

For Immediate Release

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Paterson Public Schools to Continue Middle School Model for 2026–2027 School Year

Phase 3 of school reconfigurations aims to strengthen neighborhood schools and improve access

Paterson, NJ (January 23, 2026) - Paterson Public Schools will continue the implementation of its Middle School Cohort model as part of Phase 3 of the district’s long-term school year transition plan, beginning in the 2026–2027 school year.

The continuation follows a comprehensive review of elementary and middle school programs and aligns with the district’s Long-Range Facilities Plan, which is designed to ensure equitable access to high-quality educational opportunities across all neighborhoods while improving operational sustainability.

As part of this transition, Elementary Choice Schools (Alexander Hamilton Academy, Renaissance School 1, Norman S. Weir, and Young Men’s Leadership Academy) will be phased out by June 30, 2026. These schools will be repurposed for future use in accordance with the district’s needs.

Beginning September 1, 2026, students currently enrolled in these choice schools will return to their designated neighborhood schools.

Additionally, several schools will be reconfigured to better align with grade-level programming under the middle school cohort structure:

- School No. 10 will transition from K–8 to K–5
- School No. 18 will transition from K–8 to K–5
- School No. 26 will transition from K–8 to PreK–5, incorporating School 1
- School No. 21 will transition from K–8 to a Middle School (Grades 6–8)

“This work reflects our continued commitment to providing all students with access to strong, high-quality programs close to home,” said Dr. Laurie W. Newell, Superintendent of Schools. “By continuing the Middle School Cohort model, we are strengthening school communities, improving efficiency, and ensuring that our long-term planning remains focused on student success.”

What Families Should Know

- All students affected by Phase 3 reconfigurations will be required to re-register for the 2026–2027 school year
- Re-registration will ensure students are placed in their appropriate neighborhood schools
- Families will receive individualized support throughout the transition process

Paterson Public Schools will host community forums to provide families with additional information and opportunities to ask questions. Dates and locations will be shared in the coming weeks.

The district recognizes that transitions can be challenging and remains committed to supporting students, families, and staff throughout this process.

For updates and additional information, families are encouraged to visit the district's website www.paterson.k12.nj.us.

About Paterson Public Schools

Paterson Public Schools serves over 22,000 students from pre-K to 12th grade in New Jersey's third-largest city. About 71% of the student population is Hispanic, 16% are Black, 6% 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 17 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, the P-TECH program 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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