

SUPERINTENDENT'S BRIEF

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

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VOLUME 6



Next week belongs to teachers



Monday marks the beginning of Teacher Appreciation Week. In the Poughkeepsie City School District, we have more than our share to appreciate.

Yes, our teachers encourage student excellence in the classroom. Their impact, though, is so much bigger. They help shape the student experience, serving as advisors to clubs and coaches to athletics teams, working long hours beyond the day's final bell. They keep an eye out for students who may need additional support or guidance, and can be a soundboard when needed. They organize and lead PBIS – Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports – events. They even, from time to time, compete against students to the delight of the rest of their schools in faculty sporting events.

It's all part of our teachers' effort to bolster a culture of

achievement within and beyond our schools' walls.

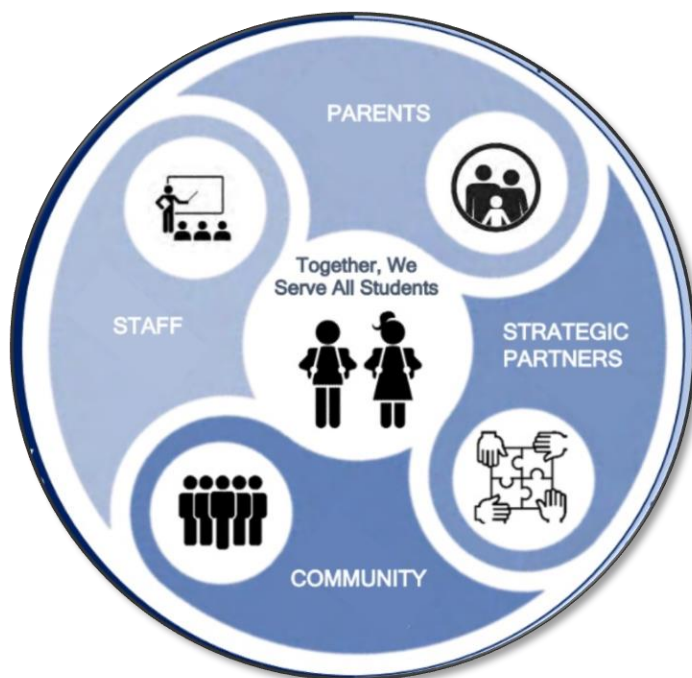
Across the country, Teacher Appreciation Week this year is May 5-9, with National Teachers' Day falling on May 6. There are many ways you can celebrate, and [PTA.org](https://www.pta.org) has a few suggestions worth taking, including printable fillable thank you cards, prompts for poems and certificates. [TeachersofTomorrow.org](https://www.teachersoftomorrow.org), meanwhile, has compiled a list of freebies and discounts teachers can utilize. And, of course, simply expressing gratitude is something that can be done early and often.

Please join the district in celebrating and honoring our teachers, who give so much of themselves to elevate the scholastic experience for our scholars.

District to form new strategic plan; take survey to participate

The Poughkeepsie City School District has elevated student success under its 5-Year Strategic Plan. Since it was implemented in 2020, the district has stabilized its finances, launched the Community Schools and College Readiness and Workforce Development departments, increased grades 3-8 proficiency rates in ELA and math, and earned "Good Standing" designations for each of its elementary buildings, among many accomplishments.

Though the plan will expire on June 30, the district is excited to announce the launch of a process to redevelop our priorities, goals and actions that will shape the future of our district, and [your involvement](#) will be an important element in this endeavor.





The updated strategic plan will aim to create a roadmap that not only reflects what is already working but also addresses areas in which improvement is needed, and we are committed to considering your perspectives and opinions on the direction we should take. We encourage you to share your insights and are eager to hear your thoughts on what we should prioritize for the future.

[To participate and share your valuable feedback, click here.](#) The survey will remain accessible until June 27.

The survey platform allows you to contribute your thoughts anonymously, and you can also view and rate the feedback provided by other community members. We encourage an open and ongoing dialogue, so feel free to revisit the platform often and keep the conversation alive. Your feedback will be instrumental in guiding our future plans, so we urge you to make your voice heard.

The district's current strategic plan was guided by four central areas of focus: student achievement; resource stewardship; internal processes, systems and structures; and organizational effectiveness. In addition to the list above, the district in the past five years has:

- Invested more than \$150 million in transforming buildings and facilities into 21st century learning environments.
- Ensured each building has full-time art and music teachers, librarians and social workers.
- Expanded social-emotional supports and staff in all buildings.
- Added reading and math academic intervention specialists in all elementary and middle schools.
- Expanded pre-K programming from half-day to full-day and greatly increased seats.
- Created a dual language program.
- Created a comprehensive arts education plan that has sprouted theatrical, poetry, strings and art productions, clubs and exhibits.
- Established the Pathways Transformation Initiative, including early college and career pathways learning, college credit attainment classes and greater college and career exposure for all grades.
- Expanded extended learning time and other enrichment like the Community Schools 'Lights' programming.
- Ensured equitable funding and programming across schools.
- Increased supports for English Language Learners and Students with Exceptionalities.
- Established the Parent Empowerment Center offering resources and supports.
- Formed partnerships with community-based organizations to augment resources and programming offered to students.

The list doesn't end there. [Visit this link](#) to read about the district's milestone accomplishments since 2020.



Two ELC students receive guidance from an Ampact tutor earlier this year.

PCSD reinstituting Ampact tutoring after federal cuts

Ampact tutoring in the Poughkeepsie City School District will resume Monday as district leaders seek to maintain the service despite an abrupt loss of federal funding that impacted more than 500 students in Dutchess County.

On April 25, funding for AmeriCorps' New York programs through the New York State Commission on National and Community Service was eliminated as part of the U.S. Department of Government Efficiency's decision to cancel grants through the AmeriCorps State and National program.

AmeriCorps, through its Ampact Early Learning Corps and Math Corps, partners with several local school districts and programs to provide high-impact tutoring to elementary students using evidence-based strategies. For Dutchess County, the cuts



equated to losing \$185,000 in critical funding that would enable the tutoring programs to continue through the end of July. The programs were suspended immediately as AmeriCorps and local partners considered how to account for the shortfall.

In all, 256 Poughkeepsie students receive Math Corps services and 90 receive Early Learning Corps services. Though these programs were already scheduled to shift under a new funding source – a National Direct grant unaffected by the federal cuts – Aug. 1, pausing the services through the end of the year would disrupt the academic progress of students, remove Ampact's ability to accurately gauge progress, and take positions from 23 local AmeriCorps members, 13 of whom work in Poughkeepsie.

Katrina Gobins, Ampact's executive director for New York programs, said all tutors around the county are able to return to service Monday after finding alternative bridge funding. Poughkeepsie will reallocate existing funds within its contract with AmeriCorps to resume tutoring in the short-term while it continues to work toward a solution that will maintain the services through the end of the school year.

New York is among 25 states that filed a lawsuit Tuesday seeking to prevent the federal government from making its planned cuts.

Ampact's tutors operate in all five of Poughkeepsie's elementary buildings. Students from grades pre-K to 3 are eligible to receive the tutoring, which comes through targeted sessions that expand upon their existing classes and close learning gaps. The tutoring is offered in addition to the schools' existing academic intervention services through staff.

"Our Ampact tutors provide a valuable additional support for our students," said Director of Elementary Education Janet Bisti. "Not only do students build foundational knowledge needed to understand more complex concepts and ideas, but they also build relationships, problem solving skills and perseverance to help them tackle future challenges. Tutors have become part of the school community, and we are thrilled about their return to schools."

Ampact first expanded into New York in 2023 when it partnered with the Poughkeepsie City School District. Its partners now also include Dover Union Free School District, Dutchess BOCES, Little Water Preparatory Charter School, Community Family Development, Day One Early Learning Community, Boys and Girls Club of Poughkeepsie, Astor Head Start and other programs based in Poughkeepsie, Wappinger and Beacon. Both tutoring programs, which aim to provide equitable access to academic support regardless of a student's background or geography, have proven effective. Comparing the assessment scores of Dutchess County students from September to April, 76% of Math Corps participants improved. In April, 62% of Early Learning Corps students were either on or above target for numeracy and kindergarten readiness, compared to 19% in the fall.

PCSD thanks cafeteria staff

Across the Poughkeepsie City School District, school [cafeterias are being remodeled](#) and [serving lines are being improved](#) to better serve our students. But students have always benefited from the dedication and importance of the staff operating those kitchens and cafeterias.

Today, May 2, is Cafeteria Worker Appreciation Day, also known as School Lunch Hero Day. It's acknowledged on the first Friday in May each year to celebrate everyone responsible for providing school meals to millions of children across America.

In the Poughkeepsie City School District, our "school lunch heroes" encompass a range of responsibilities aimed at ensuring that all children receive access to quality meal services. Beyond preparing and serving nutritious meals, they maintain clean dining environments, manage food supplies, and support extended meal opportunities beyond breakfast and lunch. Through their daily commitments to students, our heroes contribute significantly to the overall school experience by nurturing students' wellness, which is foundational

Thank you, School Lunch Heroes!





for learning. Please join the district in recognizing the difference these team members make for every child who comes through our cafeterias.

PKX Festival highlights student artists all day Saturday



Attendees look at student art during last year's PKX Festival.

The creativity and talent of the City of Poughkeepsie's youth will be on display Saturday at a free festival.

The annual PKX Festival will run from 1-8 p.m. at the Family Partnership Center. The event is a product of the Poughkeepsie Board of Artistic Youth – PK B.A.Y. – which brings together six organizations: the Boys & Girls Club of Poughkeepsie, Community Matters 2, Esperanza Dutchess County Hispanic Organization, Nubian Directions II, The Art Effect and the Poughkeepsie Children's Cabinet.

The gymnasium inside the building at 29 N. Hamilton St. will host a community celebration beginning at 1 p.m. that will include art-making and other family friendly activities, live music and food vendors. This portion of the event was originally scheduled to be outdoors at Mansion Square Park,

but plans changed due to a forecast of inclement weather.

Elsewhere in the Family Partnership, in the Duffy Community Room, an exhibition of art from area youth will be on display beginning at 1 p.m., with a reception set for 5 p.m. A youth film festival and awards ceremony will follow, from 6-8 p.m. While all ages are welcome throughout the day, the film festival is for teens and older, as some of the content is rated PG-13. The film festival, which includes work from filmmakers from across the globe, is presented by Vassar Brothers Institute.

The PKX Festival is a platform for youth artistry, embracing both emerging and accomplished young artists. Carefully curated films take the spotlight in a compelling showcase, while selected 2-D and 3-D artworks show off the talent of local youth. Each year it highlights the work of the Poughkeepsie City School District's students, many of whom take part in the programs that make up PK B.A.Y., including The Art Effect, which is currently partners with the district on the Smart Scholars Early College Performing Arts Academy.

Other newsletters to keep you informed:

Poughkeepsie City School District publishes a variety of newsletters throughout the year. Here are the available newsletters: [Curriculum & Instruction Weekly](#), May 2, 2025; [College Readiness and Workforce Education](#), April 2025.

Upcoming events

- **May 5:** Elementary Reconfiguration Informational Session: 3:15-4:30 p.m. at Smith Elementary School, 372 Church St.
- **May 6:** NAMI Mid-Hudson "Ending the Silence" mental health awareness event, at which attendees will learn the warning signs of mental health conditions and what to do if you or a loved one may need assistance. 5-6:30 p.m. at Poughkeepsie Middle School, 55 College Ave. [Register at this link.](#)
- **May 7:** Board of Education budget hearing and meeting: 6:30 p.m. at the Jane Bolin administration building, 18 S. Perry St.



MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS EVENT!
presented by NAMI Mid-Hudson



NAMI Ending the Silence
National Alliance on Mental Illness

NAMI Ending the Silence is an engaging presentation that helps individuals learn about warning signs of mental health conditions, suicide, and what steps to take if you or a loved one are showing symptoms of a mental health condition

		
EVENT DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Tuesday May 6th	5:00pm - 6:30pm	PM5 Auditorium 55 College Avenue

COME JOIN US!!

- Informative NAMI Presentation
- Tabling of Community Mental Health Providers
- Free Mental Health Tote Bags & Give-a-Ways
- And So Much More!

To Register: SCAN ME!




This event is presented by
THE OFFICE OF SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT