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PATERSON STUDENTS SHINE A SPOTLIGHT ON TEACHING CAREERS

Paterson Schools Showcase Teacher Diversity Efforts Through EP4P Grant

Paterson, NJ (September 23, 2024) –Paterson Public Schools students have created a video series highlighting teaching opportunities through the Education Pioneers for Paterson (EP4P) grant. Sponsored by William Paterson University (WPU), the EP4P grant partnership addresses the critical need to recruit and retain minority teachers and close the student-teacher diversity gap in the district. The videos emphasize why teaching in Paterson is a meaningful and fulfilling career, especially as the district and nation face teacher shortages.

“We are committed to fostering diversity within our teaching staff, as it directly impacts our students’ success,” said Paterson Public Schools’ Superintendent Dr. Laurie W. Newell. “The EP4P program helps us recruit and support teachers who will thrive in Paterson. These videos are a testament to the positive influence our educators have on the community.” Research shows that all students benefit from having a teacher of color, particularly students of color, who see improved academic outcomes and social-emotional development ([Carver-Thomas, 2018](#)).

This initiative, led by David Ferrier, Project Director of the EP4P Grant at William Paterson University, and Dr. Cicely Warren, Assistant Superintendent of Paterson Public Schools, were instrumental in overseeing the grant’s implementation, ensuring the recruitment of diverse educators while also emphasizing the retention of experienced teachers. Paterson educators Mr. Richard Solis of John F. Kennedy High School (JFK) and Mr. Nahmir Glass of Rosa L. Parks Fine and Performing Arts High School (RLP) guided the students through the production process. The student-produced videos can be viewed here: [JFK](#) and [RLP](#)

Inspired by the EP4P mission, Paterson students created the videos to highlight why teaching in the district is so rewarding. “During our discussions, we frequently asked what keeps our teachers coming back to Paterson,” said Assistant Superintendent Dr. Cicely Warren. “We realized the best way to answer that was to ask our veteran teachers—through our students. This project gave our stakeholders a unique opportunity to shape the narrative about our schools.”

A unique and inspiring feature of this initiative is the involvement of Paterson students in the creation of the videos featuring veteran teachers who have dedicated decades to the district. The students played key roles in the project, conducting interviews, filming, and editing the videos. Their work was essential in capturing the voices of educators who have made a lasting impact on the community and its students. Through this hands-on project, students not only developed technical skills in video production but also gained a deeper understanding of the importance of representation and diversity in education. Their involvement allowed them to actively shape the narrative, strengthening the bond between educators and their students.

The grant-funded partnership also provided mentorship, resources, and opportunities for both current and aspiring teachers, helping to shape the next generation of educators in Paterson. The program concluded with a celebratory event at WPU, honoring the film participants and filmmakers.

For more information about Paterson Public Schools and its programs, please visit our [website](#).

About Paterson Public Schools

Paterson Public Schools serves over 26,000 students from pre-K to 12th grade in New Jersey's third-largest city. About 70.6% of the student population is Hispanic, 16.3% are Black, 6.5% are Asian, and 5.0% are Caucasian. Recognizing its proud traditions, diverse community, and strong partnerships, the mission of Paterson Public Schools is to provide an academically rigorous, safe, and nurturing educational environment that meets the social, emotional, and academic needs of all students. The district is committed to preparing students for post-secondary education and careers. Despite the Paterson community being classified as low-income, many of its students achieve high academic success. A growing number of elementary school students are reading at or above grade level, and more high school students are earning college credits through Advanced Placement exams and enrolling in college-level courses before graduation. Paterson Public Schools is distinguished as one of only seventeen school districts in New Jersey to offer the competitive International Baccalaureate program and is among just four districts with a P-TECH high school. In collaboration with IBM and Passaic County Community College, allows students to graduate with an associate degree in applied science and valuable tech sector experience. For more information, visit www.paterson.k12.nj.us.

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