



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PATERSON BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMISSIONERS APPROVE \$780.5 MILLION PRELIMINARY BUDGET THAT AVOIDS LAYOFFS FOR A FOURTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR

Funding maintained for vital programs and services

Public hearing scheduled for Thursday, May 4th

PATERSON – Paterson Board of Education Commissioners tonight approved a \$780.5 million budget for the 2023-2024 school year that marks a four-year trend of the district avoiding layoffs and maintains funding for many vital programs and services that students and families depend upon.

“I want to thank the Board of Education commissioners for approving a preliminary budget that prioritizes the needs of our students and their families,” said Superintendent of Schools Eileen Shafer. “I also want to extend my gratitude to the Budget Team for developing a comprehensive budget that reflects our shared priorities. Their dedication and expertise have been essential in keeping our district moving forward towards greater financial stability.”

“This preliminary budget provides the resources needed to put our students on the path to greater academic achievement while maintaining a high standard of fiscal responsibility,” said Board of Education President Nakima Redmon. “I want to thank everyone in the Budget Team for putting together the preliminary budget. I also want to thank the members of the Board’s Fiscal Committee and all of the Board of Education Commissioners for their dedicated participation in the budgetary process.”

Maintaining Funding For Critical Programs

The preliminary budget maintains funding for the programs that have paved the way for student achievement and parental success including:

The International Baccalaureate Program. Paterson Public Schools is one of only 17 districts in the state that has this rigorous and world-renowned program that has enabled several students to be accepted at elite colleges including Harvard, Columbia, Johns Hopkins, and UPenn.

The Paterson Academy of the Gifted & Talented/Public School No. 28. This school has been cited by *U.S. News & World Report* as the nation’s #1 elementary school AND the nation’s #1 middle school. It also won the district’s first federal Blue Ribbon award.

Championship-Level Athletic Programs. It has been a banner year for the district’s athletic programs and the student-athletes who participated in them. Last fall, the Kennedy High School Boys Soccer Team won its first Passaic County Championship since 1996. More recently, the Eastside Girls Basketball Team won its second consecutive Passaic County Championship and the Eastside Boys Basketball Team won the Group IV State Championship and the Passaic County Championship.

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Bilingual Education Program. The district's Bilingual Education Program has been cited by the N.J. Department of Education as a model program.

Full Service Community Schools. The district's Full Service Community Schools Program provides academic support services for students and many other services – including health care, dental care, food security, and counseling services for their families.

Positive Impact On Staffing

The last time the district needed to lay off staff, in what is called a reduction in force, was in 2019 in order to balance the budget for the 2019-2020 school year. Since then, the district has had no reason to have a reduction in force. The preliminary budget adds staff in critical areas including:

- 11 new bilingual positions
- 11 new personal aides
- 3 new Facilities Department positions
- 9 new student assistance coordinator positions
- Additional board security guards

Limited Tax Impact

The tax impact of the budget on a Paterson property at the city's average assessed value of \$196,000 is an increase of \$226 a year or 62 cents a day. This tax increase is the district's lowest in five years and follows a 10-year period when taxes were raised only once while the district was under state control.

What Happens Next

The preliminary budget will be sent to the Passaic County Executive Superintendent of Schools for a line-by-line review on Monday, March 20th. The county authorities have until Thursday, April 20th to either send the budget back to the district with edits or approve it and forward it to state authorities.

A public hearing on the budget has been scheduled for Thursday, May 4th, at 6 p.m. at the Joseph A. Taub School, 202 Union Avenue.