

SUPERINTENDENT'S BRIEF

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

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VOLUME 5



District slated to lose \$1.4M in state funding



Governor Hochul's Executive Budget Proposal for the fiscal year 2025 was released late afternoon on Jan. 16, 2024. While the proposal notes that school foundation aid is set to increase by \$507 million, many school districts across the state, including the Poughkeepsie City School District, are facing decreases in state aid.

Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, superintendent of schools, and Bill Hogan, chief operating officer, reported at Wednesday's board meeting, that the governor's proposal is slated to decrease the district's state funding by approximately \$1.4

[View the Governor's Executive Budget Proposal. \(Poughkeepsie details, page 26\)](#)

million for the upcoming 24-25 school year. Notable reductions to projected state aid from the current year include \$600,000 in Foundation aid, \$863,000 in Charter School Transitional aid, and \$840,000 in Universal PreK aid. Notable increases include \$185,961 in BOCES aid, \$321,721 in Student with Exceptionalities (Excess) aid, and \$438,846 in Building aid.

Rosser, Hogan, and all members of the Board of Education engaged in conversation about the proposed budget cuts acknowledging that a better understanding of the methodology the governor's office used to support the reductions was needed. "There are many things that are not clear," Rosser shared. "The local charter school is growing in population, increasing the district's cost by over \$2.5 million next year. Additionally, our community has a great need to offer more pre-kindergarten early learning opportunities to children throughout the community."

Rosser and board members discussed how it is going to be critically important for the entire school community and vested community members to advocate for appropriate funding to maintain the momentum the district has made in improving student outcomes districtwide. They plan to participate in advocacy days in Albany in the coming months to champion children in the City of Poughkeepsie and will be publishing those days for other members of the community to participate. Kim Popken, president of the Poughkeepsie Public School Teacher's Association (PPSTA), texted Rosser during the conversation noting the "NYSUT and PPSTA can and will assist with advocacy as well."

Legislative involvement

Members of the Board of Education and Rosser have spoken with two legislative officials whose districts include the Poughkeepsie City School District.

Board members Dr. Felicia Watson, Judge Tom O'Neill, and Rosser discussed the proposed state aid reductions with Assemblyman Jonathan Jacobson, a longtime supporter of the Poughkeepsie City School District. Aware of the proposal, Assemblyman Jacobson took note of the implications of the reduction in state aid would have and noted he would advocate for his districts that are impacted.

Yesterday, Rosser connected with Sen. Rob Rolison to discuss the proposal. "Senator Rolison and I are very interested in understanding the methodology of how the proposed budget was constructed," Rosser said. "True to his commitment to children, Senator Rolison was well versed in the cuts to Poughkeepsie and other school systems in his legislative district, pledging his advocacy in addressing the proposed budget shortfalls."



Dr. Rosser shared "If these cuts come to fruition it will make budgeting challenging for this upcoming school year. Every effort to protect student programming and the district's dedicated and committed staff will be made."

View the [Governor's Executive Budget Proposal](#) (budget details for Poughkeepsie can be located on page 26).

View PCSD's [2023-24 Financial Update](#).

Community organizations come together for kids

"Eighty percent of a student's waking hours between kindergarten and 12th grade is spent in the community and 20 percent of that time is spent in the four walls we call schools" shared Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, superintendent of schools as he welcomed over 50 individuals representing 35 community-based organizations to the first Community Partner Meeting of the new year.

As outlined in the [District's 5-year Strategic Plan](#), the school district's approach to improving student achievement is to employ a school, home, and community approach to addressing the academic, social, emotional, and wellness needs of Poughkeepsie City School District students.

Citing districtwide improvements, Rosser thanked community partners for their collaboration and commitment to children and families in his welcoming address. "The success that we have attained in Poughkeepsie could not have been achieved without you," he shared. The purpose of the Jan. 17, 2024, meeting was to provide a space for community-based organizations and vested members of the community to network and learn more

about each of the 35 community-based organizations' focus, services, upcoming events, and programmatic updates and innovations. Additionally, the meeting served as an opportunity for the district to establish new partnerships and strengthen its relationship with existing community partners.

After leads from the community-based organizations presented, Greg Mott, assistant superintendent of elementary schools, provided an overview of the exploration the district is making into reconfiguring its elementary schools, noting that the exploration is intended to increase student academic achievement, enhance student social-emotional development, build stronger relationships in response to parent needs and concerns and research that indicate that school grade band configurations have a significant impact on student success. After his presentation, Mott extended an invitation to any community-based organization that would be interested in contributing to the exploration as a member of the district's reconfiguration task force.

Natasha Brown, executive director of community schools, shared details on the district's recent \$2.5 million [Full-Service Community Schools](#) award noting the expansions it will make possible. She highlighted that the district will be awarding eight \$5,000 mini-grants to community-based organizations to support Saturday Morning Lights programming and an expanded after-school grant for a community-based organization to service 100 prekindergarten and kindergarten students. Both opportunities will be available through the Poughkeepsie City School District's RFP process in February.

Brown also discussed the expansion of [The Basics program](#), a strategy for communities to support vibrant learning and brain development in infants and toddlers. The Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet, DAY ONE, and Dutchess County will be critical partners in the implementation of this program.

Da'Ron Wilson, executive director of school engagement, shared details on [City Connects](#) and [Everyday Labs](#), two initiatives funded under the Full-Service Community Schools award. Wilson noted that the City Connects initiative, piloted at Poughkeepsie Middle School from 2021-2023, will transition to all elementary schools, to address the out-of-school factors that limit the learning of the district's earliest learners. The



Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education Greg Mott speaks about exploring a realignment of elementary schools in the district to better serve students during a meeting with more than 35 community partners Wednesday, Jan. 17, 2024.



rationale behind shifting the program to the elementary schools is to address the varying social determinants that serve as obstacles earlier in students' Prek-12 matriculation in the school district as a strategy to eliminate issues hard to address when students are in middle and high school. He also shared details on the rollout of Everyday Labs, an evidence-based approach to attendance improvement, which will be piloted this spring. Everyday Labs is proven to reduce chronic absenteeism by 11-15 percent and leverages the district's attendance improvement and family engagement strategies by deploying a multi-tiered communication platform to communicate with parents whose children are missing school. The platform also provides parents and students with supports that assist in addressing the barriers that prevent regular daily attendance. Lisa Perry, executive director of strategic planning and resource stewardship, detailed the Community Schools strategic planning work currently underway through the assistance of Rockland 21C, a local community school technical assistance provider. Perry noted the importance of data sharing and collection in the collaborative work both school and community engage in. Rosser shared that besides the overarching goal of collecting data to help inform the collective impact on student success, establishing cross-sector alliances with community-based organizations will support a more encompassing communitywide prenatal to career strategy, being implemented by the [Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet](#). Such alliances position communities to be reputable contenders in receiving federal [Promise Neighborhood](#) grants to turn poverty-concentrated neighborhoods into communities of opportunity. Before Rosser closed out the district's presentations to provide additional opportunities for participants to network, Julianna Lindquist, an AmeriCorps Community Schools Fellow, provided an overview of the district volunteer process and application. The process and application are aligned with the district's volunteer policy updated spring of 2023. View the entire [community partner presentation](#).

Two PHS students receive scholarships at MLK Breakfast

This morning, the Catharine Street Legacy and Family Support Program held its 33rd Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast at the Majed J Nesheiwat Convention Center in Poughkeepsie. The first Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast celebration was held in January 1992 and for more than 30 years, the Annual MLK Breakfast Celebration has fulfilled the vision of its founding board president as it garners the support of businesses, faith-based, community & and civic organizations, schools, colleges and residents among others. This year's breakfast recognized seven honorees, two of whom were Poughkeepsie High School students, Peter Sealy, PHS senior and student liaison to the Board of Education, and Janiyah Elias, PHS senior.

Both students were celebrated by Board President Thomas O'Neill, Esq., Board Trustee Bob Creedon, PHS Principal Phee Simpson, PHS School Counselor Stacey Lee, Director of College Readiness and Workforce Education, Dr. Janety Encarnacion, Executive Director of School Engagement, Mr. Da'Ron Wilson, and Superintendent Dr. Eric Jay Rosser at the early morning event.



Janiyah thanked her mother and Simpson; Kelly Semexant, college readiness and workforce development school counselor, and others for their support. She expressed her appreciation for the scholarship, noting that while she will be an early PHS graduate - meeting New York State graduation requirements in three years -

Superintendent Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, Executive Director of School Engagement Da'Ron Wilson and Assemblyman Jonathan Jacobson pose for photos with PHS students Peter Sealy and Janiyah Elias after the Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast.





she has plans to enroll in a post-secondary institution in the fall.

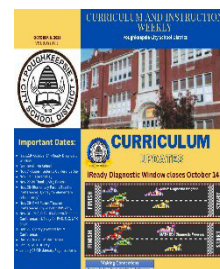
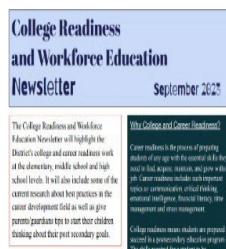
Peter also thanked everyone, for sharing his involvement in multiple school and community activities - most notably his involvement as a member of the AFJROTC and service as the Poughkeepsie City School District Board of Education student liaison. Peter will be pursuing a career as a pilot, having already been accepted to Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University located in Florida.

For more information about Sealy see the [Dec 6, 2023, Superintendent's Brief](#).

As student honorees, each student was awarded a \$2,000 scholarship to pursue higher education.

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 Jan. 19, 2024

[Mental Health in the Spotlight, January 2024](#)



Upcoming events

- Sat., Jan. 20:** Superintendent Fireside Chat,
9 a.m., Family Partnership Center, 29 North Hamilton St.
Topic: Elementary Schools Reconfiguration Exploration
- Sat., Jan. 20:** PCSD student art display
(part of [Bring a Friend Day at the Loeb](#)),
10 a.m.-5 p.m., Vassar College, 124 Raymond Ave.
Admission is free.
- Mon., Jan. 22:** Code of Conduct Committee Meeting,
5 p.m., PHS, 70 Forbus St.
- Tue., Jan 23:** The ABC's of LGBTQ+ workshop,
1 p.m., Parent Empowerment Center at PMS,
55 College Ave.
- Tue., Jan. 23-Fri., Jan. 26:** Regents exams
- Thu. Jan. 25:** Beauty and the Beast,
6 p.m., Krieger Elementary School, 265 Hooker Ave.
- Wed., Jan. 31:** FAFSA Workshop for seniors and their parents,
5-7 p.m., PHS library, 70 Forbus St.