

SUPERINTENDENT'S BRIEF

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

ISSUE NO. 35 | December 20, 2023

VOLUME 5



Ann Marie Tucker earned National Board Certification as a school counselor.

Tucker earns National Board Certification

Poughkeepsie Middle School's Ann Marie Tucker, school counselor has become the first secondary educator in the Poughkeepsie City School District to achieve National Board Certification. National Board Certification is the most respected professional certification available in education and provides numerous benefits to teachers, students, and schools. The certification was designed to develop, retain, and recognize accomplished teachers and to generate ongoing improvement in schools nationwide.

Tucker, who received the Albert Shanker Grant from the New York State Education Department to help her with funds to pursue certification, learned on Dec. 9th of her certification and now is the 24th of the 7,588 school counselors in New York State to be certified. Given three years to complete the program, Tucker completed a four-part program in one year.

"I wanted to push myself to my limits as a school counselor and see how I could better serve my students," said Tucker,

Tucker is the second person in her family to achieve National Board Certification. Her mom, retired Newburgh teacher, Ann Marie Healey, earned certification as an elementary school teacher.

"I think the certification and the experience she went through to get it is going to continue to help make her a leader in terms of elevating the role of the department and advocacy for the school counseling department, which translates into better services for the students," said PMS SEL counselor Rachel Birsner. "She's a tireless advocate for her students and families, who also has an incredible ability to synthesize all the different facets in a student's life, connecting family, teachers, administrators, and community resources."

Tucker, wife of Brian Tucker and mother of eight-year-old Brian Tucker, will now serve as a facilitator for educators looking to become National Board Certified.

Three Poughkeepsie elementary educators previously earned national certification, and two are still active in the district. "I hope there are more to come," she said.

Rosser leads Read-Aloud at Morse

Editor's note: Use the links to each book to access a read-aloud version to use at home.

"Don't you eat my crew!" shouted Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, superintendent of schools, as he read [The Gingerbread Pirates](#) to Cheryl Haines' 1st-grade class at Morse Elementary School on Dec. 11. The book tells a funny and magical Christmas story about a gingerbread pirate, Captain Cookie, and his daring adventure on Christmas Eve to rescue his crew from a suspicious "cannibal" named Santa Claus.

Haines' first graders were all ears as Rosser engaged them in the interactive read-aloud. Haines and Rosser would pause during the reading to help students build their vocabulary, point out things about



Dr. Rosser shares excitement as he reads "The Gingerbread Pirates" to first graders at Morse Elementary School.



Dr. Rosser, Ms. Haines and her 1st grade class displaying their gifts from Santa.

the text, and revisit a previous lesson on personifications. Research indicates that interactive read-aloud supports students' interest in print materials, expands knowledge, and supports reading comprehension, all elements in supporting childhood literacy development.

While engaging students in the interactive read-aloud, Rosser received an unexpected telephone call from none other than Santa Claus himself. After the excitement of the children dissipated, Santa Claus asked Rosser to place his cell phone on speaker so that each 1st grader could say their name aloud. Santa then shared with Rosser that he would be delivering something special to him to give the students the week of December 18.

Yesterday, Dr. Rosser, delivered bendable toy gingerbread boys and girls to every child, a copy of [The Gingerbread Man](#) book by Scholastic for students to add to their home libraries,

and a few other gingerbread-related items for Haines, including a new addition to her growing gingerbread book collection, [The Gingerbread Man Loose at the Zoo](#).

After much jubilee, Haines gathered the students and provided them with an opportunity to share with Dr. Rosser the various story elements they had been learning in the series of Gingerbread stories they'd read. "I love first grade, Ms. Haines reminds me of my first-grade teacher Mary Rozier, who to this day is my favorite teacher. Like Ms. Rozier, Ms. Haines is nurturing her students' love for reading," shared Rosser.

GSA Club members give, and receive help this season

Poughkeepsie High School's Genders and Sexualities Alliance Club (GSA) members gave help and received some at a meeting on Dec. 8th.

GSA received a check for \$1,000 to advance club goals from Prime Print Shop in Poughkeepsie and donated clothing from the club's first annual Trans Day of Remembrance clothing drive to the Trans Closet of the Hudson Valley.

"I'm very happy with the outcome of the clothing drive. It was our first one and I was surprised to see how many bags of clothes we had," said Danasha, senior and co-president of GSA who chose to use only her first name.

Junior Gianna Griffin added, "With the money, we'll be able to do bigger projects for us and the school. I hope with the money we could contribute more."

"I'm extremely excited for this club," shared Tasha Benbow-Harris, school psychologist, who is in her second year as club adviser. "It did take a bit of a downturn during COVID and I got the opportunity to jump on board. I call it GSA 2.0 because we want to be visible so having outside organizations come to support us through funding or collaborations, overwhelms me. "The kids are always ready to do whatever we need to do. I'm very proud of this group."

Poughkeepsie's GSA, which has some 16 members, is hoping to have its second annual Love is Love ice cream social event in the future. In addition, members will continue preparing for Pride Week at the school, which will take place during World Pride Month in June.

Janiyah Elias is the vice president of the club and was happy the club made an impact in the community with the clothing drive. "I would like to expand more into the community and have people be aware of our community. That would be a nice goal to have," she said.

"I enjoy being a member and it's why I ran for vice president this year. I love this club. It's a very safe place and a great place and outlet."



The Genders and Sexualities Alliance Club received a check for \$1,000 from Prime Print Shop to help with club activities.