



# THE PULSE

*The Heartbeat of the District.*

## PPS ANNOUNCES MEASURABLE GROWTH IN NJSLA SCORES

	State Results <i>Year-Over-Year Difference</i>	District Results <i>Year-Over-Year Difference</i>
<b>English Language Arts</b> <i>grades 3-8</i>	<b>+3%</b>	<b>+4%</b>
<b>Mathematics</b> <i>grades 3-8</i>	<b>+2%</b>	<b>+4%</b>
<b>Science</b> <i>grades 5, 8 &amp; 11</i>	<b>+2%</b>	<b>+3%</b>

Paterson Public Schools saw improvements in student proficiency on the 2024–2025 New Jersey Student Learning Assessments (NJSLA). The NJSLA measures student performance in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and Science. An overview of the results was presented at the Board of Education Workshop meeting on Wednesday, September 3, 2025.

“We know our students are very capable and these results show the commitment of our principals, teachers, and students. Every percentage point represents more children on the path to success. We will continue to use this data to guide instruction, strengthen interventions, and ensure that every student in Paterson has the opportunity to meet and exceed our expectations,” said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Laurie W. Newell.

“Our progress reflects the focused work taking place across the district through the Paterson Progress Plan (PPP),” said Deputy Superintendent Dr. Rodney A. Henderson. “By strengthening five key levers - human resources, data literacy, staff capacity, principal capacity, and family and community engagement, we are beginning to see consistent, measurable growth. These gains tell us that we’re heading in the right direction, and they challenge us to keep pressing forward so that even more of our students reach higher levels of success.”

[Read the full press release here.](#)

## Welcome Back!

Greetings Paterson Public Schools Community,

The new school year is finally upon us and I cannot be more excited to welcome back our teachers and, of course, our wonderful students! Coming off of a 2024-2025 academic year where we saw continued growth and real progress made in many key areas, I cannot help but feel encouraged and optimistic about the strong foundation that has been laid for our entire school community.

From our educators to our young people, the nervous anticipation that comes with the first day of school is felt by everyone across the district. We all want to get the year started the right way and we're eager to learn. These feelings are valid. With that said, I am extremely confident in our district and school leadership, who are more than equipped to help guide students and staff to a successful school year.

These leaders are well-prepared thanks in large part to our three-day Superintendent's Institute that took place at International High School from August 19th-21st. The Institute featured multiple days of intensive programming and workshops aimed at aligning leadership – from assistant superintendents to district administrators, from principals to vice principals – with the district's goals for the 2025-2026 school year. I believe that everyone who participated in this year's Institute, including myself, learned something valuable that we can use in our work on a daily basis. I want to thank our dedicated staff for organizing and executing this critical initiative. [Click here to watch the highlight video from this year's Institute.](#)



*Superintendent of Schools Dr. Laurie W. Newell and Deputy Superintendent Dr. Rodney A. Henderson addressed district and school leadership at the 2025 Superintendent's Institute*

## Continuing our Momentum

To help usher in the 2025-2026 academic year, [I recently shared a welcome letter to district staff and the Paterson Public Schools community](#) that highlighted two key accomplishments from the previous school year.

First and foremost, we made measurable progress in reducing chronic absenteeism. I especially want to recognize Senator Frank R. Lautenberg School as one of our schools with the most improved attendance. Its average daily attendance rate increased by 4.38% and its chronic absenteeism rate decreased by 19.82%. That means more students were present, engaged, and on track to succeed academically and socially. Additionally we completed an organizational audit across four crucial areas – Student Academics, Family and Community Engagement, Human Resource Services, and District Operations – and developed strategies for improvement that will assist our mission to provide equitable, high-quality education for all students. By strengthening these areas, we have seen improved test scores on the New Jersey Graduation Proficiency Assessment and, as most recently announced, [the New Jersey Student Learning Assessments](#). All of this is tied to the impact that the [Paterson Progress Plan](#) has had on this district as we continue to see incremental gains in our students' performance.

While we are beyond proud of these accomplishments, we all know that there is still a lot of work to be done. Let us continue this positive momentum into this upcoming school year. Let us continue to encourage our students to trust in their abilities, and let us remind our teachers that the work they put in makes a profound impact on the lives of every student and their families.

Once again, welcome back to our [students](#) and [teachers](#)! Let's have a great year!

Sincerely,

**Dr. Laurie W. Newell**  
**Superintendent of Schools**

# **SPOTLIGHT ON BACK-TO-SCHOOL MEDIA COVERAGE**



*Superintendent of Schools Dr. Laurie W. Newell spoke to CBS 2 New York about back to school at Charles J. Riley School.*



*Dr. Laurie W. Newell was interviewed at School 8 by Telemundo on the first day of school for Paterson Public Schools.*

On the first day of school, the Paterson Public Schools Communications Department, led by Director of Communications Aida E. Rosario, coordinated visits from CBS, Telemundo 47, News 12, and Univision 41 to highlight the district's back-to-school readiness. Coverage showcased our preparation efforts, initiatives to boost student attendance, and teacher recruitment strategies.

Superintendent Dr. Laurie W. Newell, along with several principals, spoke with reporters to share important updates and highlight the dedication of our staff in supporting students and families. These stories gave our community a closer look at the commitment across our schools to ensure every student has the best possible start to the year.



*Dr. Laurie W. Newell visited Charles J. Riley School and its principal, Domenico Carriero, on the first day of school.*



*Dr. Laurie W. Newell and Principal Bridget Naveira greeted a student on the first day of school at Dr. Hani Awadallah School.*

## **LEADERS GATHER FOR ANNUAL SUPERINTENDENT’S INSTITUTE**



Paterson Public Schools’ leadership and administrators prepared for the upcoming school year by coming together for the district’s annual Superintendent’s Institute, an intensive three-day program packed with workshops and discussions, held at International High School from August 19th through August 21st.

The theme for this year’s Institute, “Turning Data Into Action”, emphasized the district’s commitment to using clean data to improve student outcomes in the classroom.

“We chose this theme because it’s more than just a slogan; it’s a call to rethink how we lead, how we teach, and how we serve our school community,” said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Laurie W. Newell. “Data does not change outcomes by itself. We’ll be looking closely at how we as educational leaders can continue bridging the gap between what the data is telling us and how we can use it to increase the level of expectation that we have for academic achievement in our students.”

The keynote address, delivered by CEO and Founder of Men in Color in Educational Leadership Dr. Harrison Peters, set the tone for the Institute on day one as his speech explained the impact that principals have on a district and their students’ lives. Along with hearing presentations from department heads across the district explaining their roles and best practices, principals and vice principals met in small groups and went through larger group activities, such as the data gallery walk on day two, to learn more about how to best utilize data on a daily basis.

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“Our principals are central in our effort to improve what we’re doing,” said Deputy Superintendent Dr. Rodney A Henderson. “I’ve never seen a good school without a good principal. It just doesn’t exist. If a school is thriving it’s because the leader is phenomenal at what they do. So, we’re pouring into you to make you the best version of yourselves.”

Along with important discussions surrounding data, school and district leaders also used the three days to build camaraderie and to familiarize themselves with each other. The first day saw everyone in the program go through a team-building activity while the second and third days were special theme days. On day two, Institute participants were encouraged to wear clothes representing their alma mater, and on day three they wore clothes representing their current school that they serve in the district. [Click here to view the highlights.](#)



## **NEW TEACHER ORIENTATION WELCOMES EDUCATORS TO THE DISTRICT**



Fifty-nine (59) new teachers were officially welcomed to Paterson Public Schools last week as the district hosted its New Teacher Orientation from August 26th-28th.

The three-day orientation helped the newly-hired educators get acquainted with district-wide best practices and district leadership.

“One of your primary goals is to be role models for the students that you are in front of every single day,” said Deputy Superintendent Dr. Rodney A. Henderson on the orientation’s first day. “We’ve built a community of support around you that can give you the advice and the inspiration you will need to keep going. This is not the easiest work, but it is the most rewarding work that you will ever wish for.”

The first day of orientation took place at the District Office where the new teachers were welcomed and received invaluable information from department heads. Day two was held at International High School as participants received technology support and Google Suite instruction before breakout sessions with their supervisors. The orientation concluded with a remote session that discussed the district’s teacher evaluation tool; focusing on the guiding regulations for the evaluation system and sharing helpful resources.

# SEPTEMBER SELF-CARE CALENDAR

Hello September and welcome to the 2025-2026 school year! We are excited to bring back the Self-Care Calendar for its fourth year!

For us as educators, the start of September always feels like a new chapter—full of energy, possibility and purpose. As we transition from the slower pace of summer into the busy rhythm of a new school year, it's important to remember that September is also Self-Care Awareness Month!

In the rush of lesson planning, supporting students, and meeting countless demands, it's easy to put ourselves last. Yet, caring for ourselves—physically, mentally, and emotionally—is not a luxury, but a necessity. When we take time to recharge, we create the space to show up fully for our students, colleagues, and families.

Self-care has been shown to reduce stress, boost energy, improve focus, and support overall well-being. It is important for us to pause, breathe, and remember that caring for ourselves allows us to better care for others. The Self-Care Calendar offers simple ideas and affirmations to encourage daily moments of self-love and renewal.

**Mantra for September:** I welcome this school year with energy, hope, and purpose. This is a new chapter—for my students and for me.


For more ideas on how you can better support yourself and others, please reach out to Ms. Laurel Olson, Supervisor of Student Support Services, at lolson@paterson.k12.nj.us or ext. 10694.



 <b>SEPTEMBER 2025</b> SELF-CARE CALENDAR						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 Take time to set your self-care intentions and goals	2 Book your appointments for the month	3 Make today a social media FREE day	4 Order dinner from your favorite restaurant	5 Get 8 hours of sleep tonight	6 Meditate for 20 minutes
7 Smile at 3 people today	8 Help a friend with something small	9 Eat more fruits and veggies than usual	10 Start a conversation with someone you don't know	11 Limit screen time for one hour tonight	12 Clean your room or desk for a clear mind	13 Spend the day doing your favorite things
14 Sleep in	15 Go for a walk during your lunch break	16 Write down 5 things you are grateful for	17 Try a new healthy breakfast	18 Do a small act of kindness for someone	19 Watch your favorite TV show	20 Purchase something that makes you HAPPY
21 Stop comparing yourself to others!	22 Call someone you love	23 Try a new hobby or activity	24 Write a letter of encouragement to your future self	25 Take time to clear your inbox or voicemail	26 Cook your favorite dinner	27 Treat yourself to a delicious breakfast
28 Spend 15 minutes in a quiet place to reflect on your day	29 Clean out your closet	30 Write 3 things that went well this month				

This information is provided to you by:  

**PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
 Department of Student Support Services  
 600 West Street, Paterson, NJ 07650  
 Phone: (973) 327-6994 | Email: lolson@paterson.k12.nj.us

 <b>SEPTIEMBRE 2025</b> CALENDARIO DE CUIDADOS PERSONALES						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 Tómate el tiempo para establecer tus intenciones y objetivos de tu cuidado personal..	2 Reserva tus citas para el mes.	3 Haz que hoy sea un día LIBRE de redes sociales	4 Pide la cena de tu restaurante favorito	5 Duerme 8 horas esta noche	6 Medita durante 20 minutos
7 Sonríele a 3 personas hoy	8 Ayuda a una amiga con algo pequeño	9 Come más frutas y verduras de lo habitual	10 Inicia una conversación con alguien que no conoces	11 Limite el tiempo de pantalla a una hora esta noche	12 Limpia tu habitación o escritorio para tener una mente despejada	13 Pasa el día haciendo tus cosas favoritas.
14 Dormir tarde	15 Sal a caminar durante tu hora de almuerzo	16 Escribe 5 cosas por las que estás agradecida	17 Prueba un nuevo desayuno saludable	18 Haz un pequeño acto de bondad por alguien.	19 Mira tu programa de televisión favorito	20 Compra algo que te haga FELIZ
21 ¡Deja de compararte con los demás!	22 llama a alguien que amas	23 Prueba un nuevo pasatiempo o actividad	24 Escribe una carta de aliento a tu yo futuro	25 Tómate el tiempo para limpiar tu correo electrónico o tu correo de voz	26 Cocina tu cena favorita	27 Regálate un delicioso desayuno
28 Pasa 15 minutos en un lugar tranquilo para reflexionar sobre tu día.	29 Limpia tu ropero	30 Escribe 3 cosas que salieron bien este mes.				

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## **DHA MIDDLE SCHOOL HOSTS SUCCESSFUL PARENT MEET & GREET**



Dr. Hani Awadallah Middle School saw a large turnout of invited parents and families of incoming students at its Meet & Greet and parent orientation on Wednesday, August 27th.

Principal Bridget Naveira and Vice Principals Alexis Bermudez and Mazusa Matari presented on a range of topics from school safety to district-wide procedures and policies. In addition, they eagerly introduced new directives, such as electives in Career Exploration, Sign Language, and Yearbook for the first time.

"I was overwhelmed by the enthusiasm and positivity in the room!" said Principal Naveira following the orientation. Mrs. Abdelhadi, an incoming parent, shared with administration that "today felt like home!"

## **JFK HIGH SCHOOL CHEERLEADERS HONORED BY CITY OF PATERSON**



After becoming the first high school cheerleading squad in the city of Paterson to win a New Jersey Cheer & Dance Coaches Association (NJCDCA) state championship in February, the John F. Kennedy High School cheer team was honored by Mayor of Paterson Andre Sayegh at City Hall on Wednesday, August 27th.

The Knights, who took home first place in the All Music category at the NJCDCA Championships, were recognized for their hard work, dedication, and serving as upstanding representatives for their school and community.

## PPS IN THE NEWS

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Newcomers High School Offers Safe Haven and Second Chances for Paterson Students

August 14, 2025

First time in years: Paterson heads into school year with fewer than 100 teacher vacancies

August 18, 2025

Paterson Public Schools Launches Leadership Push With New Strategic Plan, Focus on Data and Attendance

August 24, 2025

JFK High School Cheerleaders Honored After Historic State Championship Win

August 27, 2025

What Parents Need to Know for the First Day of School: Routines, Communication, and Support in Paterson Public Schools

August 27, 2025

Dr. Hani Awadallah School to Launch New 3D Printing and Digital Photography Courses This Fall

August 29, 2025

Rain Garden to Bring Science Lessons Outdoors at Paterson School 25

September 2, 2025

Paterson, N.J. working to fill dozens of teacher vacancies

September 4, 2025

Paterson Students Show Gains On State Tests, Outpacing New Jersey Average In Key Grades

September 5, 2025

Miles de estudiantes inician el año escolar en Paterson

September 5, 2025

## IMPORTANT CALENDAR REMINDERS

- September 4. . . . . First Day of School for Students
- September 4 & 5 . . . . . 1 PM Dismissal (Staff Professional Development)
- September 15 . . . . . Hispanic Heritage Month (through October 15)
- September 16 . . . . . Back-to-School Night, 6-8 PM (PreK-8th Grade)
- September 18 . . . . . Back-to-School Night, 6-8 PM (9th Grade-12th Grade, JATS, NRC, DHA)

## BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS

<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>TYPE OF MEETING</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
September 3rd, 2025. . . . .	Workshop . . . . .	90 Delaware Avenue
September 9th, 2025. . . . .	Regular . . . . .	Virtual

Those wishing to provide public comments for the **Board of Education Regular Meeting** on Tuesday, September 9th are required to register for the meeting. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 6 PM.

**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 Newsletter** is a publication of the Department of Communications. We welcome your submissions on school and district-related news.

**Submit** stories and photos by using our newly launched **Newsletter Submissions** Google form. This form and our **Publicity Request** form can be found on our Communications page at [www.paterson.k12.nj.us](http://www.paterson.k12.nj.us)

**Questions?** Email us at [ppscommunications@paterson.k12.nj.us](mailto:ppscommunications@paterson.k12.nj.us)

Aida E. Rosario, MBA | Director of Communications  
 Peter Long | Supervisor of Special Projects and Communications  
 Aidan Solano | Graphics & Content Coordinator  
 Jeani Perez | Confidential Communications Assistant