**ConnectED NY provides free internet service**

Poughkeepsie City School District has been approved to participate in the ConnectED NY program, which provides free internet service to families that need it for remote learning. The program, announced in March by Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo and the Reimagine New York Commission, is an emergency fund established by Schmidt Futures and the Ford Foundation and managed by nonprofit Digital Promise. Through the program, students will be provided with free AT&T mobile hotspots. If fixed internet service is required, the program will work with PCSD and service providers in our area to ensure there is no cost to participants. The free service is scheduled to begin in May and will end in June 2022, according to a news release from Cuomo's office.

Internet service may be limited, slowed or terminated if data use is excessive other than in connection with a student’s education.

Parents interested in participating in the program, must fill out an application specific to their child’s school and return it by May 5. It is first come, first served with a cap of 450 families. Applications for families seeking to benefit from this program are as follows:
- Clinton Elementary School application
- Early Learning Center application
- Krieger Elementary School application
- Morse Elementary School application
- Poughkeepsie Middle School application
- Poughkeepsie High School application
- Warring Elementary School application

Families will also be able to complete applications at the Elevating Families event this Saturday. Applications are also available at each school.

**Family festival set to debut Saturday, May 1, 2021**

The mission of the Poughkeepsie City School District is to “inspire and nurture the whole child by providing innovative, high-quality educational opportunities that prepare all students to embark on individual paths of success in a globally diverse community.” The work of supporting the whole child requires school and community to come together and actively provide varying opportunities to address not only the academic but also the social, emotional and wellness needs of our students for them to maximize their potential in achieving lifelong success.

In collaboration with approximately 40 community partners, the Poughkeepsie City School District will be exercising our commitment to PCSD children and families through the Elevating Families Spring Parent and Family Engagement Festival this Saturday, May 1, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Poughkeepsie High School Football Complex, 70 Forbus St.

The event is designed to inform families about all the programs, services and supports available through the district and its partners to help students. It is also a way to celebrate parents and families for all they do to help their children succeed. There will be safe, fun activities, free food, refreshments and giveaways. Community partners will have tables throughout the stadium to provide information. They’ll be given brief opportunities to speak to attendees interspersed with safe, fun activities, performances and demonstrations. Among the services and supports highlighted are tutoring, martial arts, food, library services, sports, enrichment opportunities, health services and more.
District invests $1 million in student furniture

The Poughkeepsie City School District continues with its plan to transform its schools to be top-notch 21st Century learning environments for its students. We are starting the process off by overhauling the infrastructures of all PCSD schools, transforming the look of these community edifices, with $1 million in upgrades to student furniture throughout the entire district.

“I am excited for our PCSD students, those presently attending and those who will attend in the future, for what their instructional spaces will be transformed into. With the excess dollars realized this academic year, we are able to accomplish a goal set for next school year, and kick off a three-year furniture upgrade project,” Superintendent Dr. Eric Jay Rosser, said, adding that in many buildings furniture had not been replaced in more than 50 years.

He said this is another step in the district’s commitment to meeting the academic needs of our 21st century students. Over the past three weeks, district leadership surveyed each school to create a priority list for year one of this project. Instructional areas inclusive of classrooms, library/media centers, and school cafeterias will benefit from the initial investment. An emphasis on upgrading the furniture of students in the district autism program Social Skill and Total Communication Access Room (SSTAR) is a high priority of the district as it services some of the district’s neediest students. Students in the program are provided with daily language support and direct instruction along with the use of multisensory learning approaches and daily opportunities to practice social skills.

The breakdown of funds by school is:

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<td>PHS</td>
<td>$278,862</td>
<td>PMS: $236,774</td>
<td>Warring: $87,468</td>
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Funding for each school was calculated by a per pupil allocation. In September, students and teachers, will be able to enjoy the new look of instructional spaces across PCSD.

Teacher adds fun to Fridays through virtual field trips

Students in Rebecca Ban’s class work hard at Warring Elementary School, but Ban and teacher assistant Donna Roman, try to make each lesson interesting and provide activities to engage students. Every other Friday, the two take the class on a virtual field trip to a place related to the week’s lesson and provide an activity to reinforce the lesson.

“We’re big hands-on, arts and crafts, tactile people. They see it, make it, do it – they don’t just listen,” Roman said April 23 as she passed out materials to help students make ponds in connection to a lesson on pond habitats.
“This is the kind of stuff we do. It’s hands-on learning and we talk about it. The kids love it,” she said as she made her way around the classroom, handing out gummy frogs for children to snack on.

Her first and second grade class had a good grasp of what happens in pond habitats as she reviewed the lessons learned from the week before showing a video that took the class to a pond at Wilton Wildlife Preserve and Park in Saratoga County.

“What is a pond?” Ban asked.

“A habitat,” Preston St. Leger answered correctly.

In fact, there are five different habitats at the pond Ban and Roman created on the wall. Over the course of the week, students learned about ponds, how a tadpole becomes a froglet then a frog, the life cycle of dragonflies, and more.

Asked what the process of going from a tadpole to a frog is called, Preston raised his hand, and again answered correctly, saying “metamorphosis.”

When the video host used the term during the tour, Preston excitedly echoed her and pointed to the word on the wall.

When the tour ended, Ban asked the students what their favorite animal was.

The turtle won with three students choosing it, followed by the frog with two students and the duck and tadpole with one each.

“I liked learning about tadpoles, frogs and turtles and how they grow,” St. Leger said afterward.

Ban and Roman then passed out pond habitats made from plastic dinner plates to each student so they could customize it, adding tadpoles, lily pads and flowers where they wanted them.

**Saturday Career and College program resumes May 8**

PCSD, in partnership with critical community partners, continues to push the newly established Saturday Morning Lights Career and College Pathways to Success program, which returns to Poughkeepsie High School for six weeks beginning May 8.

The program offers students in grades 7-12 an opportunity to explore careers and gain skills related to life after high school, regardless of whether they choose to pursue college or a career.

Information about internships, college options, creating a resume, and earning trade certificates and college credit will be presented. Students will also hear from successful Poughkeepsie graduates.

The 9 a.m. to noon program includes breakfast and lunch.

Registration forms in **English are here** and **in Spanish here**. For more information, email Community Schools Administrator Mario Johnson at mjohnson@poughkeepsieschools.org, Liz O’Raffty at mzoraffity@aol.com or Gully Stanford at gullystan@gmail.com