

SUPERINTENDENT'S BRIEF

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

ISSUE NO. 45 | January 31, 2024

VOLUME 5



All Elementary schools earn 'Good Standing'

State accountability designations have not been achieved in 13 years.

Elementary School	23-24	22-23	21-22	20-21	19-20	18-19	17-18	16-17	15-16	14-15	13-14	12-13	11-12	10-11
Clinton	LSI - "Good Standing"	ATSI	ATSI	TSI	TSI	TSI	Focus	Focus	Focus	Focus	Focus	Focus	Improvement Comprehensive	"Good Standing"
Krieger	LSI - "Good Standing"	LSI - "Good Standing"	LSI - "Good Standing"	LSI - "Good Standing"	LSI - "Good Standing"	LSI - "Good Standing"	Focus	Focus	Focus	Focus	Focus	Focus	"Good Standing"	"Good Standing"
Morse	LSI - "Good Standing"	CSI - Receivership	CSI - Receivership	CSI - Receivership	CSI - Receivership	CSI	Priority	Priority	Focus	Focus	Focus	Focus	"Good Standing"	"Good Standing"
Warring	LSI - "Good Standing"	LSI - "Good Standing"	ATSI	TSI	TSI	TSI	Priority	Priority	Focus	Focus	Focus	Focus	"Good Standing"	"Good Standing"
Smith ELC	LSI - "Good Standing"	LSI - "Good Standing"	LSI - "Good Standing"	LSI - "Good Standing"	LSI - "Good Standing"	LSI - "Good Standing"	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Columbus	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	N/A	Good Standing	Good Standing	Good Standing	Good Standing	"Good Standing"	"Good Standing"	"Good Standing"

2018 – 2024 State Accountability Designation Codes
LSI: Local School Support & Improvement "Good Standing" • ATSI: Additional Target Support • TSI: Target Support • CSI: Comprehensive Support and Improvement

Chart showing state accountability ratings for PCSD elementary schools from 2010-11 through 2023-24, with all open schools rated as "Good Standing" in 2023-24.

For the first time in 13 years, all Poughkeepsie City School District elementary schools have been designated as schools in "Good Standing," according to the New York State Department of Education's recently released state accountability school designations for 2023-2024.

The improved designations mean all elementary schools have demonstrated progress in the areas of student achievement, student growth, chronic absenteeism, and English language learners. Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the goal is for all students to receive a quality education. The law requires that state educational agencies hold public schools accountable for how students achieve. NYSED's indicators to measure school performance include achievement in English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies including student growth and school progress, progress of English language learners, chronic absenteeism, and high school - graduation rates and preparing students for college, career, and civic engagement. Read the [NYSED accountability fact sheet](#) for more information.

Just as significant is that Morse Elementary School is no longer designated as a school in receivership. Morse's performance before 2019-2020 was determined to be among the lowest 5 percent of schools in New York State, resulting in the superintendent having special authority to improve school and student outcomes. Morse Elementary School and Clinton Elementary School now join Krieger Elementary School, the Early Learning Center at Smith, and Warring Elementary School in holding the "Good Standing" designation, which Warring earned in 2022-23.

"I am beyond ecstatic about this historical achievement the Poughkeepsie City School District has achieved," Superintendent Eric Jay Rosser said. "For over a decade, the Poughkeepsie City School District has been considered a low-performing school district. The efforts of all of our elementary school teachers, administrators, support staff, parents, and strategic community partners are evidenced through the 2023-2024 state accountability designations." Rosser also noted that while this accomplishment deserves accolades and celebration there is still much more required of the entire school community to increase ELA and math proficiency rates, and graduation rates. "Continuous improvement and progress is good."

Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education Greg Mott pointed to several contributing factors. "In my three years in Poughkeepsie schools, through collaboration and partnership, we have implemented a new core curriculum, a structured literacy program, and before and after school programs providing individual instruction that supports student's growth. Through these initiatives, our students rose to the challenge and excelled," Mott said, adding that the parents deserve thanks for their continuous support and commitment. "We will continue to build on our success," he said.



PMS and PHS Designations

For the 23-24 school year both Poughkeepsie Middle School (PMS) and Poughkeepsie High School (PHS) state accountability designations remained "Comprehensive Support and Improvement."

PMS, while making growth in some areas, has not achieved the level of growth to achieve a higher state accountability designation. While PHS has increased its graduation rate by 6 percentage points since 2019 from 54 percent to 60 percent (the district is awaiting the 2023 calculated graduation rate), its designation is due to the school not achieving a 67 percent graduation rate and levels of growth not achieved in other areas.

District hires counselor for youngest students



School Counselor Oliva Post, right, and College and Workforce Readiness Counselor Kelly Semexant, left, conduct a college readiness presentation at Clinton Elementary School.

Olivia Post knew she wanted to go into counseling when she grew up. She did not yet know what form that would take or whom she wanted to help. A school counselor helped make it clear.

"She was the most helpful person in school I ever met," Post said of the substitute school counselor who worked at John Jay High School in East Fishkill during her senior year. At the time, Post was feeling "inadequate." While many of her classmates were preparing to attend four-year schools, she was resigned to beginning her college experience more affordably at Dutchess Community College.

"She was the one who told me it was OK to go to community college," Post said of the school counselor. "That made me want to be that person for students." After two years at Dutchess, she earned a bachelor's degree from SUNY Plattsburgh and a master's in school counseling from SUNY New Paltz. This past October, the 27-year-old joined the Poughkeepsie City School District as a school counselor for its elementary schools. Fittingly, college direction is a

point of focus for her position, under the district's college and workforce readiness program, as is social and emotional learning. Post works in all five of the district's elementary schools, spending a day of the week in each. She conducts one-on-one and group sessions with students and speaks to whole classes.

"In the short time she's been here she's been able to build relationships with the teachers in each school community," said Dr. Janety Encarnacion, district director of college readiness and workforce education. She's done the same with the students, some of whom are known to drop in unannounced just to say hello. "I don't get a break," Post said. "But, I wouldn't have it any other way."

Though Post comes to Poughkeepsie from the little Andes Central School District of roughly 70 total students in Delaware County, she grew up in Dutchess and said her older siblings graduated from Poughkeepsie High School. "I grew up with kids like this," she said of Poughkeepsie students. "Being able to help them, it's a great experience." Post said she aims to help students develop skills that can be used at home as well as in schools, such as conflict resolution and handling anger, "just things that will make them more empathetic human beings." Encarnacion admitted there are "barriers" to the school counselor position being successful.

However, she said, Post has been "relentless" in breaking through. "And that's what we need," Encarnacion said. Encarnacion tasked Post with developing a series of presentations in which fourth- and fifth-grade students at each elementary school were introduced to the idea of attending college and what they could do to prepare for it. "Many of our students are first generation," Encarnacion noted. "We know that they may not be having those conversations at home." Post said, "I want them to start thinking this is a viable option for them." Encarnacion praised ideas Post brought to the assemblies to engage the students, including videos that illustrated the campus experience and a trivia game that delved into local colleges and cost.

Post said she lets a student work the PowerPoint at each assembly, which "makes them feel important." It's one of several ways she's already endeared herself to the students, though she thinks her age may give her an advantage.

"I know all the social media sites they're talking about. I don't play the games they're playing but I know about them," she said, noting kids enjoy being asked to explain things. "They love teaching adults something. They like to say 'I taught Miss Post today.'"