

BOUND FOR BROWN

IHS SENIOR JOHAN BELTRE BAEZ BECOMES THE DISTRICT'S 11TH IVY-LEAGER SINCE 2012



Johan Beltre Baez Photo courtesy of staff

International High School (IHS) senior Johan Beltre Baez has been accepted to Brown University on a full scholarship. The scholarship is provided by the Questbridge Scholarship Program, a nonprofit organization that provides higher education opportunities to high-achieving students from low-income families who would be the first in their families to go to college.

“We’re very proud of Johan for acceptance to Brown University,” said Superintendent of Schools Eileen Shafer. “I want to congratulate him and his family and thank the teachers and administrators who helped him along the way. We’re all working to help make students’ academic dreams a reality, and we’re so glad when we see students like Johan achieving academic excellence the way he has.”

“The teachers and administrative team at International High School are thrilled for Johan,” said Dr. Catherine Forfia-Dion, principal of International High School. “He is a dedicated student who is involved

in all aspects of the school community. I know that he will continue to excel at Brown University.”

Five years ago, Baez had just arrived in the country from a small province in the Dominican Republic called San Jose De Ocoa. He said he can remember playing in the forest next to his former home with his brothers and helping his grandmother to store water in pots and buckets for use during the week.

Baez knew no English when he first arrived and had few expectations as he navigated a new culture and environment. His hard work and supportive teachers put him on a path to success.

Throughout his education in the District, Baez immersed himself in working towards fulfilling his dream of being the first in his family to go to college. While attending IHS he was part of the National Chinese Honor Society, Robotics Team, Chinese Club, Student Government Association, National Honor Society, and Upward Bound. He also volunteered at the Paterson Public Library, making interactive crafts for young children.

Please see “Brown” on p. 2.

Brown continued from p. 1.

Baez said he intends on earning a double major in biochemistry and visual arts. "With Brown's Open Curriculum, I will be able to deepen my interest in how visual representation is used in science and also explore my interests in music production and social work," he said. "I hope to learn about the design and production of prosthetic devices by pursuing medical school or the research field, and I know Brown will give me the platform to follow any of those paths."

Baez is the eleventh Paterson Public Schools student to be accepted by an Ivy League college since 2012.

KHS BANK GETS A REBOOT

KNIGHTS ALUMNI COME HOME TO OPEN "THE CASTLE 2.0," WHERE KNIGHTS GO TO BANK

Officials from Paterson Public Schools, John F. Kennedy High School, and the North Jersey Federal Credit Union gathered today for a reboot of the high school's student-run bank.

The Castle 2.0 is an update of the banking branch that originally opened in January 2011. (The name is in reference to Kennedy High School's mascot, the Knights.) Banking has become increasingly more electronic since then, which is why school officials worked to update the bank to better serve its customers and better prepare students for the financial services industry.

"Now the students who work at the Castle 2.0 will continue to get practical experience in opening savings and checking accounts for other students, but they will also be learning about financial services such as home mortgages, auto loans, and retirement planning accounts such as IRAs," said Superintendent of Schools Eileen Shafer. "Many of the reasons people used to walk into the branch of a bank have been nearly eliminated. With this reboot, The Castle 2.0 will continue to be a place where students will learn about the financial services industry with practical experience that will help them enter the workforce after they graduate."

The Castle 2.0 has been made possible through a partnership with the Totowa-based North Jersey Federal Credit Union. The credit union's CEO, Lourdes Cortez, just happens to be an alumna of Kennedy High School.

"The one thing I wish I had back then was a financial literacy program. It gives me great pleasure to see how the branch has been renovated," Cortez said. "This year's Castle students are a very enthusiastic group who have quickly become accustomed to our credit union's all-new core system. They are now able to make funds more available. Most importantly, they serve as financially literate role models to their fellow students."

Another Kennedy High School alumna Janelis De Jesus worked at The Castle before she graduated in 2016. She now works at the North Jersey Federal Credit Union and participated in today's press event.



From left, Superintendent Shafer, Janelis De Jesus, Jorge Osoria, an NJFCU official, Edwin Hernandez, & Pamela Powell

Photo by Daniel Juan

Please see **"Bank"** on p. 3.

Bank continued from p. 2.

Shafer thanked Cortez for her continuing partnership with Kennedy High School, as well as Kennedy Principal of Instruction Jorge Osoria who worked to update The Castle's functions and curriculum.

Shafer also thanked Pamela Powell, currently a principal at Public School No. 7, who spearheaded the original effort to establish the Castle when she was an administrator at Kennedy High School.

Among the new features customers can enjoy is a brand new ATM machine at the bank. Also, the North Jersey Federal Credit Union has committed to rewarding student customers for good grades – along the lines of a \$5 deposit for every “A” on a student’s report card. [CLICK HERE](#) to see WPIX’s story on The Castle 2.0.

SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS GET NEW ID CARDS FROM SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENT

Special needs students at Public School No. 2, Dale Avenue School, Public School No. 6, and Public School No. 20 have received new identification cards issued by the Passaic County Sheriff’s Department. The new IDs

will provide information to law enforcement officials in the event the students are missing or involved in an emergency.

Information that would be conveyed through the IDs includes a condition a student may have, such as being on the autism spectrum or having a disability such as epilepsy, as well as a student’s home address, names of parents or guardians, and contact information.

“It’s a huge safety factor,” said Superintendent of School Eileen F. Shafer this morning at School 2, which has one of the district’s highest special needs student populations. “Some of these students are non-verbal. I can only imagine how upset a

parent would be if a nonverbal student were to get lost anywhere.”

“We’re very pleased to partner with Paterson Public Schools to provide IDs to children with special needs,” said Passaic County Undersheriff Kevin Dickson. “In the event of an emergency or if a child is lost this will help law enforcement officials to identify the child and be aware of any special needs the child may have.”

Shafer thanked everyone at the Passaic County Sheriff’s Department, in particular Commander Robert Scott, as well as Assistant Superintendent of Special Education & Services Cheryl Coy and District Director of School Safety Dalton Price.

“We hope this gives the parents of these children a little more peace of mind,” he said. “This initiative also gives the school district and parents more information to share with law enforcement in case of an actual emergency.” [CLICK HERE](#) to see TAP’s story on this topic.



A School 2 student gets his photo taken for a new ID.

Photo by Daniel Juan

SWAG ROOMS OPEN THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT

**REC ROOMS MADE AVAILABLE AS INCENTIVES
FOR STUDENTS TO DO THEIR BEST IN SCHOOL**

If you walk the hallways of the Sen. Frank Lautenberg School (SFLS) or Public School No. 10 and pass a room full of students playing video games, air hockey, or foosball, those students are actually some of the school's best.

That's because the room they are in is the school's new S.W.A.G. room, with S.W.A.G. standing for "students with academic goals." And to be able to enjoy the S.W.A.G. room, students need to earn their way in by reaching their academic goals.

"This is a great incentive for the Lautenberg School's elementary and middle school students to be goal-oriented – no matter what grade a student is in," said Superintendent of Schools Eileen F. Shafer at the official opening of the room on Dec. 5. "Students work hard to be allowed to come into the S.W.A.G. room. Any student in this room truly is a student with academic goals."

The district's first S.W.A.G. Room opened at Public School No. 21 in November 2021. All of the rooms have been created by Zone6ix, a local company that markets itself as a media platform for youth and high school student-athletes, through a partnership with Paterson Public Schools.

"SWAG' comes from confidence within and that's what we want for our young scholars," said Justin Wimberly, whose mother is a former SFLS teacher. "For the students, I couldn't be more excited."



Zone6ix CEO Justin Wimberly, Superintendent Shafer, and SFLS Principal Melanie Brown cut the ribbon on the school's new SWAG room earlier this month.

Photo by Daniel Juan



From left, Assistant Superintendent Cheryl Coy, SFLF Principal Melanie Brown, Justin Wimberly, Teacher Sherri Brackett, Superintendent Shafer, and Board Commissioner Vincent Arrington in front of the mural at the SFLS SWAG Room.

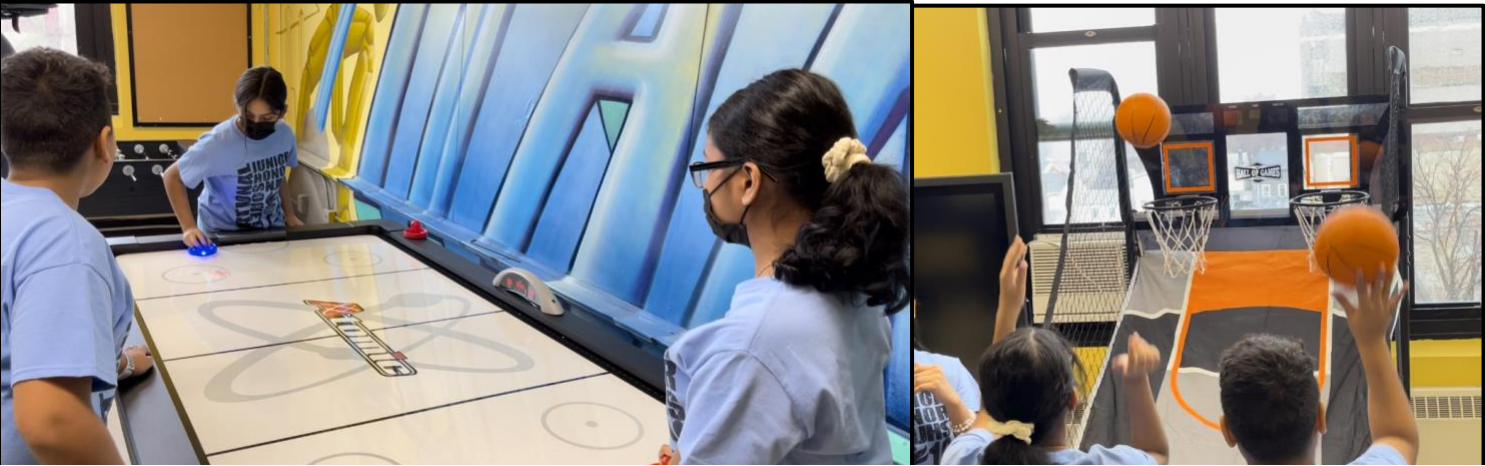
Photo by Daniel Juan

Please see "SWAG" on p. 5.

He thanked Superintendent Shafer, Principal Brown, Assistant Superintendent Cheryl Coy, and the Board of Education for the opportunity to open the SWAG rooms at district schools.

SWAG continued from p. 4.

Another SWAG Room is scheduled to open at the Dr. Frank Napier Technology Academy.



At left, School 10 students try out the air hockey table at their school’s new SWAG Room. At right, School 10 shoot hoops in the new SWAG Room. *Photos by Paul Brubaker*

[CLICK HERE](#) to see The Star-Ledger/NJ.COM’s story about SWAG Rooms.

NINE PPS GRADS GET SCHOLARSHIPS FROM CHEMICAL COMPANY

Nine 2022 graduates of Paterson Public Schools high schools have received scholarships courtesy of the Independent Chemical Corporation, based in Glendale, N.Y.

Jonathan Spielman, the company’s president, made \$10,000 available to be divided among the nine graduates. Each recipient had to show proof of enrollment in a college studying a science-related major in order to receive their \$1,111.11 share of the scholarship fund. Shafer thanked PPS Director of Guidance and Counseling Services Tamisha McKoy for her work as liaison with the company, and all of the school counselors who helped the students obtain the scholarship. The recipients are as follows:

Afsar Ahmed	STEM Academy (JFK)	NJ Institute of Technology
Samiha Ahmed	HARP Academy	NJ Institute of Technology
Adoni Deacon	HARP Academy	Rutgers University
Maricarmen Inoa Gonzalez	Rosa Parks High School	NJ Institute of Technology
Edwin Luna-Gonzalez	International High School	Montclair State University
Tasani Mack-Garret	Garret Morgan Academy	Kean University
MI Rifat	STEM Academy (JFK)	NJ Institute of Technology
Ariana Valverde	STEM Academy (JFK)	William Paterson University
Yolemi Villar Diaz	GOPA (EHS)	William Paterson University

AROUND THE DISTRICT

Tech Lessons. Public School No. 5 Principal Dr. Jorge Ventura and fourth grade teachers Judit Conetta and Shereen Jaloudi presented workshops as part of this fall's William Paterson University Continuing Education Program for Educators. Dr. Ventura presented a workshop on lessons learned at ISTE (the International Society for Technology and Education), and Ms. Jaloudi and Ms. Conetta partnered to present ways to ignite student learning with technology. All attendees received WPU professional development certificates.

Photo courtesy of Dr. Betsy Golden



EHS Teams Up. In recognition of National Red Ribbon Week – an alcohol, tobacco, drug and violence prevention awareness campaign observed every year – Eastside Educational Complex staff wore their favorite sport teams' apparel to "Team Up" against drug abuse.

Photo courtesy of staff



EHS Spanish Honors Society Warms Up the Holidays The Eastside Spanish Honor Society (ESHS) held a winter clothing drive in late fall and early winter. The group managed to collect 100 sets of winter hats, scarves, and gloves which were donated to the elderly at a local adult day care center. *Photo courtesy of staff.*

Kennedy HS Alum Gives Gift.

Chuck Muth, second from the right, graduated from Kennedy High School in 1973. The former Coca-Cola exec has given \$5 million to Montclair State University for the Negro League Museum that will be built at Hinchliffe Stadium.

Photo by Daniel Juan



Moody Portrait Added to EHS' Wall of Service. Zatiti Moody, who served as Eastside High School's principal of operations before his current position as principal of Alonzo Tambua Moody Academy, now has his place on the Eastside Wall of Service. In a special ceremony just before Thanksgiving, Moody's portrait was unveiled alongside those of his many predecessors, including Dr. Gerald Glisson and Joe Clark. "Zatiti Moody continues the educational care and counseling of Paterson students for which his family has been known for generations," said Superintendent Shafer. *Photo by Daniel Juan*



To Keep The Closets Stocked. Arya Kaul, a senior at Ramapo High School in Franklin Lakes, stopped by the Central Office Building just before the holiday break to dropped off a supply of feminine hygiene products. After seeing news coverage of the district's Confidence Closets initiative, Kaul held a products drive at her high school to help the district's efforts and promote the idea that menstrual hygiene is a human right. *Photo by Paul Brubaker*



Daffodils in Bloom. At Public School No. 25, Sigal Kaplan's fifth-graders had the opportunity to create a Daffodil garden with help from City Green. City Green hosted this Daffodil project at Public School No. 25 in November. This project is only one of many other projects Mrs. Kaplan is leading this year as part of the school's sustainability program. Last year all fifth-graders were part of the Empowered Schools program offered by PSE&G to schools across New Jersey. This program is designed to empower students with resources to educate them in saving energy and money in their schools and homes. *Photo courtesy of staff.*



DR. GERALD E. GLISSON FIELD HOUSE OPENS IN REMEMBRANCE OF BELOVED EDUCATOR



Mayor Andre Sayegh helps Michelle Glisson, widow of Dr. Gerald Glisson, as they prepare to cut the ribbon on the new field house. *Photo by Paul Brubaker*

The new Dr. Gerald E. Glisson Field House was officially opened on Dec. 19th with many of the late educator's family members, friends and colleagues gathered for the occasion.

The new field house is equipped with amenities that many of the district's student-athletes have had to go without in previous years, such as central air-conditioning and professional-grade lockers that allow student-athletes to store valuables securely. There are also screening rooms with Promethean Boards that will allow teams to watch videos of their games and analyze their performances. The Coaches' Office has windows that will allow them to look out onto

Bauerle Field, there are new public restrooms, a washer and dryer, and the Trainer's Room will soon be equipped with a whirlpool bath.

"As much as we miss Dr. Glisson and wish that he was with us today, we know that today we are doing so much more than the opening a new field house. We are keeping Dr. Glisson's legacy," said Superintendent Eileen Shafer. "And if we continue to be committed to keeping Dr. Glisson's legacy alive, his memory will live forever."

Dr. Glisson passed away in May 2020 after testing positive for the COVID-19 virus.

2022 PPS STEM EXPO

The district's annual STEM Expo was held at William Paterson University earlier this month. First-place winners of each elementary school in grades K-8 displayed their projects and later participated in activities led by university staff.



Photos by Daniel Juan

A 30TH ANNIVERSARY FOR THE HOLIDAY DINNER FOR THE COMMUNITY

WIMBERLY & COHORTS MARK THREE DECADES OF SPREADING COMFORT AND JOY

“Twas a few nights before Christmas, and all through the Eastside cafeteria, creatures great and small celebrated the holidays, with the help of N.J. State Assemblyman Benjie Wimberly and all of his merry volunteers.

It was the 30th anniversary Holiday Dinner for the Community, and it drew about 700 people to the Dec. 20th event. Participants were treated to a meal prepared by the students of Eastside’s Culinary Arts, Hospitality, and Tourism program.

Free haircuts were also provided, courtesy of House of Experts. Manicures were also available at the south end of the cafeteria.

Superintendent Eileen Shafer and Passaic County Sheriff Richard Berdnik were on hand to welcome everyone. But the big moment came when Santa Claus himself arrived so that he and his helpers, a.k.a. the brothers of the Lambda Epsilon chapter of the Omega Phi Psi fraternity, could hand out toys to the children and run the raffle for bikes.



Photos by Paul Brubaker



DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WIN NJ TOY DRIVE ESSAY CONTEST

Six high school students emerged from more than 50 entries in an essay contest sponsored by the New Jersey Toy Drive, a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving students in underserved communities.

Lisdhairis Diaz Cuevas, a junior at Eastside High School, won the \$150 first prize in the 11th and 12th grade category for her response to the essay prompt: Colleges and employers often use social media to learn background information about someone. What are some pitfalls to avoid, and how can you leverage social media to highlight your strengths? Destiny Garcia, also a junior at Eastside, won the \$100 second prize for her response to the prompt, while Nickelajah Ortiz, a junior at Paterson P-TECH High School, won the \$50 third prize.



Essay contest winners at Eastside High School. Photo by Daniel Juan

Gabrielle Wilson, a sophomore at Eastside, won the \$150 first prize in the 9th and 10th grade category for her response to the prompt: What advice do you have for younger students about navigating social media?

Ayleen Pineda Fuentes, a freshman at Kennedy High School, won the \$100 second prize, while Nashly Cano, a sophomore at Kennedy High School.

When she announced the winners at the Dec. 14. Board of Education meeting, Deputy Director of Accelerated Programs Rita Route thanked all of the teachers and school administrators who assisted the students in completing their entries. The winners received their prizes on Dec. 8th.

SCHOOL 21 ALUM VICTOR CRUZ TAKES 25 STUDENTS HOLIDAY SHOPPING



Former New York Giant Victor Cruz, center, with School 21 students, staff, and friends. *Photo courtesy of Benjie Wimberly*

Super Bowl Champion and Paterson Native Victor Cruz made it a very happy holiday season for 25 students who attend Public School No. 21 by taking them all on a holiday shopping spree on Dec. 18th.

The students, and a few adult supervisors including his former high school football coach Benjie Wimberly, were brought to the Foot Locker store on 34th Street near Sixth Avenue that Sunday morning. Upon arrival, each student was given a gift card worth \$300, which they could use to buy whatever they wanted in the store. The cards were available through the Victor Cruz Foundation.

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Important Dates

Dec. 26 – Jan. 2	District Closed Holiday Break
Jan. 4	Board of Education Reorganization Meeting 6:00 p.m. – Joseph A. Taub School, 202 Union Blvd., Paterson
Jan. 13	Early Dismissal for students PD for Staff
Jan. 16	District Closed Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday
Jan. 24	2nd Marking Period Ends
Jan. 25	No School for Students Staff In-Service

Board of Education Meetings

The Jan. 4th Board of Education meeting will be held in-person at 6:00 p.m. at the Joseph A. Taub (JAT) Middle School, 202 Union Avenue. It will also be live streamed at pps.eduvision.tv/LiveEvents. Those who want to give public comment must do so in person. They should register when they arrive at the JAT School for the meeting.

Reinstatement of the Mask Mandate

Due to the high transmission rates of COVID-19, RSV, and the flu in Passaic County, everyone entering a school or district building will be required to wear a mask when the district reopens on January 3rd. Please continue to maintain universal masking throughout all buildings and take all other precautions against the spread of the COVID-19, RSV, and the flu viruses including washing hands frequently, avoiding large gatherings, and staying home when sick. Masks will be made available to anyone who forgets their mask. The only time students can remove their masks is when they are eating, drinking, or taking medication.

PPS Beat is a publication of the PPS Department of Communications. We welcome your submissions on school and district-related news. Submit stories and photos to ppscommunications@paterson.k12.nj.us.