



THE PULSE

The Heartbeat of the District.

PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS 

MARCH 24, 2026 | VOL. 29

NUTRITION MONTH

Eat well. Live well. Be well.



March is National Nutrition Month and Paterson Public Schools wants to emphasize that healthy food is a powerful tool that impacts students' physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

Good nutrition supports cognitive function, memory, and consistent energy levels, all of which are essential for academic success. The best work in the classroom begins with balanced, nutritious meals that keeps young learners focused throughout the school day. By encouraging Paterson's students to make informed food choices today, the district helps students build healthy habits that last a lifetime.

The community is encouraged to explore the resources and daily menus available on the [Food Services Department webpage](#) on the district website, www.paterson.k12.nj.us. Paterson Public Schools' passionate and dedicated food services team remains committed to providing nutritious, balanced meals that fuel the learning and growth of every student in the district.

Together, let's discover the power of nutrition!

Greetings Paterson Public Schools Community,

In February, I shared an update as we awaited the State's final aid figures. Now that those numbers have been released, I want to provide clarity on where we stand and how we will move forward together.

Paterson Public Schools will receive an increase in state aid of approximately \$38 million for the 2026 to 2027 school year. Under the State's funding formula, approximately \$28 million of that increase must be directed to charter schools. As a result, our district is now facing a \$28 million gap in our operating budget.



I know many of you may be wondering what this means for your school, your classroom, or your child. Let me be clear about our approach. We will meet this moment with discipline, transparency, and an unwavering commitment to our students. We will protect classroom instruction and prioritize the conditions that allow teaching and learning to thrive. Every decision we make will be grounded in what best serves our students, while working to minimize disruption to our schools and community.

This is a challenging moment, but it is not one that will define us. We will not retreat from our responsibility to provide every child with a high quality education. Instead, we will act with purpose and care, making thoughtful adjustments that preserve stability while positioning our district to continue moving forward.

Since receiving the State's final figures, district leadership has been actively shaping a responsible path forward. We are identifying adjustments with a clear focus on protecting what matters most and ensuring that our schools remain places of strong instruction, support, and opportunity. These decisions are not easy, and we understand the concern they may cause. Please know that this work is being done with great care, clarity, and a deep respect for our community.

A Special Board meeting is scheduled for March 25, 2026, where we will present the preliminary budget and outline our next steps. This will be an important opportunity to continue our commitment to transparency and to ensure our community remains informed and engaged.

We will continue to communicate openly as this process unfolds. In moments like these, we are reminded that our strength is not only in our resources, but in our shared commitment to one another and to the children we serve.

Together, we will navigate this moment with focus, with integrity, and with an unshakable belief in what our students can achieve.

Thank you for your continued partnership and trust.

Sincerely,

Laurie W. Newell, PhD
Superintendent of Schools

JROTC CONCLUDES YEAR WITH CHAMPIONSHIP PERFORMANCE, COMMUNITY SERVICE

The Mighty Ghost JROTC Battalion achieved distinguished success at its league championship drill competition on Saturday, March 21. Hosted by Union High School, the final event of the academic year saw the Battalion compete against ten premier JROTC programs from across the tri-state area and secure a total of six trophies across multiple disciplined categories.

The Battalion demonstrated exceptional precision in drill, color guard, squad, and inspection earning top-tier placements in the following divisions: First Place - LET 1 Squad; Second Place - Unarmed Platoon; Second Place - Unarmed Inspection; Second Place - Unarmed Color Guard; Second Place - Armed Color Guard; Second Place - Armed Inspection

Beyond their competitive achievements, the Battalion's commitment to civic duty was on full display this weekend. A separate contingent of Cadets participated in the 5th Ward Paterson Spring Clean-up, providing instrumental support to efforts aimed at revitalizing and improving the local community. The Mighty Ghost Battalion extends its gratitude to the administration and the Paterson community for their continued support of these developing student leaders.



PPS STAFF LEADS STATEWIDE INNOVATION IN AI AND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Paterson Public Schools World Language Supervisor Ms. Kayla Khaled and Rosa Parks School of Fine and Performing Arts Spanish teacher Mr. Josue Castillo recently represented the district at the Fellowship of Language Educators of New Jersey (FLENJ) conference. The duo facilitated a standing-room-only session titled “AI as a Partner in Language Acquisition”, drawing educators from across the state and affirming the department’s reputation as a leader in innovative instruction.

The workshop provided a structured, ethical framework for integrating artificial intelligence into second language acquisition. Moving beyond surface-level technology use, the session demonstrated how AI can serve as a catalyst for student agency while enhancing communication and cultural understanding across interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational modes.

Participants departed with actionable resources, including adaptable lesson templates and AI prompt frameworks designed for immediate classroom implementation. This contribution underscores Paterson Public Schools’ commitment to advancing instructional excellence and supporting the broader professional community through standards-aligned leadership.



PRINCIPALS REFLECT AND REVIEW AT MONTHLY MEETING

Paterson Public Schools’ principals gathered at Central Office for its Monthly Meeting on March 19 where they focused on data-driven intervention, state compliance, and NJSLA testing.

The school leaders were asked to reflect on what they learned about early intervention strategies, with K-8 leaders utilizing the LinkIt! platform to identify student needs and high school leaders focusing on intervention for ninth graders. Following an informative session dedicated to accountability and reporting requirements from Acting Director of Federal Programs Irene Del Rosso and Director of Assessment, Planning, and Evaluation Luis Valentin, the principals received a critical briefing on the upcoming New Jersey Student Learning Assessments (NJSLA). These collaborative sessions ensure that district leadership remains aligned in fostering academic excellence and operational transparency across all district schools.



EASTSIDE CONTINUES SUCCESS IN AATSP POSTER CONTEST

Eastside High School continued its run of success in the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP) Poster Contest as students Bristany Tavares and Emely Chumbiriza placed first and second, respectively, in the state of New Jersey for their AATSP posters. Both students advance to the final national stage to compete against the premier world language students in the country.

Adding to the school's growing literary profile, Ashly Gaibor represented Eastside with distinction in the 2026 NJEA and New Jersey Hall of Fame Essay Contest.

"Our students are not just competing; they are setting the national standard," stated advisor Mrs. Marbel Tamayo. "Their success proves that with disciplined effort, the youth of Eastside can achieve any goal they envision."

This consistent high performance is supported by an administration committed to student achievement, led by Principal Dr. Dorothy Douge and Vice Principal Ms. Elisabeth Geron. Their leadership has cultivated a culture of excellence that empowers Eastside High School students to excel on the national stage. The students and advisor wish to extend their sincere gratitude to the faculty of Eastside High School for their steadfast encouragement and support of these competitive initiatives.



DALE AVENUE SCHOOL STUDENTS EXPLORE THE ECOSYSTEM

On Tuesday, March 17, the Liberty Science Center visited Dale Avenue School to deliver an interactive presentation on forest ecosystems and wildlife habitats. This experiential program was attended by both special education and general education preschool classes, fostering an inclusive learning environment.

The students were actively involved in the presentation and totally engaged in the experience. Students were able to participate in the program by answering open-ended questions and completing hands-on activities.

The Preschool Special Education department recently concluded an in-depth study of animal life, with a transition toward bugs and insects scheduled for the coming month. To make the lesson more relevant and provide additional comprehension support, school leadership coordinated the special visit from the Liberty Science Center.



SCREENING OF COUNTED OUT TO TAKE PLACE AT INTERNATIONAL HS

Paterson Public Schools, the Paterson Education Fund, and the Benjamin Banneker Association are proud to host a special community screening of the thought-provoking documentary Counted Out at International High School on Thursday, March 26 from 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM.

This compelling film pulls back the curtain on the hidden power of numbers, illustrating how math literacy serves as a gateway to civic participation and economic empowerment. Following the film, we invite students, parents, and educators to stay for an engaging community discussion to explore how we can work together to ensure every student in Paterson has the tools to master the “language of power.”

Counted Out has been selected to screen at dozens of film festivals, including the San Francisco International Film Festival, South by Southwest EDU, and Original Thinkers in Telluride, Colorado which spotlighted the intersection of mathematical thinking and civic health.

Registration is required to attend and can be accessed by clicking [here](#).



MARIA MAGDA O'KEEFE SCHOOL STUDENTS VISIT MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Last week, eighth grade students from Maria Magda O'Keefe School took enjoyed a quick trip to New York City to visit the Museum of Natural History. Students explored the museum's world-renowned fossil halls, gaining a deeper understanding of prehistoric life and the evolutionary history of our planet.



SCHOOL 26 PROUDLY CELEBRATES READ ACROSS AMERICA

School 26 proudly celebrated Read Across America with an exciting day full of reading, fun, and special guests! The school community was honored to welcome Superintendent of Schools Dr. Laurie W. Newell and Deputy Superintendent Dr. Rodney A. Henderson, who joined the students to promote the importance of literacy and a love for books.



PPS IN THE NEWS

Paterson P-Tech Wins Inaugural Silk City Drone Competition, Advances to Nationals

March 21, 2026

Paterson Students' Restored Race Car Selected for New York International Auto Show

March 23, 2026

STAFF REMINDER

YOUR ONE-STOP SHOP FOR SUCCESS: EXPLORE THE PPS STAFF HOMEPAGE

Stay organized and empowered by visiting the Paterson Public Schools [Staff homepage](#), your central hub for everything you need to succeed during the school year. Whether you are looking for instructional support or administrative tools, the homepage is designed to streamline daily tasks for PPS staff.



PARENT REMINDER

EXPLORE RESOURCES DEDICATED TO HELPING PATERSON PARENTS

Paterson Public Schools families have a dedicated resource center in the [Parents homepage](#) on paterson.k12.nj.us. There you will find essential links for Central Registration, the Infinite Campus Parent Portal, and family engagement tools designed to support your child's education. Explore the resources available on this page to stay connected and informed throughout the school year and beyond.



MONTHLY CALENDAR REMINDERS

[Full 2025-2026 District Calendar Here](#)

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS

A **Board of Education Special Meeting** will be held on Wednesday, March 25th, at 90 Delaware Ave. Those wishing to provide public comments must do so in person and are required to register for the meeting. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 6 PM.

The **Board of Education Workshop Meeting** will be held on Wednesday, April 1st, at 90 Delaware Ave. Those wishing to provide public comments must do so in person and are required to register for the meeting. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 6 PM.

The **Board of Education Regular Meeting** will take place virtually on Wednesday, April 15th. Those wishing to provide public comments 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.

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 **Newsletter Submissions** form.

This form can be found on our Communications page at www.paterson.k12.nj.us

Questions? Email us at ppscommunications@paterson.k12.nj.us

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