

# SUPERINTENDENT'S BRIEF

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

ISSUE NO. 50 | February 16, 2024

VOLUME 5



## Krieger State Float Museum amazes

Krieger Elementary School's fifth annual State Float and Brochure Museum was packed with an abundance of energy and enthusiasm radiating from the fifth-grade student creators.

Learning about the geography of the United States continues to be an exciting topic in elementary schools across the country. Not only does geography open up students' awareness to what is around them locally and globally, it helps students make sense of the complexity and interconnectedness of the world around them. The Poughkeepsie City School District's mission of preparing "all students to embark on individual paths of success in a globally diverse community" requires that all students understand the similarities and uniqueness of the nation's 50 states as a starting point to embarking on individual journeys that will lead to success.

With the support of Cynthia O'Herron, Krieger art teacher; Dorothy Luongo, Krieger librarian; and Stacy Grady, Krieger music teacher; teachers Andrea Boccio, Skip Hoover, Jennie Hennie, Kelly Rooney, Brian Hatfield, and Jackie Clyburn's fifth-grade students researched the 50 states and each created a float and travel brochure that represented a state of choice, highlighting its places and unique and interesting qualities.

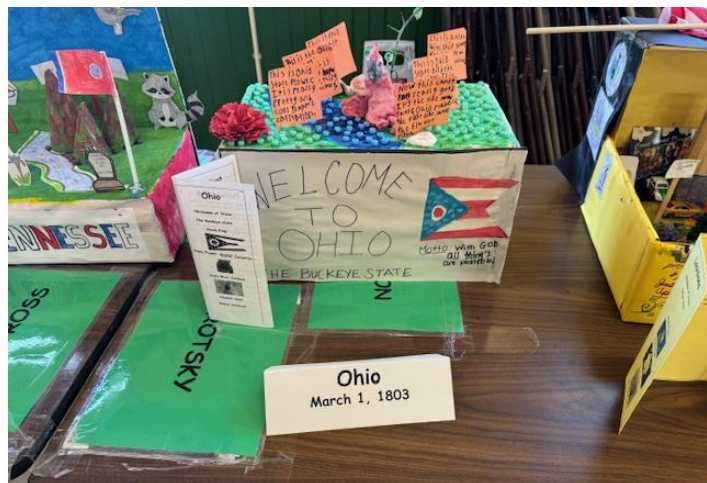
They presented the floats Thursday to the school's fourth graders, family members and leaders from the Elementary department and Office of the Superintendent, and fielded questions.



Students presented their states to family, district officials and fourth-grade students, and answered questions.

As with previous years, the state float research project was based on standards in ELA and social studies. It also provided students with an opportunity to write letters to their chosen states, asking for literature and information about attractions in the state.

Before permitting the fourth graders and parents to walk the gallery, Carolyn Fields, Krieger Elementary principal, thanked the fifth-grade team, O'Herron, Luongo, Grady, and Krieger lead custodian Kristopher Bottoms and the custodial staff for their support and "hard work in preparing our students for this day."



Krieger Elementary School fifth-grade students created floats and brochures for a state of their choosing, such as this float of Ohio.

The program started with students singing "50 Nifty United States," in which they proclaimed New York was the best of all states.

Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, superintendent of schools, spoke with the only student who chose to create a float of his home state of Ohio, quizzing him on which was the state bird and what are the names of the state's three major cities. Rosser said he passed the questioning with flying colors, only struggling a bit in pronouncing Cincinnati, Rosser's birth city. The superintendent said he got a kick out of seeing various highlights of the states in which he's lived, represented in the many floats.

Boccio noted many of her English as a New Language parents appreciate the event, as it not only educates their children but provides parents with a greater understanding of the geography of the U.S.



# Black History celebration aims to 'nurture our roots'

Students and families who visit Poughkeepsie Middle School next Friday evening can expect to find food, music and entertainment.

They also can expect to learn more about Black culture and, organizers hope, walk away feeling empowered.

"We're nurturing our roots to grow our future," said Natasha Brown, executive director of Community Schools for the Poughkeepsie City School District.

The Community Schools department is hosting a celebration of Black History Month and the African Diaspora, free to district families, Feb. 23.

"We're really celebrating black excellence," Brown said, noting it as a theme in one of the videos that will be shown to attendees. "Our school is full of Black excellence. We're taking a moment to put that in the spotlight."

Entertainment for the inaugural event will mix history with the present, while the food will showcase Black entrepreneurs. Performances through the night will span a variety of music and styles, including exhibitions from some Poughkeepsie students' groups, such as the Mighty Young Techs baton twirlers, the Saturday Morning Lights marching band, poetry from Poughkeepsie Middle School students and string music from elementary students. The high school cheerleading squad and the Tighten Ups drill team are set to perform, as is singer and Krieger elementary student Heaven Murphy. Members of the National Honor Society will also be on hand for face painting, and there will be African drumming and dancing performances.

Kevin Douglass Greene, a great-great-grandson of Frederick Douglass, is slated to speak about the life and legacy of the famed abolitionist and orator.

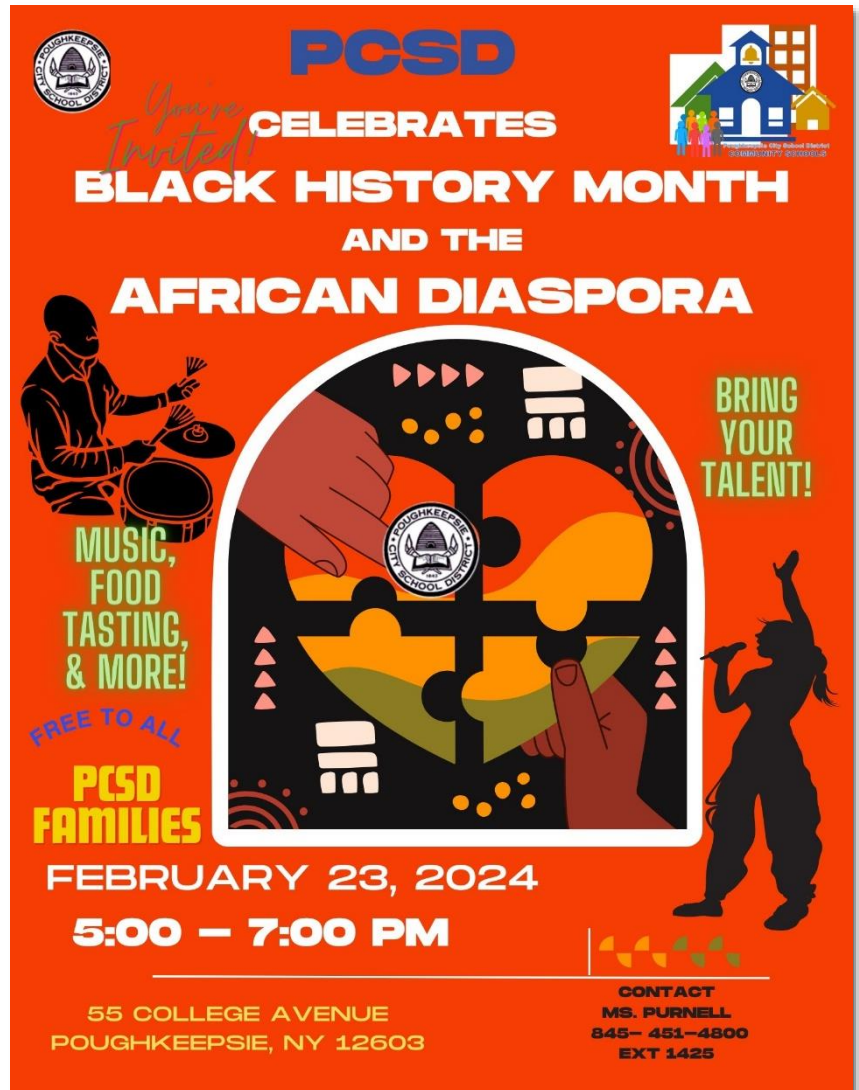
"We would like to take a moment to focus our attention on celebrating the various contributions that Black Americans have contributed to society," Brown said.

Dr. Edward Antonio, vice president of diversity, equity and inclusion at Marist College, will also speak. Several local Black-owned businesses are among those providing food and drink for tasting. Some of the businesses contributing are Essie's Restaurant, Dulce Cafe, Empire Jamaican Fusion Restaurant, Upstream Cafe, Geneva's House of Blues, Pat's Kitchen and personal chef Nirva Llorca.

Other organizations and businesses providing services and education include Silver Linings, the Sadie Peterson Delaney African Roots Library, the Poughkeepsie Farm Project, K's Aromatics Gifts, Lo'Kel-Li Vendor Market, Shopping Reveal, STEM Program, Charlia Frank, Zen Lounge, Amayzyn Designs, Sisters in Christ United women's ministry, the Skip Lee Foundation, NDB Athletics and the Allstate insurance company.

"We're providing our students with an opportunity to engage and assimilate with business owners who look just like them," Brown said. "I hope students and families will come out inspired."

The celebration is scheduled to start 5 p.m. in the middle school's auditorium.





## Athlete of the Month

### Siblings' 'improvement' yields track and field excellence

When you ask Travis and Saniya Jenkins about the best parts of their senior indoor track and field season, they don't boast about where they finished in each race or rattle off their personal-best times and distances.

The brother-sister combo talk about improvement. "They're naturally driven," said Nedra Garriques, Poughkeepsie High School's girls indoor track and field coach. "They would both watch other athletes and say 'Coach, I want to get my time down like them; I want to jump higher; what do we need to improve on?'"

For the Jenkins pair, neither of whom joined track and field until their sophomore year, improvement has taken different forms. Saniya, a runner, says she needed a mental change in order to realize her potential. For Travis, who has broken out as a jumper, the precise mechanics needed to launch forward through the air is a puzzle he's piecing together. That progress yielded some of the best results of their respective Pioneers careers in January and, accordingly, the siblings shared Poughkeepsie's Athlete of the Month honor.

"I've been trying my hardest," Travis said. "It's nice that we are getting recognition for the improvement we're making. It's been really fun."

Saniya was previously named Athlete of the Month in September during cross country season.

"It's nice winning it again," she said. "To know that I'm still putting in the hard work and getting recognition for it is pretty rewarding."

Garriques said the siblings, who are both members of the National Honor Society, encourage each other. "They're driven by each other's success," as well. Case in point, Saniya admits to boasting to Travis "a little bit" about that first monthly honor.

"She was just doing a lot of jumping up and down," Travis said. "It was kind of funny. I was happy for (her) though. This is my older sister. I like to see her succeed."

Both had a successful January.

Travis, who enjoys basketball and credits it for some of his explosiveness jumping, took first place in both the long jump and triple jump at the Section 1 League 1A championships.

"It felt really, really good," he said. "Last season I didn't get a medal at all. I went from not having any medals to placing first in two of my main events."

Later in January he jumped a personal-record distance of 19 feet, 1.75 inches at the Northern County Championships, placing second by a quarter of an inch. He took fourth in the same meet in the triple jump. Travis then placed fourth in the triple jump at the Section 1 Class A Championship meet on Feb. 7 with a personal-best of 39 feet, 5.25 inches, and was seventh in the long jump. He's scheduled to compete in both events at the state qualifier this weekend.



From left, Travis and Saniya Jenkins shared the January Athlete of the Month honor.



Travis said mastering the mechanics of the triple jump is challenging as “everything has to be in-sync” to maintain momentum. He watches video of jumpers online to glean tips for his form. “I can feel I’m not done improving.” Conversely, Saniya said she made strides psychologically. “I finally unlocked the mental state of my mind. I just ran. I wasn’t scared to run or anything like that,” she said. She saw other runners posting faster times “and I realized I can do that too, if I put in the work.”

Saniya finished fifth in the 1,000-meter run and ninth in the 1,500 at the Section 1 League 1A Championships. She then was third in the 1,000 at the Northern County meet and seventh in the 1,500 in a personal-best time of 6:02.08. She began February with a personal-best time of 3:35.97 in the 1,000 at the Section 1 Class A Championships, where she was 14th. She’s earned a place at the state qualifiers in both the 1,000 and 1,500, and as a part of the 4x400 relay team.

Saniya is hoping to receive an acceptance letter to Cornell University in March; she’s already been accepted to Tuskegee University in Alabama, her second choice. She plans to one day become a veterinarian oncologist. Travis next year hopes to attend Duke University in North Carolina, where he would like to jump for the Blue Devils’ team.

Before high school is over, both want to qualify for a state championship meet and nationals.

Travis offered another goal: “I want to get a banner in the gym,” he said.

Garriques said those who place – finish in the top six – in an event at the state championships get their name added to a banner hanging in the gym. Does he have a chance? Garriques’ pause was as long as one of Travis’ jumps. Then she answered: “I have to say he does have a shot,” she said. “His progress has been in great strides. It hasn’t been in small increments.”



Travis and Saniya Jenkins both aim to make a state championship meet and nationals before graduation.

## Other newsletters to keep you informed:

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

[CI Weekly](#) for Feb. 16, 2024  
[Athletic and Wellness](#), for January 2024

## Upcoming events

- **Mon., Feb. 19:** President’s Day (all PCSD schools and offices closed)
- **Tues., Feb. 20:** Bullying and Cyberbullying Workshop for Caregiver, 10 a.m.,  
Parent Empowerment Center inside Poughkeepsie Middle School, 55 College Ave.
- **Wed., Feb. 21:** Board of Education workshop meeting, 6:30 p.m.,  
Administration Building, 18 S. Perry St.
  - Understanding Adolescent Emotions workshop, 9:30 a.m.,  
Parent Empowerment Center inside Poughkeepsie Middle School, 55 College Ave.
- **Sat., Feb. 24: Mental Wellness Panel** - Black History. Our History. His Story, 4-7 p.m.,  
489 Main St., Poughkeepsie,  
sponsored by The Brain and Body Coalition and Marist Liberty Partnership.
- **Wed. Feb. 28:** ABCs of LGBTQ+ workshop, 3 p.m.,  
Parent Empowerment Center inside Poughkeepsie Middle School, 55 College Ave,  
RSVP to Lesley Rodriguez, [lrodriguez@poughkeepsieschools.org](mailto:lrodriguez@poughkeepsieschools.org) or call 845-874-0216.

