

# Paterson Post

Paterson — A Promising Tomorrow

Together We Can

NOVEMBER 2021

## ‘YES’ TO BETTER SCHOOLS

*Program brings students into discussions about equity, inclusion*



Superintendent Eileen Shafer listens to a student share his perspectives during the YES Program at Eastside High School. *Photo by Daniel Juan*

Students from five district schools gathered at the Eastside High School auditorium to begin a day of personal sharing and understanding of one another in an effort to develop ideas on how to make education more inclusive and equitable. The students, along with administrators and faculty members, were involved in the launch of the Youth Equity Stewardship, or “YES,” program – an initiative to bring young people’s perspective, vision, creativity, and passion to the forefront of policymaking for schools in the 21st century.

“The point is not to merely make sure that young people are represented, but to

make sure that young people are understood, as well as all of the participants in the YES program,” said Schools Superintendent Eileen Shafer, in her remarks to the students. “Too often, discussions about what education should be in 21st century America do not include all of the people who should be a part of those discussions. More often than not, it’s the students who are left on the sidelines of those discussions. Or, if students are included, it is often those students for whom the status quo is working, those who are succeeding with the way things are while many others are left behind.”

“You should have influence on the environments where you learn, and your advisors have invited you because they believe you have something to say about how we can make our schools more inclusive and equitable. That’s why you are here,” Assistant Superintendent Cicely Warren told the students.

Core groups of 20 students from five district schools were chosen by principals and faculty to

**Please see, “YES Program” on page 2.**



Assistant Superintendent  
Cicely Warren *Photo by Daniel Juan*

**YES Program**  
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participate in the YES program. The five participating schools are Eastside High School, Kennedy High School, The Rosa L. Parks School of the Fine and Performing Arts, the Dr. Frank Napier School of Technology, and the



YES Program Co-Founders Wade Colwell (left) and Benjie Howard listen to students sharing at the Eastside High School session.  
Photos by Daniel Juan



Students shared their perspectives with the entire audience of participants as well as with each other in discussion groups.  
Photos by Daniel Juan

Charles J. Riley School. The schools were selected on their previous use of restorative justice practices, the principal's interest in the YES program, and the availability of teachers and other staff to participate as advisors.

The YES program was co-founded by Benjie Howard and Wade Colwell, who led the session at Eastside. Both Howard and Colwell are consultants with Corwin Press, a division of Sage Publications that focuses on publications that help educators' professional development. Howard and Colwell are also artists whose resumes include backgrounds in education, songwriting, poetry, and performance art.

For more information about the YES program, please see the videos at the following links:

[90 Seconds of YES](#)

[Student Leaders Discuss Race: Youth Equity Stewardship Program](#)



# BTMF ACHIEVES GOLD STANDARD

*Nonprofit bestows its highest honor to BTMF for requiring financial literacy education*

Next Gen Personal Finance (NGPF), a non-profit with a mission to ensure every high school student in America takes a personal finance course by the year 2030, has awarded John F. Kennedy High School's School of Business, Technology, Marketing, and Finance (BTMF) its Gold Standard School award. The award is given in recognition of JFK-BTMF's ensuring that all of its students take at least one standalone semester course in personal finance before they graduate.

"Our BTMF students graduate high school with a solid knowledge of personal finance. They have the keys to financial success, and we greatly appreciate Next Gen Personal Finance's recognition," said Superintendent of Schools Eileen Shafer.

"The BTMF curriculum requires students to know how to keep their personal finances in order, which is knowledge they will benefit from for the rest of their lives," said Kennedy High School Principal of Instruction Jorge Osoria. "The reality is that every high school graduate should have this knowledge. That is why we applaud Next Gen Personal Finance's mission to promote financial literacy among high school students and thank them for bestowing the Gold Standard School award on BTMF."

NGPF teamed up with researchers at Montana State University to identify 1,591 Gold Standard Schools, including BTMF. These schools were in addition to high schools in six states – AL, MO, UT, MS, TN and VA – where all students are guaranteed to take a personal finance course before graduation.



## STUDENT: SCHOOL 12 GARDEN IS "BEST PLACE EVER"



Public School No. 12's garden buzzed with activity as William Paterson University Professor Julie Rosenthal's students demonstrated for Anissa Conyers' fourth-graders how to plant daffodil and tulip bulbs. Students were not daunted by the hard work of planting bulbs in the garden. Rather, they were delighted with their accomplishment. As they headed back into the school building, one student exclaimed, "This is the best place ever!"

Public School No. 12's garden  
Photo courtesy of Dr. Betsy Golden



Dream Catchers Photo courtesy of Dr. Betsy Golden



Gummy-Bear Experiments Photo courtesy of Dr. Betsy Golden

At Public School No. 5, Yudelis Nunez's third-graders have been very busy enjoying hands-on activities related to what they are learning in different content areas. After reading *The Dream Catcher* and learning about this Native American tradition, students had the opportunity to create their own dream catchers. They were eager to take home their creations and explain the history of the dream catcher and how cultures can influence communities.

On another day, the third-graders applied the scientific method by creating and testing their hypotheses to discover what happens to gummy bears soaked in various substances such as vinegar, salt water, and water with baking soda. These young scientists closely analyzed the results, discussing which substances broke down the gummy bears the fastest and which made the gummy bears swell.

## BREAKFAST TIME IS SHOPPING TIME AT SCHOOL 12



The School Store at School 12  
Photo courtesy of Dr. Betsy Golden

One of Brigitte Shahin's middle school students has long dreamed of starting his own business, and this year his teachers have helped him realize this dream -- at least in their own classroom. Shahin and Instructional Aide Gail Harvey bought several boxes of snacks and treats, which their young entrepreneur set up in a section of the room designated as the "School Store." Each morning, his classmates are allotted a certain number of coins from the math manipulatives center so that they may purchase an item of their choice. The teachers have now extended an invitation to their colleagues to reward their own students by sending them to the School Store during breakfast so they may be gifted with coins to buy something.



# A HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH BAZAAR

Public School No. 21's administration, faculty, staff, and students celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month with an outdoor bazaar. There were eight stations for students to visit that featured artworks, music and dance, mask decorating, soccer, and food tastings. Pumpkins decorated by students with the flags of different countries were displayed in School 21's garden. The walls and gates of School 21's playground were transformed into beautiful displays of student research projects and other creations. Special Thanks to Nicole Echeverry and Lizbeth Moran for serving as co-chairs of the event and to their phenomenal team who came in early and stayed late to prepare and clean-up the bazaar. *Photos courtesy of Public School No. 21*





## School 2 Celebrates 100 Years



From left, School 2 Chief Custodian Bill Moses, Principal Van Liew, Maria Zafarino, and Mayor Sayegh

*Photo courtesy of Tamara Rivera*



From left, N.J. Assemblyman Benji Wimberly, Principal Van Liew, N.J. Senator Nellie Pou, Vice Principal Dr. Serrano, and Councilwoman Lilisa Mimms

*Photo courtesy of Tamara Rivera*

Public School No. 2 celebrated 100 years of education at the Paterson Museum. The special guest speaker was 90-year-old Maria Marzella Zafarino who shared her School 2 memories. A member of the class of 1945, she is School 2's oldest living alumna.

Other alumni participated in saluting the flag and singing *My Country 'Tis Of Thee*, just as they did when they were students. Staff members joined them in the ritual, as they were accompanied by pianist Nancy Tiritilli, daughter of the late alumnus, Julius Tiritilli.

N.J. State Senator Nellie Pou, a member of School 2's Class of 1969, proudly shared her elementary school experiences.

Paterson Mayor Andre Sayegh and other community leaders lauded Principal Felisa Van Liew for her leadership and dedication to the School 2 students and families.

Van Liew expressed her gratitude to former Chief Custodian Bill Moses for keeping the building immaculate for over 25 years. She said that she hopes that staff and students will continue to care for the building so that it lasts another 100 years.

She also gave a special thank you to the School No. 2 Alumni Association and Paterson author Jennifer Tiritilli Ranu for organizing the event and publishing the commemorative book, which is filled with School No. 2 stories and pictures from 1921 through 2021.

# SCHOOL 9 RAISES \$1400 FOR LEUKEMIA RESEARCH...IN A WEEK

Staff and students at the Charles J. Riley School/Public School No. 9 had only been in school a few days when they joined together to raised money for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. A week later, they had raised \$1,400 through a fundraiser led by Seventh Grade Science and Health Teacher Jeanne Albanese.

Albanese started "Team JDF," the fundraising effort named after her father, John, a family friend, David, and her father's cousin, Felix. All three men died from blood cancer complications. Staff and students joined "Team JDF" by making donations starting on Sept. 29. By Oct. 15, staff and students had donated more than \$1,400.

The homeroom that had donated the most, \$133, was given an ice cream party, courtesy of Albanese.

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society is a nonprofit organization founded in 1949 and it funds research for every type of blood cancer, including leukemia, lymphoma, myeloma, and other rare types of blood cancers.

## NAPIER SCHOOL WALKS FOR BREAST CANCER AWARENESS



Dr. Frank Napier School of Technology staff and students took to the streets on Oct. 28<sup>th</sup> to walk for breast cancer awareness. The walk not only commemorated Breast Cancer Awareness Month, but also raised \$500 for the Hackensack University Medical Center.

Staff and students of the Dr. Frank Napier School of Technology on their Breast Cancer Awareness walk. *Photo by Daniel Juan*

### Follow PPS Social Media!

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On **Instagram**, it's Paterson\_Public\_Schools\_NJ.

On **Twitter**, it's @Paterson\_Public.



# BOE COMMISSIONERS RE-ELECTED

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*Castillo-Cruz, Martinez, Redmon to return with three-year terms*



Ms. Oshin  
Castillo-Cruz



Mr. Manuel  
Martinez, Jr.



Ms. Nakima  
Redmon

In Paterson's first Board of Education election since the restoration of local control of the district, voters re-elected the three incumbent candidates: Commissioners Oshin Castillo-Cruz, Manuel Martinez, Jr. and Nakima Redmon. The three commissioners are scheduled to be sworn into their three-year terms in January.

## TWO IB SENIORS NAMED QUESTBRIDGE FINALISTS

*First-generation college-bound hopefuls vying for scholarships*



Stefany Morales

*Photo courtesy of Dr. Cate Forfia-Dion*



Louis Varela

*Photo courtesy of Dr. Cate Forfia-Dion*

Stefany Morales and Louis Varela, two International Baccalaureate (IB) seniors at International High School, have been named finalists in qualifying for four-year college scholarships and early decision

acceptance to college through QuestBridge, 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.

Morales and Varela were among 16,500 applicants to QuestBridge's National College Match scholarship program, and now stand as two of the 6,312 finalists for the scholarship from throughout the United States.

In addition to qualifying financially, applicants must exhibit outstanding academic achievement. Previous National College Match scholarship have traditionally been in the top five to 10 percent of their graduating class, with a combined SAT score of 1260 or higher or ACT score of 27 or higher. Their transcripts have had grades of mostly A's in challenging courses such as honors level, Advanced Placement, or IB courses. Finalists are notified

of National College Match scholarship results on December 1st.

National College Match scholarship recipients are granted early admission to one of QuestBridge's 45 college partners with a full four-year scholarship.

The two seniors are both aiming high when it comes to their college plans. "My number-one school is UPENN!" said Morales. "I want to possibly major in either earth science or ecology. After college, I plan on going to dental school or possibly doing something in the environmental

**Please see, "Finalists"**  
*on page 9.*



**Finalists***Continued from page 8*

field relating to sustainability.” Varela simply stated, “I would like to get into Columbia or Princeton and study civil engineering.”

“Both of these students, Stefany and Louis, have already done the district and the Paterson community proud with their hard work and focus on their academic studies,” said Superintendent of Schools Eileen F. Shafer. “But obviously, winning the scholarships would mean they would have the opportunity to be the first in their families to go to college. That would make a world of difference in their lives. For that reason, everyone in the district hopes they win the scholarships.”

## “I AM PATERSON” YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM LAUNCHES AT HARP ACADEMY

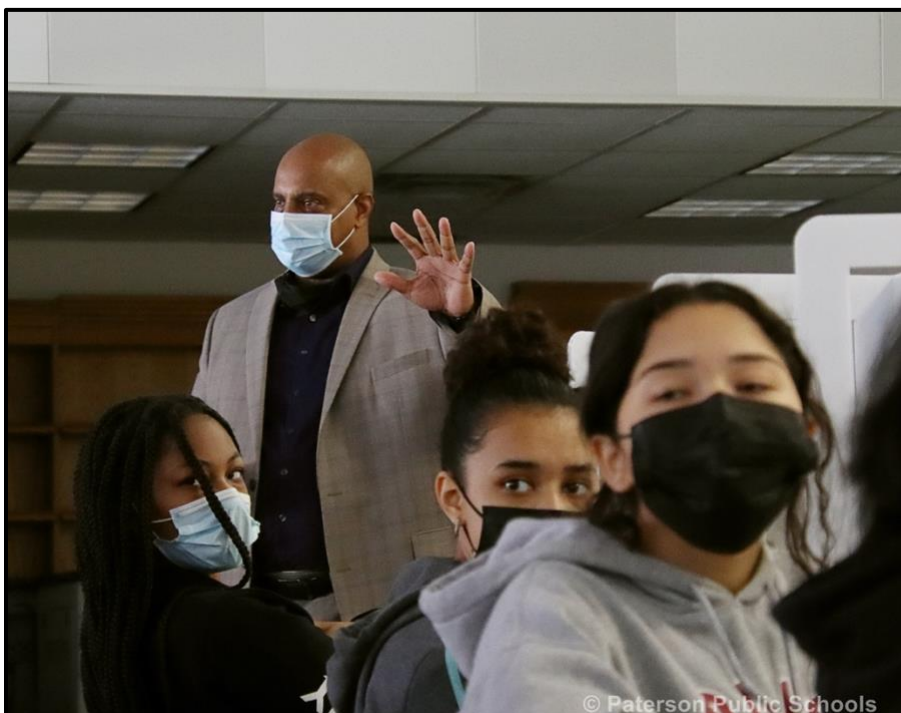
Thirty HARP Academy students began their journeys to becoming leaders as the “I AM Paterson” Youth Leadership Program launched on Nov. 10th. The program was hosted by the African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey (AACCNJ) at no cost to the district.

The Youth Leadership Program focuses on improving each student’s ability to succeed in the 21st century workforce with particular attention to raising students’ awareness of opportunities for academic success, job training, and higher education.

“The program’s facilitators come from a variety of professions, which is a tremendous asset in exposing our young people to the many opportunities that lie ahead after they graduate high school,” said Assistant Superintendent Cicely Warren. “The sessions that are planned throughout the rest of the year will help the students develop the skills they’ll need to make those opportunities attainable and succeed when they attain them.”

The Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> event was the first of the program’s seven monthly sessions, each covering a different aspect of leadership. Today’s topic was “Team Building.” Topics for the upcoming sessions include “Steps To Attaining Leadership,” “Competing in 21st Century Business,” “Ethics,” and “Public Speaking and Effective Communication.” Each of the sessions will be led by professionals and executives from a variety of industries as well as government.

At the end of the school year, the participating students will be taken on a field trip to visit an AT&T facility.



Dan Veasy of Covenant Business Concepts speaks to the HARP Academy students.  
Photo by Daniel Juan

# PPS STUDENTS WIN FIRE PREVENTION POSTER CONTEST

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Several district students in grades kindergarten through eight were honored as winners of the Paterson Municipal Youth Guidance Council's annual Fire Prevention Poster Contest at a special ceremony at Paterson's City Hall on Oct. 13th. Among the dignitaries in attendance were Mayor Andre Sayegh and Fire Chief Brian McDermott.

## **2021 Fire Prevention Poster Contest Winners**

### **Kindergarten**

Michaela Woolley, Public School No. 1  
Lya Chavez, Public School No. 19  
Amelia Govevia, Public School No. 1  
Ibelisse Diaz, Roberto Clemente School  
Steicy Pichardo, Roberto Clemente School

### **First Grade**

Evangeline Portillo, Norman S. Weir School  
Kristopher Catoe, Public School No. 1  
Isaias Deonate, Public School No. 3  
Labiba Chowdhury, Public School No. 19  
Alaa Saaif, Public School No. 25

### **Second Grade**

Heavin Bellamy, Public School No. 1  
Hailey Clarke, Norman S. Weir School  
Arielle Cruz, Public School No. 3  
Rwan Alhnaiti, Public School No. 25  
Nayeli Mejia Braya, Public School No. 19

### **Third Grade**

Stacy Jimenez, Public School No. 19  
Adrian Velasco, Norman S. Weir School  
Isabella Oliveira, Public School No. 1  
Autumn Walker, Public School No. 25  
Leylani Carrion, Public School No. 3  
Davion Harper, Norman S. Weir School



### **Fourth Grade**

Helina Ramirez, Public School No. 25  
Andrea Gutierrez, Public School No. 1  
Kelly Garcia, Public School No. 3  
Liliana Carrion, Public School No. 3

### **Fifth Grade**

Jazmin Hernandez, Public School No. 24  
Emily Hernandez, Public School No. 3  
Anthony Jalmes, Norman S. Weir School

### **Sixth Grade**

Fiona Chen, Public School No. 24  
Nicole Velez, Public School No. 25  
Erimar Chalas, Norman S. Weir School  
Muktharun Noorullah, Public School No. 8

### **Seventh Grade**

Samantha Lovely, Norman S. Weir School  
Elaine Chen, Public School No. 24  
Eman M. Taher, Public School No. 25

### **Eighth Grade**

Kayla McFadden, Norman S. Weir School  
Giania Aneyda Melvin, Public School No. 25  
Katherine Cordero, Public School No. 25  
M. Saad Ansari, Public School No. 25  
Audrey Swartz, Public School No. 25



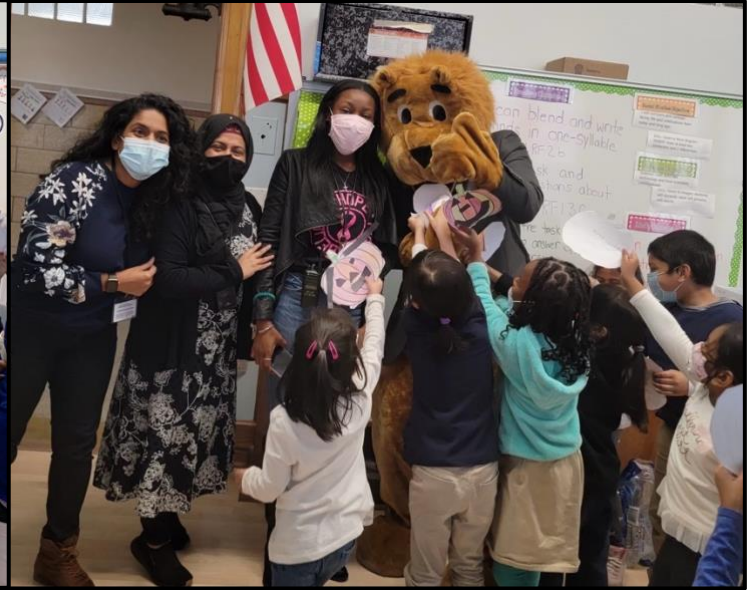
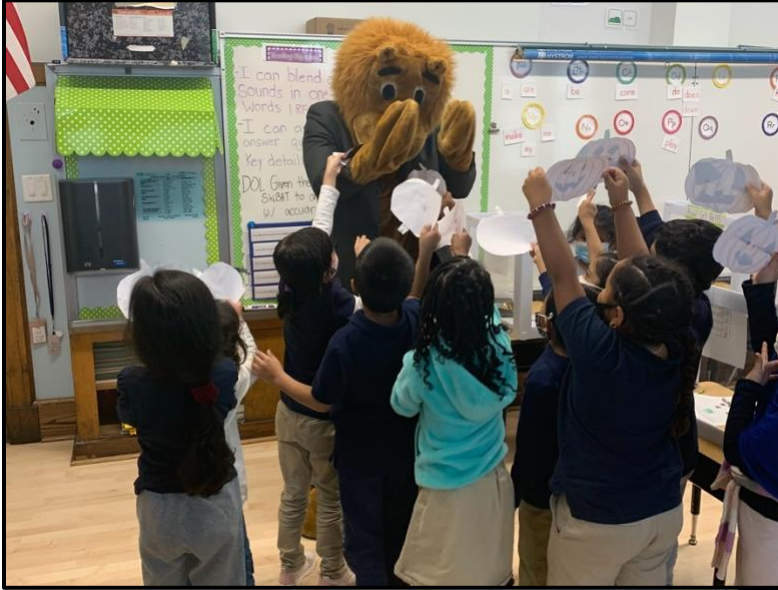
*Photos courtesy of Deputy Superintendent Susana Perón*



# PRINCIPALS: UNDERCOVER

*School leaders don disguises to educationally engage students*

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**Who Can It Be Now?** Students at Public School No. 5 were thrilled to get a visit from “Leo, the Learning Lion” who encouraged them to do their best in school (above). If his voice sounded a little familiar, it was because inside the costume was the school’s principal, Dr. Jorge Ventura. (Photos courtesy of Assistant Superintendent Jalyn Lyde.) Meanwhile over at Public School No. 2, students were surprised to find out that the “Mystery Firefighter” at their fire prevention lesson was none other than their school principal, Felisa Van Liew, who can be seen smiling at the far right. (Photo courtesy of Tamara Rivera.)

## Get The Most From *The Paterson Post!*

- Please submit news items to [ppscommunications@paterson.k12.nj.us](mailto:ppscommunications@paterson.k12.nj.us).
- When referring to staff members, please include their first names.
- To request coverage of live events, please complete a Versiform request.

# Upcoming Events

- Nov. 18:** Report Card Parent Conferences,  
Grades 9 to 12, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
- Nov. 22:** Board of Education Regular Meeting\*  
6:00 p.m.
- Nov. 22:** Report Card Parent Conferences  
School 7, Joseph A. Taub and New Roberto Clemente, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
- Nov. 23:** Report Card Parent Conferences  
pre-K to 8, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
- Nov. 24:** Early dismissal; 1:00 p.m. for students, 1:20 p.m. for staff
- Nov. 25 & 26:** Thanksgiving Break
- Dec. 8** Board of Education Workshop Meeting\*  
6:00 p.m.
- Dec. 10:** Staff in-service, 1:00 p.m. for students
- Dec. 15:** Board of Education Regular Meeting\*  
6:00 p.m.
- Dec. 23:** Early dismissal; 1:00 p.m. for students, 1:20 p.m. for staff
- Dec. 24 – Jan. 3:** Holiday Break

\*All Board of Education meetings are live-streamed at [pps.eduvision.tv/LiveEvents](https://pps.eduvision.tv/LiveEvents). Those who want to give public comment should register in advance by emailing [public@paterson.k12.nj.us](mailto:public@paterson.k12.nj.us) by 5:00 p.m. on November 22nd, December 8th, and December 15th. Participants are asked to provide their name, address, and the phone number from which they will be calling.

**The Paterson Post** 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](mailto:ppscommunications@paterson.k12.nj.us).