

# — THE DISTRICT — CHRONICLER

PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS 

February 2025

## SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER

The Middle School Model, Principals' Meeting, and More

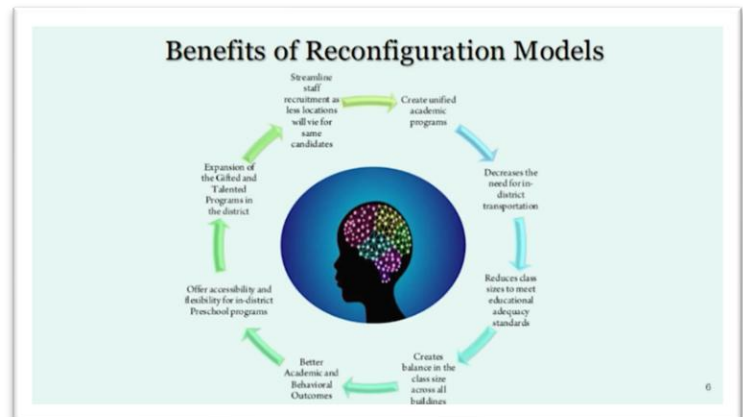
### A PATH FORWARD: STRENGTHENING OUR MIDDLE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

For more than a decade, Paterson Public Schools has been working toward a vision—one that ensures our students receive the best possible education in an environment designed for their success. That vision is now taking its next step forward. As part of this transition, we will be hosting two community forums to engage with our families: a virtual forum on March 11<sup>th</sup> and an in-person forum on April 3<sup>rd</sup> at Dr. Hani Awadallah School. These forums will provide an opportunity for parents to learn more about the initiative, ask questions, and share their thoughts.

The Middle School Model Initiative, first introduced in 2012, is more than just a reconfiguration of schools; it's a commitment to fostering student-centered learning that meets the academic, social, and emotional needs of our young learners. By transitioning to designated middle schools for grades six through eight, we are creating spaces where students can thrive, where teachers can focus on the unique needs of this age group, and where every child is given the tools they need to prepare for high school, college, and careers.

As we move forward, our leadership team is working closely with staff and families to ensure a smooth transition. We understand that this shift impacts many aspects of school life, including special education and multilingual programs, and we are committed to making adjustments that best serve all students.

This is an exciting time for Paterson Public Schools. We look forward to engaging with our community, listening to feedback, and working together to create a middle school experience that truly prepares our students for a bright future. Stay tuned for updates on upcoming forums and resources—we look forward to continuing this journey with you.



### PRINCIPALS COLLABORATE ON KEY INITIATIVES AT FEBRUARY MEETING

At the February 21<sup>st</sup> Principals' Meeting, Superintendent Dr. Laurie W. Newell and Deputy Superintendent Rodney Henderson met with school leaders to discuss the important work happening across Paterson Public Schools. The meeting provided an opportunity to share updates, exchange ideas, and focus on strategies that will support student success. A major topic of discussion was science assessment preparation, as principals explored ways to help students feel confident and ready for their upcoming exams.

School leaders also exchanged insights on managing leadership teams and test preparation strategies, ensuring that best practices are shared across the district. Another key focus was the strategic plan—a roadmap that will guide the district’s direction over the next five years. Principals were reminded to encourage their teams to participate in the districtwide survey, providing valuable input that will help shape this plan.

“Recently, we sent out an email with a video explaining how we got to this point and emphasizing that we want as much feedback as possible as we continue shaping our strategic plan,” said Dr. Newell. “The district has already received great initial feedback, and we appreciate everyone who has taken the time to watch the presentation and complete the survey. Your insights are critical as we work toward a stronger, more transparent, and accountable school system.”

If you haven’t yet had a chance, we encourage you to watch the presentation to understand the purpose of the audits and how we are moving forward. Be sure to scan the QR code and complete the brief survey—your voice matters, and your input will help guide the future of our schools!

Click [here](#) to view the Strategic Plan video presentation.



## ADVOCATING FOR OUR SCHOOLS: PROTECTING CRITICAL FUNDING

Paterson Public Schools depends on federal and state funding to support essential programs and services that benefit our students and families. Recently, we learned of potential federal funding reductions, which could significantly impact our district. To ensure our voices are heard, Superintendent Dr. Laurie W. Newell joined a panel of superintendents to testify before Senator Andy Kim’s team, advocating for continued federal support. Currently, Paterson Public Schools receives millions of dollars in federal funding—resources that directly contribute to student learning and success.

While the specifics remain uncertain, we want to be proactive and transparent with our community. We understand the possibility of reductions in state aid and are preparing for any potential impact.

“I want to assure you that I, along with the Board of Commissioners and district leadership, am committed to fighting for our students and families,” said Dr. Newell. “We are actively advocating for continued funding and exploring all available options to protect our schools.”

We firmly believe that every student in Paterson deserves access to a high-quality education, and we will continue working tirelessly to secure the resources they need. We will keep you informed as we learn more about the federal and state budgets and what they mean for our schools.

Your support and partnership are invaluable as we navigate these challenges together.

## TWO BOARD COMMISSIONERS ATTEND THE NEW BOARD MEMBER ORIENTATION WEEKEND

On February 21, Board Commissioners Kenneth Rosado and Hector L. Nieves, Jr. attended the New Board Member Orientation Weekend in Plainsboro, New Jersey. This required training, part of the School Ethics Act, ensures newly elected school board members are well-prepared for their roles. The three-day program covered key topics such as school law, finances, labor relations, board-superintendent relationships, and advocacy through a mix of large and small group sessions. This training equips new board members with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively serve Paterson Public Schools and its students.



# BLACK HISTORY MONTH

## MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

At Paterson Public Schools, we proudly recognize the African Americans who shaped our community and paved the way for future generations. This Black History Month, we honor the theme “African Americans and Labor,” celebrating not only their history but also the resilience and brilliance that continue to inspire our students. We are committed to fostering an environment where diversity and rich cultures are valued, empowering students to learn from the past and shape a more inclusive future.

Let us use this month to learn, reflect, and honor these incredible contributions. Let us inspire our students to dream big and work hard to achieve their goals. Together, we honor the past and build a better future!

Click [here](#) for Dr. Newell’s message.

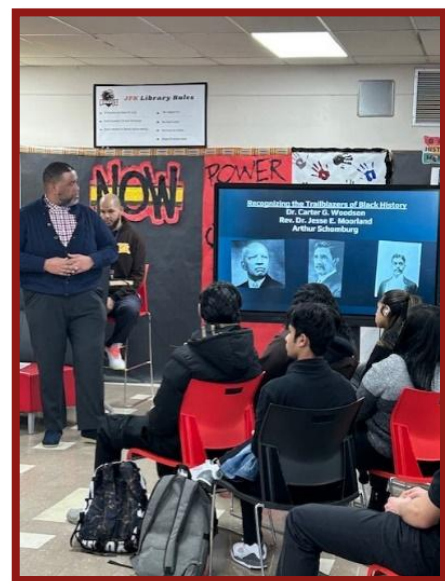
## JFK CELEBRATES BHM WITH STUDENT-CREATED MUSEUM

At John F. Kennedy High School, Black History Month came to life through a student-created Black History Museum, showcasing artwork, research projects, and displays highlighting the rich history and contributions of African Americans.

Walking through the museum, visitors experienced a powerful celebration of culture, resilience, and achievement—brought to life by the creativity and dedication of JFK students.

Adding to the month’s celebrations, Special Education teacher Shelton Prescott led an engaging presentation titled "Breaking Barriers: African American Trailblazers of Paterson and Passaic County." Through this lesson, students learned about influential local figures who shaped history, inspiring them to see the impact of Black leaders in their own community.

JFK High School’s Black History Month celebration was more than a lesson in history—it was an opportunity for students to honor the past, reflect on the present, and embrace the future with knowledge and pride.



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## RENAISSANCE ONE KICKS OFF BHM WITH INTERACTIVE CELEBRATION

The energy was high, and the drums were beating as students at Renaissance One School of Humanities kicked off Black History Month with a vibrant and interactive assembly on January 31. Hosted by the Passaic County Folklife Center, the event immersed students from School 1 and School 26 in the rich traditions of African music, dance, and culture.

West African drummer Mr. Victor Marshall and African dancer Audrey captivated students with their performances, sharing the history and significance behind traditional drumming, costumes, and movement. But this wasn't just a show—students became part of the experience! They had the chance to dress in authentic costumes, dance, and engage with the rhythms of African drumming, making history come alive in a way they won't soon forget. Through music and movement, students not only celebrated Black history and heritage, but also gained a deeper appreciation for the cultural traditions that continue to inspire communities around the world.



## SCHOOL 2 CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Paterson Public Schools is proud to continue celebrating Black History Month with engaging and meaningful events across the district.

Students and staff at School 2 came together on February 26<sup>th</sup> for a special Black History Month event titled "Black History is American History." The celebration featured a variety of inspiring performances, including singing and poetry, honoring the contributions and legacy of African Americans throughout history.



## ROBERTO CLEMENTE BLACK HISTORY MONTH EVENT



On February 25, students at Roberto Clemente School honored Black History Month with a special musical event filled with talent and enthusiasm. The celebration showcased students' performances, highlighting the rich cultural contributions of African Americans through song and music. Dr. Newell attended the event, addressing the students and congratulating them on their hard work and inspiring performances. She encouraged them to continue learning about history and embracing the power of music to celebrate culture and unity.

## BHM CELEBRATION AT ALEXANDER HAMILTON



On February 26, Alexander Hamilton hosted a powerful Black History Month celebration that brought the school community together. The event, attended by Dr. Newell, featured a captivating music presentation, where students took the stage to honor historic African American figures who made significant contributions to U.S. history. Among those highlighted were leaders like Martin Luther King Jr., whose legacy continues to inspire generations. The performance was a testament to the talent and dedication of our students and staff, who worked hard to create an unforgettable tribute. We are incredibly proud of their efforts and the meaningful impact of this production.

## ANNUAL BLACK HISTORY PROGRAM AT ROSA PARKS HS

Paterson Public Schools is committed to recognizing and celebrating the rich diversity and cultures that make our community unique. As part of the district's ongoing Black History Month celebrations, Superintendent Dr. Laurie W. Newell had the honor of attending Rosa L. Parks High School's annual Black History event on February 27th. The event was hosted by Senator Benjie Wimberly and featured incredible performances from both students and staff, each honoring the contributions and legacy of African Americans. Kudos to all involved for their hard work and dedication, which made this event a truly memorable celebration of history and talent!





## SPECIAL EDUCATION | TICKET TO TRANSITION FAIR

*Paterson Public Schools  
3rd Annual Special Education  
"Ticket to Transition Fair"*

*Presented to you by The Special Education Department & District Transition Coordinator,  
Crystal Cox-Tober*


Friday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
4:00pm to 7:00pm

@  
**PATERSON STEAM/STARS/T.I.E.S.**  
764 11<sup>TH</sup> Avenue  
Paterson, NJ 07514

Join us for an opportunity to learn about resources for students with disabilities that are transitioning from high school to adult life. There will be representatives from over 30 agencies participating.

➤ Due to limited space registration is required.

Please click on the link  
<https://forms.gle/1RVcZrw4HDvPttw7>  
or scan the QR code to register



SCAN ME

**Agencies attending:** Division of Developmental Service (DDD) \*Division of Vocational Rehabilitative Services (DVRS) \*Division of Human Services (DHS) \* Arc of New Jersey \* Circle of Care \* Passaic County Sheriff's Department (NJ ABLE) \* Bergen & Passaic Community College's \* William Paterson College\*Financial Aide & Admissions Planning (HESAA) and more!!

For more information, please contact:  
Crystal Cox-Tober at [ccoxtober@paterson.k12.nj.us](mailto:ccoxtober@paterson.k12.nj.us) or call (973)-321-0838

On behalf of: Assistant Superintendent, Cheryl D. Coy

## ACADEMIC SERVICES CELEBRATE VALENTINE'S DAY

The Academic Services team marked Valentine's Day with a special celebration. Dressed in red and pink, team members gathered for a festive breakfast featuring bagels and other treats. The event provided a chance for colleagues to socialize, share in the holiday spirit, and enjoy some quality time together.



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## MLK HOSTS PATERSON FIRE DEPARTMENT

We are excited to announce that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Educational Complex was selected to host the Paterson Fire Department's new Interactive Fire Safety Trailer System. This innovative educational tool provided both special education and general education students with hands-on learning experiences to better understand fire safety and emergency preparedness.

Students participated in a variety of interactive scenarios, including:

- Fire safety techniques
- Kitchen safety to prevent home fires
- Training on the Bullseye Interactive Fire Extinguisher System
- Practicing bedroom exit drills for emergency situations
- Preparing for severe weather scenarios

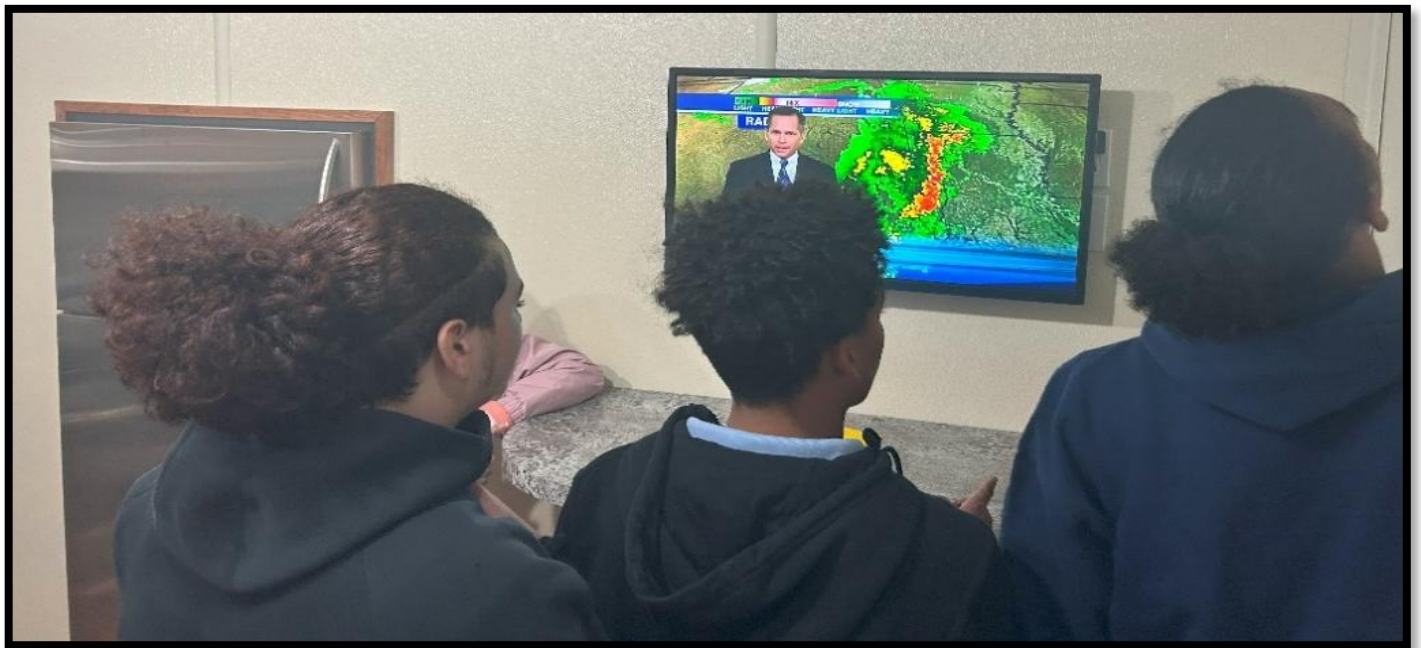
This system is designed to teach students essential skills for preventing fires, handling emergencies, and practicing safety at home and in their communities. It also strengthens family and community education by preparing students with the knowledge and confidence to act in emergencies.

A heartfelt thank you goes to the Paterson Fire Department Public Education Division, Firefighter Jerome Hunter, Fire Marshal Helen Ybanez, and Fire Marshal Joe Pagnozzi for making this invaluable training both educational and enjoyable for our students.

We are grateful for this opportunity and look forward to continuing to work together to keep our community safe!



Students practice using a fire extinguisher (top) and learn about preparing for weather emergencies (below)





## P-TECH CELEBRATES GRAND REOPENING OF ITS TRANSFORMED PLANETARIUM

On January 31, P-TECH High School marked a significant milestone with the grand reopening of its Planetarium. After undergoing a complete transformation, the planetarium now boasts cutting-edge technology and offers exciting new opportunities for learning and events. The celebration was attended by Superintendent Dr. Laurie W. Newell and her cabinet, members of the Board of Education, and P-Tech's dedicated staff who all gathered to witness this exciting upgrade.

Dr. Carlos Miranda, the Planetarium Manager, shared his excitement about the newly revamped space, revealing the extensive improvements made to both the physical structure and the technology. With new flooring, seating, and the latest software, the planetarium is now ready to deliver an immersive educational experience.

During the event, Dr. Miranda gave a live demonstration of how the new software can be used to enhance a wide range of content areas, from astronomy to science, and how it will serve as a versatile space for hosting various types of events. The planetarium's reopening is a testament to the district's commitment to providing students with access to state-of-the-art learning tools that inspire creativity, exploration, and academic growth.



Attendees were served dinner by Eastside High School's Culinary students.



Dr. Newell, Dr. Henderson, and staff touring the Planetarium

## JFK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS SHINE AT 'ART START' RECEPTION

John F. Kennedy High School Foundations of Fine Arts students, Rodney Mendez, Soybah Rahman, Sha'ki Kelly, and Farida Nishat, attended the 'Art Start' art reception at the Powers Art Center at William Paterson University on Monday, February 10, accompanied by their art teachers, Ms. Jackson and Ms. Lym. Students Jennifer Polanco and Juniely Uceta Reyes also had their artwork displayed at the event but were unable to attend the reception.

The annual showcase was organized by WPU Professor James Blasi, offering high school art students the chance to see their artwork displayed in a formal gallery setting alongside their peers. Each participating school was allotted six student works and one faculty artwork. Ms. Lym contributed a poster of her paintings to the exhibition.

Other participating high schools included Indian Hills, Ramapo H.S., West Milford, Passaic County Technical Institute, Kearny, Union City, Boonton, Bergen County Technical Institute, and Wallkill Valley. The New Roberto Clemente Middle School in Paterson also took part in this exciting event.



## JFK & STEAM HS STUDENTS RECOGNIZED AT AENJ EXHIBITION

Juniely Uceta Reyes, a 12th-grade art student at John F. Kennedy High School, and Jathniel Thompson, an 11th-grade art student at STEAM High School, were honored with Award Certificates for having their artwork selected for the Art Educators of New Jersey (AENJ) Late Winter Student Art Exhibition at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) in Newark, NJ.

Juniely and Jathniel attended the reception on Sunday, February 16, alongside their art teachers, So Yoon Lym and Jaymie Stein. Out of 125 student submissions from AENJ Art Educator members, only 30 artworks were chosen for the one-month exhibition at the Victoria Theater Lobby at NJPAC.

Both Dr. Stein and Ms. Lym are members of the Art Educators of New Jersey, and they actively submit their students' artwork for exhibition opportunities throughout the year. This recognition highlights the exceptional talent of our students and their teachers' dedication to providing enriching art experiences.





## DONUTS WITH DAD AT SCHOOL 1



Students at Renaissance One School of Humanities celebrated Valentine's Day with a special program called Donuts with Dads. This program was organized by the school's Parent Teacher Organization, and featured students enjoying a special breakfast with their fathers, grandfathers, and other parental figures. Principal Jo Ann Barca reported that this year's event had a great turnout. Mayor Andre Sayegh also attended this event.

Click [here](#) for a short video.

## ALEXANDER HAMILTON ACADEMY GIVES BACK

Alexander Hamilton Academy is dedicated to increasing its involvement in the local community by giving back to those in need. In January and February of 2025, the academy launched projects to support community members facing hardship. This included organizing a winter essentials package that included socks, hats, scarves, gloves, children's and adult coats/sweaters, and sweats. The care package also included hygiene products. This act of kindness partnered with a local temporary housing facility, Eva's Village in Paterson NJ. By actively giving back, Alexander Hamilton Academy aims to make a positive impact and support the well-being of its community members.

Additionally, the school puts a strong emphasis on student involvement in observing and celebrating Black History Month. Alexander Hamilton Academy organizes educational activities, events, and projects to highlight the contributions and achievements of African Americans throughout the past and present. Students actively participate in discussions in class, music performances with the help of our music teacher, and projects that honor and commemorate the rich cultural heritage and significant accomplishments of African Americans.

Alongside all events, Alexander Hamilton Academy is currently collaborating with Paterson P-Tech on creating a Black History Month presentation that will be used at the end of February for our students in the Paterson community and future students. Through these initiatives, the school fosters awareness, appreciation, and understanding of Black history and culture among its student body.



## STUDENTS AT SCHOOL 28 CREATE MURAL IN COLLABORATION WITH HALLS THAT INSPIRE

On February 7<sup>th</sup>, students at Paterson Public School 28 had the opportunity to showcase their artistic talents by painting a mural in the school. This exciting project was made possible through a partnership with David Thompson, founder of the nonprofit organization Halls That Inspire Inc., and the Paterson Public Schools Parent Teacher Organization.

Thompson, a Paterson native, created Halls That Inspire with the mission of providing students the opportunity to participate in the beautification of their learning environment. He and his team design each mural and then collaborate with the students to bring the vision to life.

“Art has the power to inspire, uplift, and transform—not only our spaces, but also our students,” said Superintendent Dr. Laurie W. Newell. “This project is more than just painting walls; it is about empowering our students to express themselves, collaborate, and take pride in their school. We are grateful to Halls That Inspire for their commitment to making our schools brighter and more welcoming.”

Thompson echoed these sentiments, reflecting on the significance of the program and its impact on students’ creativity. “This is really a unique opportunity for students to see their ideas come to life in a meaningful way,” said Thompson. “The murals they create today will inspire future generations of students who walk these halls.” Thompson emphasized the goal of the project: to challenge students artistically while providing them with an unforgettable experience that will stay with them for years to come.



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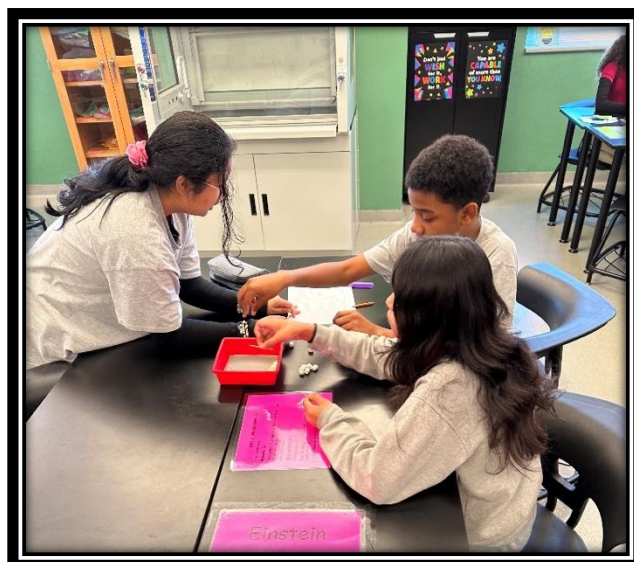
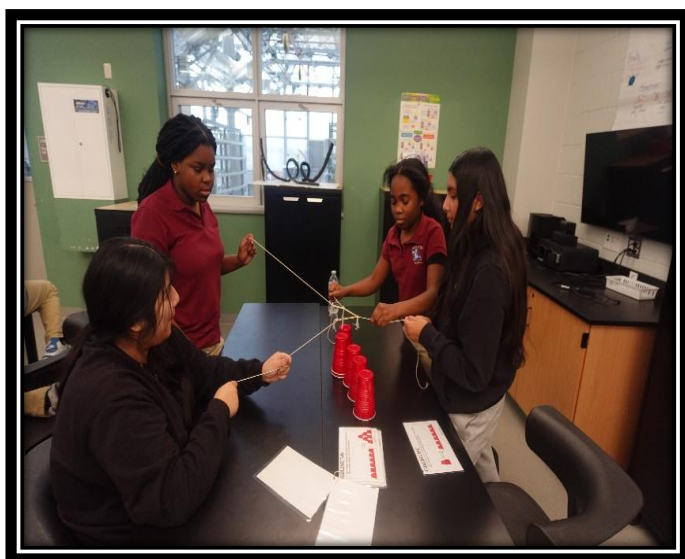
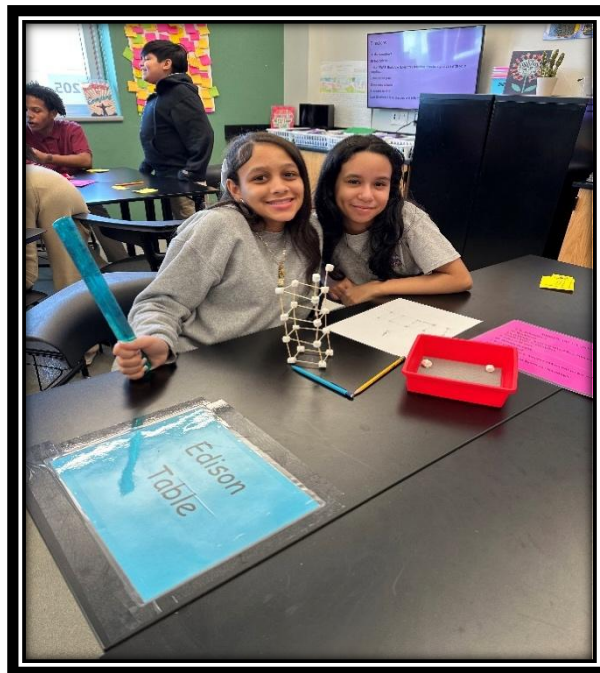
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## JOSEPH A. TAUB MIDDLE SCHOOL CELEBRATES STEM DAY

Joseph A. Taub Middle School's sixth-grade students recently participated in an exciting cross-curricular STEM Day, a dynamic experience designed to integrate science, technology, engineering, and mathematics across various subject areas. Throughout the day, students engaged in hands-on activities that encouraged critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork.

Each subject area played a key role in the event's success. Math classes challenged students with engaging escape room activities focused on ratios, while science classes facilitated the STEM Cup Challenge and the Toothpick Tower competition. In ELA, students explored Galileo and Newton through thought-provoking compare-and-contrast exercises, and social studies classes highlighted the history of STEM innovations through interactive presentations. Art classes took a creative approach, designing a pixel mural that continued into ELA lessons. Students also enjoyed Minute-to-Win-It games, which tested their dexterity and strategic thinking.

A special thank you goes to the dedicated sixth-grade teachers at JATS who made this event possible: Jennifer Post, Ivette Soto, Emilee McGilligan, Matilde Muniz, Andres Paez, Patricia Kaminski, Erin Torretta, Shannon Alejo, Kozeta Bido, Dalya Matari, Natasha Carcich, Abdallah Vwich, Nadime Martinez, Steffani Ramirez-Veras, and Julia Hishmeh. Their collaboration and commitment to student success were instrumental in making STEM Day an enriching experience for all involved.



## PPS IN THE NEWS

Paterson Board of Education Set to Vote on Changes to Special Education Programs

Feb. 10, 2025

Paterson will put sixth, seventh and eighth graders in separate schools from younger students

Feb. 12, 2025

Paterson's Middle School Restructuring is Happening, Despite Community Concern

Feb. 16, 2025

Paterson Board of Education Approves Special Education Program Changes

Feb. 19, 2025

Paterson Schools Seek Grant for Climate Change Education

Feb. 25, 2025

Rosa Parks School of Fine and Performing Arts Partners with Paterson Inner School Ensemble for Dance and Community Engagement

Feb. 25, 2025



### IMPORTANT CALENDAR REMINDERS

<b>March 3</b>	Progress Reports (grade PreK-12)
<b>March 14</b>	1 PM Student Dismissal & PEA staff
<b>March 19</b>	1 PM Student Dismissal/Staff PD
<b>March 31</b>	Eid Al Fitr-District Closed

### BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS

The **Board of Education Workshop Meeting** will be held on **Wednesday, March 5th**, at **90 Delaware Avenue**. Those wishing to provide public comments must do so in person and are required to register for the meeting. The **Board of Education Regular Meeting** will take place virtually on **Wednesday, March 12th**. Both meetings are scheduled to begin at **6 PM**.

### LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION

**Online language interpretation** is available for all pre-recorded Board meetings in Spanish, Arabic, Bengali, and Turkish. Simply select your preferred language at [pps.eduvision.tv/LiveEvents](https://pps.eduvision.tv/LiveEvents)

**The District Chronicler** is a publication of the 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).

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Jeani Perez | Confidential Communications Assistant

