

SUPERINTENDENT'S BRIEF

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

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Voters approve 2020-21 district budget plan

Poughkeepsie City School District voters approved the proposed \$104,466,005 budget by a vote of 1,554 to 769. A total of 2,457 of the 14,592 ballots mailed out were returned. Of those, 2,323 were validated and 108 voided. Turnout was better this year than last year, when only 884 votes were counted and in 2018 when 1,348 votes came in, according to data from NTS Data, the vendor used to print and mail PCSD's ballots.

Voters also elected two board members. Debra Long was re-elected to a second term and Thomas O'Neill, Esq. was elected. Both fill three-year terms beginning July 1, 2020.

On behalf of all PCSD students, I thank the community for voting its support and belief in our vision of the Poughkeepsie City School District. The community's support for the budget is a support of PCSD children. Thank you for championing the future of our great city.

Summer learning set for students with exceptionalities

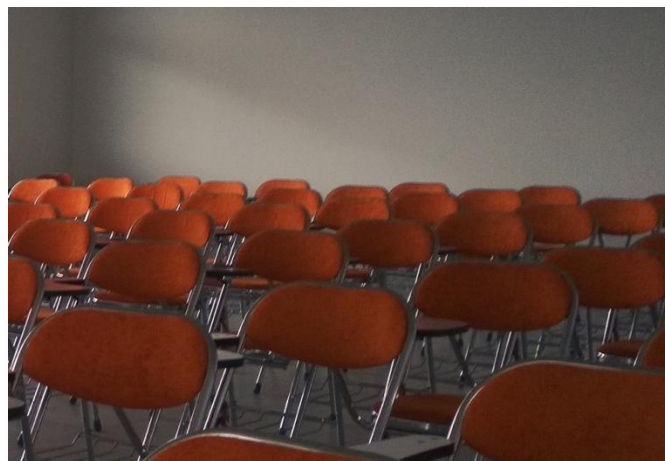
Poughkeepsie City School District students who have an extended learning year identified in their Individualized Education Plan will have an opportunity to participate in programming this summer.

The decision to provide programming for students with exceptionalities came through Gov. Andrew Cuomo's June 5 executive order permitting in-person special education and instruction for the summer term.

The program is scheduled to begin July 6 remotely for all participants, with in-person learning starting July 13 at Krieger Elementary School. It will run through Aug. 14. An extended school year is important for students with exceptionalities. Without it, many of the students

would experience academic and/or social and emotional regression, Assistant Superintendent for Family and Student Support Services Charlotte Mennona said. There are about 125 district students who qualify for this program. An [extended school year survey](#) was posted to the district website seeking information as to how parents would prefer to receive services. It was also emailed to those parents/guardians.

Each class will be no more than 10 students so the district can adhere to Department of Health guidelines, she said. This means the district will be hiring 13 teachers, 12 teacher assistants and staff to provide related services including speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy and one-on-one aides as indicated by Individualized Education Plans.



Student desks will need to be rearranged to adhere to social distancing requirements when extended learning begins in person. Photo by [Bima Rahmanda](#) on [Unsplash](#)



PMS science experiments hit new heights

Scientific thinking, time, effort and funding from Donor's Choose helped put three Poughkeepsie Middle School students' science experiments aboard a balloon that took off toward the stratosphere last week.

Part of the Global Space Balloon Challenge, the launch was only the second of its kind at the school, the first taking place in 2018, according to John Garesche, the eighth-grade science teacher

who coordinated the event. This year, the launch had two purposes, one scientific and the other to mark the moving up of the eighth-grade class.

Unfortunately, because of Covid-19, students were not allowed at the June 12 launch, but it was [streamed live on Facebook](#). A portion of the launch video will be included in the video for the moving-up ceremony.

Students were asked to design an experiment that would be impacted by temperature, air pressure or both. The assignment was initially only for students on Mr. Garesche's Science Olympiad team. But, when the pandemic struck, he opened it up to all eighth graders. Mr. Garesche chose three experiments to send up, based on the experiments themselves and whether they would be able to fit on and be carried by the balloon.

He chose:

- Crissandy Adriano-Reynoso's ice cube experiment wanted to see if ice cubes would remain intact through launch
- Layla Martin-Sellers proposed seeing what would happen to three balloons: one filled with helium, one filled with air from lungs and a third balloon partially filled with lung air.
- Several students suggested sending up water to see if it would freeze.

At about 12:22 p.m., the 1,500 gram balloon filled with helium was released. Outfitted with two GoPro cameras the balloon was approximately seven feet in diameter,



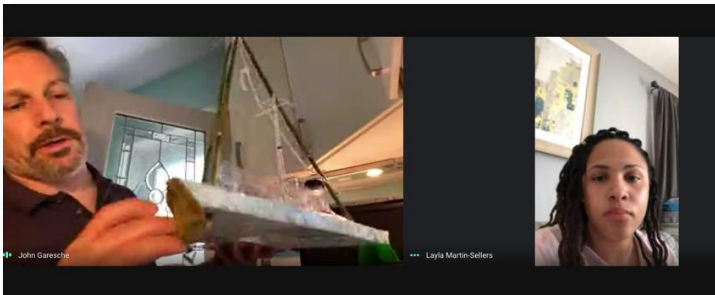
Eighth grade science teacher, John Garesche (center) and his team prep for launch Friday, June 12, 2020.

equipped with a radio transmitter to send signals so it could be tracked, a radar reflector to prevent it being struck by a plane, and a parachute to help with landing and the experiments. The balloon spent a little more than three hours airborne, reaching a peak of about 109,000 feet at 3 p.m. above October Mountain State forest in Massachusetts and landing at 3:35 pm in Ashfield, Massachusetts, Mr. Garesche said.

The experiments showed the following:

- Video verified that the ice cubes were still present when the balloon landed.
- The helium-filled balloon popped before launch and couldn't be replaced. However, the lung-filled balloon popped at around 40,000 feet, but it was also pummeled by winds. The partially-filled balloon was mostly deflated upon landing, but no holes could be seen.
- There were two water containers sent up. One sealed, which appeared to have ice in it at about 100,000 feet. An unsealed container of water with a thermometer in it registered -5 Celsius or 23 Fahrenheit according to the video. Both were melted at landing.

Layla said this was her first experiment of this nature. "I wanted to see if the helium-filled balloon would shrink because of low air pressure and high heat from UV rays," she said. Asked why she thought the partially-filled balloon shrunk, she suggested it could be because air from your lungs have oxygen, which is heavier than helium. Mr. Garesche added that it also contains nitrogen, which is also heavier than helium and the temperature was also very cold.



Garesche and student Layla Martin-Sellers discuss her experiment post recovery.

Since the balloon was recovered successfully with all equipment intact, Mr. Garesche plans to do another launch, maybe two, next year. "It was just a cool thing to get kids engaged.: Mr. Garesche said.

During the live stream, parents and staff displayed signs wishing the eighth graders well as they transition to PHS. Many KUDOS to Mr. Garesche. Thanks for keeping STEAM alive and students engaged through distance learning.