

Bronx School Leader Named New York State High School Principal of the Year

Pierre Orbe of DeWitt Clinton High School was named NYS High School Principal of the Year for transforming the Bronx school's academics and culture.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- The School Administrators Association of New York State (SAANYS) has honored Pierre Orbe, principal of DeWitt Clinton High School in the Bronx, as the 2025 New York State High School Principal of the Year.

This prestigious recognition is awarded annually to an exceptional high school principal who exemplifies visionary leadership and fosters academic excellence. As this year's recipient, Orbe will go on to represent New York at the national level with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), competing for the title of National Principal of the Year.

When Orbe assumed leadership of DeWitt Clinton High School in 2017, the school faced significant challenges. At the time, only 48% of students were graduating, just 28% were deemed college-ready, and fewer than 35% pursued higher education within six months of completing high school. The school also struggled with a reputation as one of New York City's most troubled institutions.

Since then, Orbe has overseen a dramatic schoolwide transformation.

"Today, our graduation rate has peaked at 97%, and college readiness has soared to 60%," Orbe said. "Enrollment in postsecondary education is up to 65%, and the percentage of students completing college or career preparation programs has jumped from 22% to an impressive 91%."

Orbe attributes these improvements to a school culture centered on student engagement, teaching excellence, and shared leadership.



Pierre Orbe of DeWitt Clinton High School

"We've made it a priority to involve students in decision-making processes," he explained. "Every week, I meet with student representatives from each grade level to listen to their ideas and concerns. Their voice shapes our work."

Beyond empowering students, Orbe has created opportunities for teachers to grow professionally by establishing teacher leader roles. These educators work collaboratively to design unit plans, assessments, and model lessons, fostering a school-wide approach to thoughtful, data-driven instruction.

Assistant Principal Jennifer Lovejoy highlighted the school's strategic use of the DataWise Inquiry process, which brought administrators and faculty together to examine student performance data and tailor instruction accordingly. "As a result, we've seen Regents exam scores in both English Language Arts and Math more than double," she noted.

Lovejoy praised Orbe's leadership in cultivating an environment where students are not only safe but actively engaged. "He's built a school community where students feel valued, where learning is meaningful, and where every student is positioned for success," she said.

Parents have also recognized Orbe's dedication to student growth. "Mr. Orbe offers every student the chance to thrive," said Estrella, a parent of a Clinton student. "His after-school clubs and enrichment programs keep our kids inspired and focused on the future."

Orbe's credentials reflect his deep commitment to education. He holds a bachelor's degree from Drew University and a master's degree in education from New York University. He is currently pursuing a doctorate in educational leadership at Russell Sage College, with an expected graduation in 2026. He also holds administrative certifications from the College of St. Rose.

Orbe will be officially celebrated, alongside other distinguished honorees, during the SAANYS annual awards ceremony on May 2 at the Desmond Hotel in Albany.

Reflecting on Orbe's impact, Social Studies teacher Rafel Erazo said, "He turned around a school once defined by fear and uncertainty into a place full of promise. His high expectations and compassionate leadership have earned him this recognition and the admiration of our entire community."

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