olympics.

The seventh grader at Poughkeepsie Middle School is a second-degree black belt in karate and hopes to be a third-degree black belt in about 18 months. She works out six days a week and has traveled to tournaments all over North America, winning numerous tournaments and medals representing Leclerc's Martial Arts.

Martin's story - her struggles and her overcoming them - is being told by Kingston-based Hudsy TV in a recently released 14-minute film, "[One of a Kind: Aria Martin](#)." Hudsy TV is a free streaming service with a mission to use film and storytelling to strengthen, engage, and connect with the community.

"I liked it a lot," she said of the movie. "I just really wanted to see how it turned out at the end - that was the most exciting part about it."

Martin said the toughest part of making the movie was having people follow her at school, karate school, and a tournament at the Hudson Valley Sports Dome in Milton.

"They were following me a lot, I didn't like that," she said. "I don't like a lot of attention. I like to be in my own space sometimes."

Robert Parkes, interim principal of Poughkeepsie Middle School, said Martin is on the Principal's Honor Roll and understands her discomfort with having a camera follow her.

"I think one of the best things about her is she is very humble," he said. "She said it. She doesn't like the limelight, the spotlight, and all things that are happening. She is awesome. I can easily see that not too long from now, I will be watching her at the Olympics."

Martin is the youngest of Zachary and Jennifer Martin's three children. She's been going to Leclerc's Martial Arts for seven years.

"I love karate," she said. "I'm fortunate and grateful because I made a lot of friends. It's like another family when I go in there."



Aria Martin stands in the Poughkeepsie Middle School lobby.



Basketball team competes in Canadian tournament

The Poughkeepsie High School boys varsity basketball team is in Edmonton Canada competing in the [40th REB Invitational Basketball Tournament](#), which began Thursday and runs through Saturday, Dec. 16. The team won Thursday's game, defeating Ross Shepherd 60-54.

The tournament is recognized as one of the top amateur events in North America. Over 500 athletes and coaches, hundreds of volunteers, full media coverage, and sold-out crowds helped promote this event as a top basketball tournament.

Twelve teams will be competing in the tournament, with the PHS

Pioneers being the only team from the United States. According to the [REB Invitational Program](#), contests

started yesterday and continue through Saturday. The event, which also hosts girls' basketball, also includes a Slam Dunk Contest.

The program also highlights the names of PHS players, position, height, and grade along with the names of coaches and team managers.

"This trip has been such an enjoyable experience. More than half of the team members are enjoying their first time out of the country. For many other players, this was their first time taking an airplane. The trip has been an experience of a lifetime and I'm just happy to see the smiling faces of our youth partake in the festivities," head Coach Cody Moffett said.

All games will be [streamed live](#). Note that there is a two-hour time difference. For example, games that start at 10:30 a.m. MT in Edmonton starts at 12:30 p.m. EST here on the east coast.

"This is an exciting time for our players along with our Poughkeepsie community. We are very proud of this team, along with all our sports teams, and looking forward to continuing to have a successful winter athletic season!" shared Peter Bianco, executive director of physical education, health services, athletics, and recreation. See the [brackets](#) and watch it [live](#).

Poughkeepsie advances to compete against Jasper Place at 4 p.m. EST today.

Morse first graders visit SUNY New Paltz planetarium

First graders at Morse Elementary School recently explored the stars and planets at the John R. Kirk Planetarium on the SUNY New Paltz campus.

"It was really fun," said first-grader Jose Perez III. "We learned why the moon is special because if the moon didn't exist, our homes wouldn't exist. The moon controls the oceans."

Cheryl Haines, the first-grade teacher, taught a unit on astronomy before her class and four other first-grade classes at Morse visited the planetarium over two days.

"We learned some of the stars are planets," said first-grader Elizabeth Garcia.

First-grader George Fleming added, "I learned Saturn's moon exploded and turned into a ring."

Ahinoa Garzon Erazo said the trip taught her more about constellations and recalled some of the constellations she learned from class and the trip – Taurus the bull, the Gemini twins, and the two hunting dogs, Canis Major and Canis Minor.

"Constellations are made by stars and they can be made by stars since there are many stars and constellations can be very big," she said.

For many of the students, this was their first trip to a college campus and the first time they interacted with college students. The first graders toured the campus and ate in a campus cafeteria. Haines' students raised their hands when asked if they hoped to one day attend college.

Gaines shared what she hoped students learned from the trip.

"Learning is a lifelong journey," said Haines. "You don't stop once you finish first grade or move up to middle school or high school, it is a lifelong journey and it never stops."

The first graders received a grant for the trip from The Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley. The grant paid for the transportation and admission into the planetarium show. Earlier in the school year, the first graders were presented with a grant from the same foundation to pick apples and pumpkins at Barton Orchards.

"We as a team work very hard to find funds to help us get the trips that we plan to enhance the learning," she said of the teachers.

"It makes what they learn in the classroom just that much more engaged and becomes a part of them."

Plan a visit: <https://www.newpaltz.edu/planetarium/>



First graders from Morse Elementary experience the stars and planets at the John R. Kirk Planetarium



SAVE THE DATE!

Yvonne Flowers Mayoral Oath of Office



Tuesday, Jan. 2, 2024 at 1 p.m.

Poughkeepsie High School Auditorium

Yvonne will be joined by Common Council members who will also be sworn in.

Stay tuned for more information in the coming weeks!

RSVP to dpowell@cityofpoughkeepsie.com

Mayor-Elect Flowers picks PHS for January 2nd Inauguration

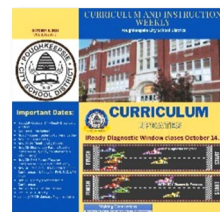
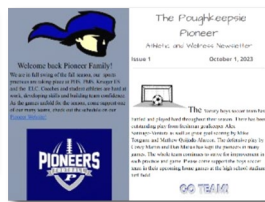
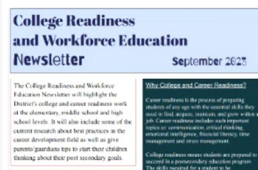
The inauguration of the City of Poughkeepsie's first African-American mayor will be held at Poughkeepsie High School on January 2, 2024, at 1 pm.

Mayor-elect Yvonne Flowers, a graduate of Poughkeepsie City School District, will be sworn in on January 2, 2024. She will be joined by Common Council members who will also be sworn in.

One other graduate of the Poughkeepsie City School District, Da'Ron Wilson, who serves as the district's executive director of school engagement will also be sworn in as Councilmember-at-Large. Other members of the Common Council will be sworn into their seats at the event.

Parent's students and other members of the school community are invited to take part in this historic inauguration by sending an RSVP to <mailto:dpowell@cityofpoughkeepsie.com>

Other newsletters to keep you informed:



Poughkeepsie City School District publishes a variety of newsletters throughout the year. Here are the newsletters that are available now:

[CI Weekly](#) for Dec. 15, 2023

[Poughkeepsie Pioneer November 2023](#), athletics newsletter

[Mental Health and Wellness, December 2023](#)

Upcoming events

- **Sat., Dec. 16:** Saturday Morning Lights Holiday Celebration, 12-3 p.m., PHS
- **Wed. Dec. 20:** Clinton Elementary School Winter Concert, 6 p.m.,
 - School board workshop meeting, 6:30 p.m., 18 S. Perry St.
 - Presentation: \$3 million Safety and Security Project Update
 - Presentation: 1st Quarter Performance Objectives Update
- **Fri., Dec. 22:** ½ day for students
- **Mon., Dec. 25-Jan. 2, 2024:** Winter Recess
- **Mon., Jan. 2, 2024:** Mayor Inauguration Ceremony, 1pm, PHS