

SUPERINTENDENT'S BRIEF

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

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VOLUME 5



PCSD celebrates maintenance team

Poughkeepsie City School District maintenance personnel are an essential team of dedicated and hardworking district employees, ensuring that our facilities operate smoothly.

Their work encompasses maintaining facilities, operational systems, machines, mechanical equipment, grounds and more.

It is heartening to know that their commitment drives them to ensure that our school facilities are in good shape throughout the year. Especially during the winter months, it is impressive to know that they are onsite in the wee hours of the morning removing snow and guaranteeing that our HVAC systems are working properly. Let's take a moment to celebrate their hard work and dedication towards keeping our schools in excellent condition on National Maintenance Worker Appreciation Day, which falls on Monday, March 4.

Poughkeepsie City School District Maintenance Team	
Marcos Rodriguez, Director	
Peter Quartironi, Supervisor	
Kingsley Henry, Maintenance Mechanic	Tyreck Douglas, Maintenance Helper
Jimmy McRay, Maintenance Mechanic	Christopher Duffy, Maintenance Helper
Alexander Rivera, Maintenance Mechanic	David Espinosa, Maintenance Helper
Javier Santiago, Maintenance Mechanic	Jason Sneyd, Maintenance Helper
Richard Simmons, Groundskeeper	Michael Zeoli, Maintenance Helper



Poughkeepsie takes steps to reduce chronic absenteeism

The Poughkeepsie City School District has launched a new tool for reducing chronic absenteeism by providing families with the

tools to support their students.

On Feb. 20 the district began utilizing "EveryDay Intervention," an evidence-based program that monitors attendance data and sends students and their families an escalating level of reminders and support to get students back on track.

The partnership with EveryDay Labs is being funded as part of a \$2.5 million, five-year Full Service Community Schools federal grant the district announced in November.

Reducing chronic absenteeism has been a priority for the district under Superintendent Dr. Eric Jay Rosser.

The district is also planning a series of informational sessions for parents March 4-7.

As of Jan. 27, 40.1 percent of district students this school year are considered chronically absent, having missed 10 percent or more school days, and 21.9 percent are considered at-risk, having missed between 5 and 9 percent of days.

"Students have to be in school in order to learn," said Da'Ron Wilson, executive director of school engagement for the district.

Everyday Intervention is a four-step system:

First, it monitors daily attendance data supplied by the district.

Second, it automatically identifies students who accumulate a concerning number of absences and "nudges" them with text messages and physical mail.

Third, the nudges escalate and are extended to the student's family.

Finally, the families are given continuous support until a student is no longer classified as at-risk or chronically absent.

The messages sent are multilingual and are personalized to suit the proper grade, school and level of absenteeism for each student. According to Everyday Labs' site, enrolled families can receive up to six mail



nudges a year and texts with offers of support up to twice a month. “The nudges are short and clear, designed with busy families in mind, and help them easily keep track of their student’s absences.” The first of the nudges by mail were sent Feb. 27. Families can opt out of receiving text messages, but not the mailed notices. The support offered to families comes through either live, one-on-one assistance with a multilingual support team, or through an AI-powered bot. The support team “helps answer families’ questions and connects them to resources that help them overcome attendance barriers,” according to the site. According to Everyday Labs “research shows that mail-based interventions help promote positive attendance over time, while text-based communications support short-term actions needed to make long-term progress.”

More than 2,000 schools use the service, which the company estimates has prevented almost 2 million absences nationwide.

The program “offers the district a low-lift, evidence-based approach to attendance improvement for better academic outcomes,” Wilson said. “It proactively uses absenteeism data to provide family and student support and streamlines family outreach to maximize resources and mitigate barriers to student learning.”

Informational meetings

Parents and guardians can meet with district caseworkers at a series of informational meetings labeled “Every Day Counts.”

Kiera O’Loughlin, caseworker for the high school, said parents can “learn about the misconceptions in regards to attendance, tips on achieving perfect attendance, resources to improve attendance, data that shows how attendance directly affects their child’s future and more.”

She said parents will be asked to participate in games “that will demonstrate the effects it has on children when they arrive to school late.”

Schedule of meetings:

- March 4, noon: 7 Eastman Terrace in the community room
- March 5, noon: 21 Williams St. in the community room
- March 6, noon: 10 Rinaldi Blvd. in the community room
- March 7, 4 p.m.: 120 Hudson Ave., in the gymnasium

Anyone who attends will be entered into a raffle for a free television. Light refreshments will be served.

For more information, contact elementary school caseworker Ariel Bland at 845-874-7884; middle school caseworker Melyssa Gomez at 845-475-6004; or O’Loughlin at 845-874-9751.



Armani Hayles acts like Rosa Parks during Morse Elementary's Fifth Grade Wax Museum.

Morse Elementary ‘Wax Museum’ brings history to life for students

Rosa Parks stood motionless against a wall in a second-floor hallway of Morse Elementary School.

To her right stood fellow civil rights activist Ella Baker, holding a microphone. On her shoulder was a small red circle with the words “Push Me” written. Pushing it brought her to life.

“My name is Rosa Parks. I was born February 4, 1913, in Tuskegee, Alabama...”

In this case, Rosa Parks’ real name was Armani Hayles, a student in Shenice Mattis’ fifth-grade class. But, Armani knew Parks’ story and impact on history, and told it to dozens of fellow students, teachers

and parents each time they pressed that red button.

Morse held its annual Fifth Grade Wax Museum this week. Each student in the six classes learned about a famous African American figure and their historical impact. They then dressed up to look like them, stood in a line like a display of wax figures and taught whoever pushed their buttons.



Each class had a 40-minute session through the course of the week in which the school's other classes visited. Tuesday's sessions, which served as the kickoff, were held in the cafeteria and began with the fifth-graders singing "Lift Every Voice." Mayor Yvonne Flowers was among those in attendance.

The historic figures ranged from the well-known, like Jackie Robinson, Frederick Douglass and, yes, Rosa Parks, to the lesser-known, like Stephanie Wilson, Benjamin Banneker and Ella Baker, who on Wednesday was portrayed by Noelle Burns. Burns said Baker appealed to her because she helped found the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. She held a microphone for her presentation because Baker "would talk about civil rights."

Aiden Brown on Wednesday was George Washington Carver, though he disagrees with the famous scientist on a key point. "He likes peanuts. I don't," Aiden said, before noting Carver didn't invent the peanut. "He made products for it."

Armani said she chose Rosa Parks because she already knew some things about her. But she said she learned her real name – Rosa Louise McCauley Parks – and that she had a brother, Sylvester James McCauley.

Armani's mother, Jenida Kilpatrick, was among those pressing her red button Wednesday. She said her daughter practiced her presentation often.



Above: Fifth-grade students sing at the kickoff event Tuesday. Right: Kiayana Bartley, as Maya Angelou, speaks as Superintendent Dr. Eric Jay Rosser listens.



Ester Flores speaks as astronaut Stephanie Wilson from behind a cardboard space shuttle.

"It's nice. I love seeing their progress," Kilpatrick said. "She's in fifth grade, so all these little projects are cute and shows that they're learning."

Rodney Smith picked President Barack Obama. When asked what he learned that was most interesting about him, Rodney looked incredulous.

"He was the first Black president," he said, which is an inspiration. "I want to be president."

Despite how often he had to repeat Obama's story, he said other students coming up to him was fun.

"Seeing my brother, sister, I keep seeing my friends..." his button was pressed. "Hi, my name is Barack Obama, I was born August 4, 1961, in Honolulu, Hawaii..."

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](#), March 1, 2024; [Puentes](#), February 2024; [CCR](#), February 2024; [Mental Health](#), February 2024

Upcoming events

- **Fri. March 1:** Asthma 101: Parent Workshop; first of three-workshop series
Parent Empowerment Center in Poughkeepsie Middle School, 55 College Ave.
- **Fri. March 8:** Father & Male Role Model Support Group: Two sessions:
3 p.m. at Morse Elementary, 101 Mansion St.; 4:30 p.m. at Poughkeepsie Middle School
- **Thurs. March 14:** Poughkeepsie middle and high schools Pops Concert: 6:30 p.m.
Poughkeepsie Middle School, 55 College Ave.

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www.poughkeepsieschools.org