



THE PULSE

The Heartbeat of the District.

PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS 

APRIL 2, 2026 | VOL. 30

AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

APRIL 2026

Greetings Paterson Public Schools Community,

In April, Paterson Public Schools proudly joins communities around the world in recognizing Autism Awareness and Acceptance Month. This is a time to celebrate neurodiversity and reaffirm our commitment to inclusive learning environments where every student is supported and empowered to reach their full potential.

Our strength lies in our diversity. Recognizing and valuing the unique perspectives and strengths that our autistic students bring to our classrooms is not just a monthly observance, but a core tenet of our mission. We continue to move beyond awareness and focus on meaningful acceptance by making our learning environment more accessible. This progress is made possible through the dedication of our Department of Special Services and our educators who work every day to ensure our schools are spaces where all students feel valued, supported, and connected.

I encourage all families, staff, and students to take part in this month's activities and continue these conversations beyond April. By working together, we strengthen our shared commitment to inclusion and to the success and well-being of every child.

Thank you for your continued support as we celebrate the achievements and potential of our students with autism.

Sincerely,

Laurie W. Newell, PhD
Superintendent of Schools



SCHOOL 2 COMMUNITY GATHERS TO RAISE AUTISM ACCEPTANCE FLAG



School 2 hosted an Autism Acceptance Flag Raising Ceremony on April 1 that brought together students, staff, and families in a powerful display of unity and support. The ceremony served as a meaningful reminder of School 2's shared commitment to creating a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment for all students.

A school with a strong and supportive Autism Program, School 2's take pride in fostering a culture where every student feels valued and empowered to succeed. Through initiatives such as its Unity Crew and inclusive school-wide events, School 2 continues to build meaningful connections and promote a true sense of belonging.

"At School 2, Autism Awareness and Acceptance Month reminds us that every child brings unique strengths, perspectives, and gifts to our school community," said School 2 Principal Dr. Vanessa Serrano. "We are committed to ensuring that all students feel seen, supported, and empowered to thrive every single day."

School 2 extends its gratitude to its dedicated staff, supportive families, and community partners who work together each day to ensure that all students succeed.



P-TECH STUDENTS SELECTED FOR NASA CITIZEN SCIENCE PROJECT

Paterson P-Tech students are joining a NASA Citizen Science initiative in partnership with the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory. Supporting the Electrojet Zeeman Imaging Explorer (EZIE) mission, P-Tech was selected to receive and operate a magnetometer. This allows students to monitor Earth's magnetic field in real-time, analyze patterns, and contribute authentic space weather data to global researchers.



SCHOOL 13 HONORS COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND FOSTERS CONNECTION

The School 13 community gathered on April 1 to celebrate the vital partnerships that strengthen and enrich the lives of its students. The event served as a formal expression of gratitude for the individuals and organizations whose continued dedication supports the school's mission of excellence. Following the formal recognition of community partners, the event transitioned into interactive Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) activities.



STUDENT VOICES IN ACTION AT DR. FRANK NAPIER SCHOOL OF TECHNOLOGY

Dr. Frank Napier School of Science and Technology proudly showcased the power of student voices and leadership as Youth Empowered Stewardship (YES) program students hosted “What I Wish My Teachers Knew About Me,” a student-led roundtable that created a space for honest dialogue, reflection, and connection between students and the adults who support their learning every day.

Facilitated entirely by YES students and guided by advisors Lois A. Powell and Jason McQuilla, the forum brought together a wide range of stakeholders. Attendees included Assistant Superintendent Dr. Cicely Warren, Assistant Superintendent Dr. David Cozart, Principal Derwin Smith, Vice Principal Anthony Licamara, as well as teachers, guidance counselors, parents, and community staff.

In a powerful display of student leadership, YES students posed thoughtful, structured questions to participants. The discussion was organized into key sections: Student Experience, Perception & Alignment, Academic Support & Equity, YES Framework Alignment, and Direct Questions to Leadership. The format ensured that student voices guided the dialogue while encouraging honest reflection and meaningful responses from all participants.

Students courageously shared their insights on classroom expectations, relationships with teachers, and the importance of feeling seen, heard, and supported. Their voices highlighted key themes, including the need for understanding, patience, culturally responsive teaching, and strong student-teacher connections. The event concluded with a powerful student-led call to action chant, reminding all adults of their role in supporting student success: “We are not our struggles. We are not our stress. With your support— we can be our best.”

This initiative shows Dr. Frank Napier School’s ongoing commitment to a positive school climate and student-centered practices. By elevating student voice through the YES program, students become active contributors in shaping their educational experiences and strengthening their school community.



PPS PRINCIPALS HONORED AS 2026 “WOMEN WHO ROCK”

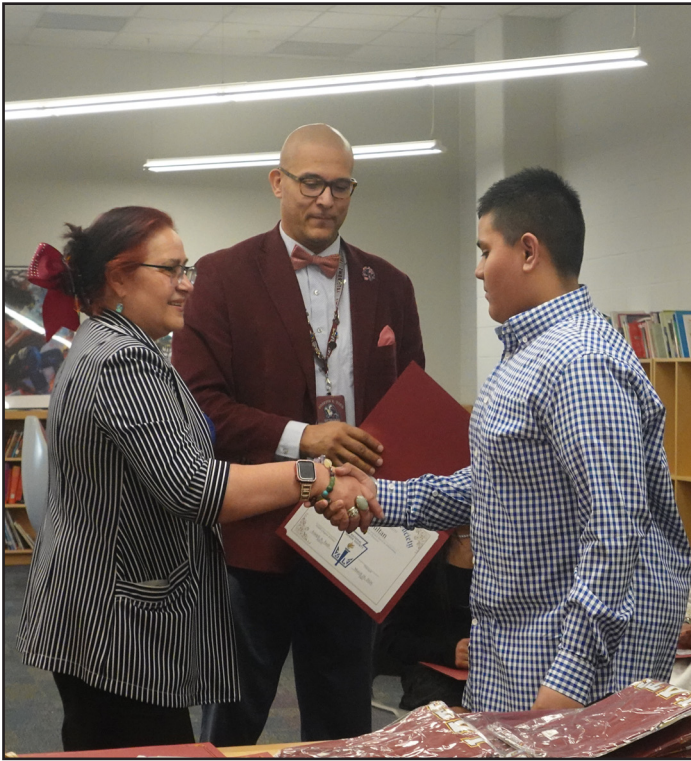


Paterson Public Schools proudly celebrates School 28 Principal Nancy Castro and School 2 Principal Dr. Vanessa Serrano, who were honored last week at the 2026 Women Who Rock event hosted by the Paterson City Council.

Both leaders exemplify dedication, strength, and a deep commitment to student success. Through their leadership, they have created school communities that prioritize academic excellence, inclusivity, and opportunity for all students. Their passion for education and unwavering support for their staff, students, and families continue to make a lasting impact across the district.

This recognition, which was presented by City Council President Dr. Lilisa Mimms, highlights not only their professional achievements, but also their influence as role models who inspire others to lead with purpose, resilience, and heart.

JATS HOLDS INAUGURAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY INDUCTION CEREMONY



Joseph A. Taub School hosted its inaugural Junior Honor Society induction ceremony, celebrating a distinguished group of students for their academic achievement, leadership, character, and commitment to service. The ceremony, led by Junior Honor Society Advisor Mrs. Dalirka Hilario, brought together students, families, and staff for an evening of recognition and pride.

Principal Dr. Jorge Ventura delivered a powerful message, emphasizing that this moment was not just about recognition, but about purpose. He shared that the journey to excellence begins at home, where families plant the seeds of discipline, resilience, and belief. He reminded the audience that at Joseph A. Taub School, "Passionate Lives Change Lives", and he credited parents for igniting that passion in their children.

Vice Principal Dr. Yelena Gould expressed her appreciation to both parents and teachers for their support during the program's inaugural year, describing the ceremony as a reflection of the school's upward trajectory. Seventh Grade social studies teacher Mr. Sean Palen also shared his enthusiasm for the organization's future, noting his commitment to supporting upcoming projects and initiatives as an advisor of the Junior Honor Society.



K-9 DAVE TALKS TO THE NRC STUDENTS ABOUT SELF CARE

New Roberto Clemente School students in grades 6–8 had a special visit from Dave, Paterson Police Department's K-9 wellness dog. During the visit, which was coordinated by NRC's Student Assistance Coordinator, students learned about the importance of self-care and emotional wellness, while also receiving fun giveaways. This meaningful experience helped students feel supported, relaxed, and more aware of ways to care for their well-being.



CHEER, BASKETBALL CHAMPIONS CROWNED IN THE TAUB DOBY LEAGUE

Paterson's Department of Recreation recently held its championships for the Taub Doby League and Paterson Public Schools was well represented. Norman S. Weir School cheer team took first place in the non-stun category and Joseph A. Taub School placed first in the cheer/dance category. In basketball, New Roberto Clemente School were winners of the NIT championship.



JOSEPH A. TAUB SCHOOL HOSTS SILK CITY SKIES DRONE COMPETITION

Joseph A. Taub School proudly hosted the Silk City Skies Drone Competition on March 14, which served as the culminating drone event of the school year. This milestone reflects the school's continued investment in innovative STEM programming since the 2024–2025 school year with a strong focus on robotics, coding, and real-world problem solving. The event brought together students, staff, and community partners to compete against local high school drone programs.

Under the leadership of JATS Principal Dr. Jorge Ventura, Mr. Andres Paez, and Mr. Gerardo Joven, students trained weekly every Thursday from 3:00–5:00 p.m., building skills in piloting and autonomous drone programming. Students demonstrated strong commitment and enthusiasm, consistently attending sessions and pushing themselves to master both technical and strategic aspects of drone operation.

After months of preparation, three student teams were selected to represent Joseph A. Taub School in the competition. JATS Hover Team A consisted of Yandell Bello and Abdiel Cabrera, JATS Hover Team B included Kelvin Polanco and Luis Rodriguez, and JATS Hover Team C featured Luis Rodriguez and Yerik Pantoja. These students worked diligently throughout the season and were eager to showcase their skills on competition day.

Competing against high school teams across the city, JATS students delivered an outstanding performance, placing fourth, fifth, and sixth overall. JATS Hover Team B earned the prestigious Judges Award, recognizing their exemplary effort, perseverance, and teamwork throughout the competition. JATS Hover Team A captured the Skills Mission Championship, achieving the highest combined piloting and autonomous flight score and outperforming top high school competitors. Following this competition, the JATS Hover Team is now ranked 954 in the world, a remarkable accomplishment that highlights the strength of the program.

In addition to these accomplishments, the school also earned the Coding Award for Autonomous Missions, one of the most challenging components of the competition. Students developed their coding skills using both block programming and Python, learning how to adjust flight paths and problem-solve in real time. On the day of the event, the teams successfully used their attempts to program their drones with precision, ultimately coding their way to victory.

Students expressed excitement and pride in their achievements, with many highlighting their growth throughout the season. Yandell Bello shared that he had been looking forward to the competition and developed a strong passion for piloting, especially navigating obstacle courses. His experience reflects the broader impact of the program, which has sparked student interest in STEM pathways and built confidence through hands-on learning. Dr. Ventura reflected on the program's impact, stating, "At Joseph A. Taub, passionate lives change lives. When our students showed interest in drones, we made it our mission to bring that passion to life."

The school extends its gratitude to Dr. Carlos Miranda for his instrumental support, as well as to staff members Mr. Paez, Mrs. Nour Nahla, Mr. Ferzad Ajam, Mrs. Marla Gaines, and all faculty who contributed as judges and organizers. Mr. Joven added, "Events like this inspire our students and open doors to future opportunities, and we are excited to continue growing this program."



MATT BELLACE VISITS NEW ROBERTO CLEMENTE'S 8TH GRADERS

Eighth grade students at New Roberto Clemente School recently hosted an inspiring presentation by renowned speaker Matt Bellace. Through humor and real-life experiences, he encouraged students to make positive choices, manage stress, and stay focused on their goals. The presentation was both impactful and memorable for all who attended.



STEAM/STARS T.I.E.S. FLAG FOOTBALL WINS SEASON OPENER

Paterson STEAM High School and the STARS Academy/T.I.E.S. Unified Flag Football program delivered a commanding 18-6 road victory in its season opener over West Orange High School. The win marks the first-ever victory for the program in its inaugural season. The team showcased a balanced and explosive offense, with touchdowns coming from 3 different players. Defensively, the team held firm, limiting West Orange to just one score.



TAKING FLIGHT: THE INSPIRING JOURNEY OF KENDRIN DIAZ



The journey of School 2's Kendrin Diaz is a true testament to perseverance, growth, and determination. At a young age, Kendrin began his educational experience in a self-contained Autism classroom. As he progressed into elementary school, he continued to grow and develop in an SLLD setting, building both his academic and social skills.

With continued hard work and support, Kendrin transitioned into middle school where he entered a general education classroom with resource support. Now, as a seventh grade student, he has made tremendous progress and currently requires only limited resource support—an incredible achievement that reflects his dedication and resilience.

On March 18, Kendrin reached an important milestone as he was inducted into the National Junior Honor Society, a recognition of his commitment to scholarship, character, and excellence.

School 2 is incredibly proud of Kendrin. He is a shining example of what it means to be a School 2 Eagle — one who has truly taken flight.

SENATOR FRANK R. LAUTENBERG SCHOOL CELEBRATES WOMEN IN STEM

In celebration of Women's History Month, students at Senator Frank R. Lautenberg School actively engaged in dynamic Women in STEM learning experiences facilitated by Reading Specialist Mr. Jonathan Raditch. Fourth and fifth grade students worked collaboratively to solve clues, research influential figures, and identify women who have made significant contributions to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. As they explored each clue using their Chromebooks, students discussed how these innovations continue to impact their daily lives.

Students took ownership of their learning throughout the activity. Fifth graders independently navigated the research process, while fourth graders built their skills through modeling and guided discussions focused on identifying key words within each clue. With support from their teachers and access to translated materials, multilingual learners fully participated alongside their peers. Through collaboration, problem-solving, and meaningful discussion, students strengthened their research skills and developed a deeper appreciation for the role of women in shaping the world of STEM.



LADY RAMS CHEER TEAM SECURES BACK-TO-BACK CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Joseph A. Taub School Lady Rams cheer team has once again proven its dominance, capturing its second consecutive Paterson Recreation Taub Doby championship. The team earned first place in the cheer/dance category and secured first place overall, solidifying its reputation as one of the premier middle school cheer programs in the region. Their performance showcased precision, energy, and unity, reflecting months of disciplined preparation and teamwork.

Led by Coach Gibson and Coach T, the Lady Rams have worked passionately throughout the year to reach this level of excellence. Their commitment to the program extends beyond competition, as they have been a constant presence at every basketball game, delivering electrifying halftime performances and helping create a true playoff atmosphere inside the Joseph A. Taub gymnasium. When the team begins to cheer, the energy in the building rises to a level where the crowd can barely be heard over the roar of support.

"Passionate lives change lives," said JATS Principal Dr. Jorge Ventura. "It is an honor to have such a talented and hardworking cheer team representing our school."



**LET'S HEAR IT FOR
THE LADY RAMS!
YOUR
2026 CHAMPIONS**



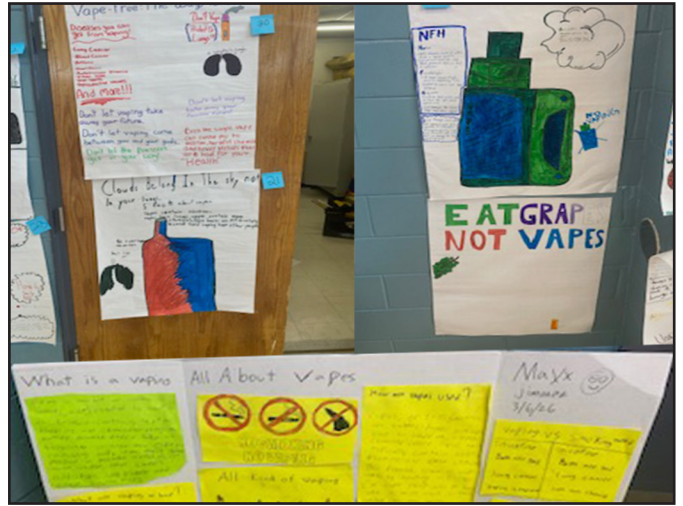
NEWCOMERS STUDENTS INSPIRED BY NASA STORY, TALK WITH FILMMAKER

Newcomers High School students recently came together for a special screening of *A Million Miles Away* as part of Montclair Film's High School Impact series. This remarkable film tells the true story of José Hernández, who rose from working as a migrant farmworker to becoming a NASA astronaut while embodying perseverance and determination. Students also had the unique opportunity to participate in a live Q&A session with the film's writer and director, Alejandra Márquez Abella.



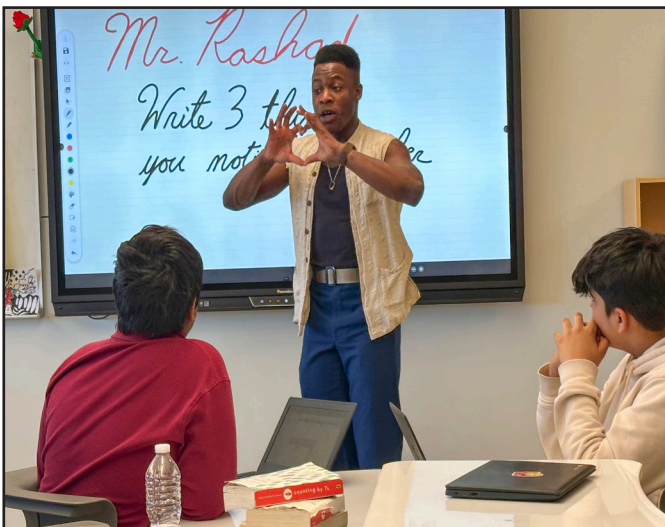
MLK STUDENTS TAKE A STAND AGAINST VAPING

Students at Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Educational Complex participated in an anti-vaping poster contest that helped them learn about the dangers of vaping. Student Assistance Coordinator Mr. Alvin Bush gave a presentation on the dangers of vaping before students started creating their posters. The contest, which was led by physical education teacher Mrs. Christine Arena, saw the students vote on the entries themselves, ultimately selecting Poster #26 as the winner.



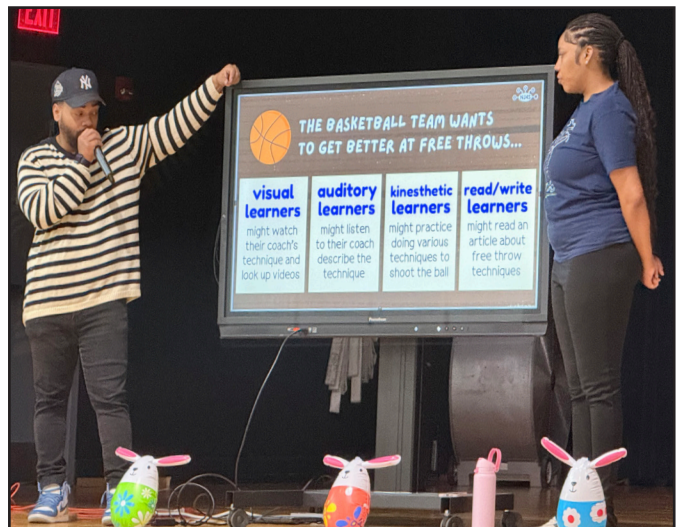
JATS STUDENTS INSPIRED BY POETRY WORKSHOPS

Led by local poet Rashad Wright, Joseph A. Taub School students recently completed a series of poetry workshops to craft original works for the annual Passaic County Community College poetry contest. Throughout the workshops, students were immersed in engaging lessons that guided them through the creative process of writing poetry.



NJ4US MOTIVATES NRC PIRATES PREPARING FOR NJSLA

New Roberto Clemente School students in grades 6–8 participated in a Study Skills for Success presentation by NJ4US. Coordinated by their Student Assistance Coordinator, the session focused on motivating students and strengthening their academic habits as they prepare for the upcoming NJSLA and the end of the school year.



APRIL SELF-CARE CALENDAR

Hello April 2026!

“Bloom gently, without rushing the season you are in.”

April arrives with a sense of lightness; longer days, softer air, and sunshine returning to lessen winter’s chill. As the world around us continues to bloom, we’re reminded that growth isn’t just something we see in nature but something we feel within ourselves. This month invites us to tune in more closely to our own needs. With the busyness of the year still in motion, April offers a gentle nudge to pause, check in, and care for ourselves with intention.

How are you really feeling? What do you need more of? Rest, balance, connection, or space?

Just as flowers don’t rush their blooming, we too can move at a pace that feels right; giving ourselves permission to grow, recharge, and simply be.

Mantra for April:

I honor what I need and allow myself to grow with care and intention.

Let April be a time to nurture your well-being, honor your energy and embrace the steady, unfolding process of becoming.



APRIL 2026						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 Make a goal to finish by summer	2 Go for a walk outside	3 Find a spring time meditation	4 Visit a farmer's market
5 Exercise outside	6 Put on nature sounds and relax	7 Make a new friend	8 Read something light and fun	9 Listen to the birds	10 Channel your inner superhero	11 Buy a new spring outfit
12 Air out your living space and let sun in	13 Go easy on yourself	14 Create a playlist of upbeat music	15 Look at the stars	16 Eat dessert	17 Get a new houseplant	18 Pick flowers and then press them
19 Create and outdoor space for yourself	20 Simplify your schedule	21 Make a fruit or veggie platter	22 Find a new outside hobby	23 Try something new-to-you	24 Go on a mini adventure	25 Take a nap in the sunshine
26 Order takeout	27 Do some Spring cleaning	28 Clean up your digital device storage	29 Change the energy in your home	30 Put on music and sit outside	This information is provided to you by: DATERSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS Department of Student Support Services 81C and Social Emotional Learning 98 Delaware Avenue, Paterson NJ 07653 Office: (973) 321-6094 info@daterston.k12.nj.us	

ABRIL 2026						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 Ponte la meta de terminar para el verano	2 Sal a dar un paseo	3 Encuentra una meditación para la primavera	4 Visita un mercado de agricultores
5 Haz ejercicio al aire libre	6 Pon sonidos de la naturaleza y relájate	7 Haz un nuevo amigo	8 Lee algo ligero y divertido	9 Escucha las Aves	10 Canaliza a tu superhéroe interior	11 Compra un nuevo vestido para la primavera
12 Ventila tu espacio habitable y deja entrar el sol	13 Sé amable contigo mismo	14 Crea una lista de música animada	15 Mira las estrellas	16 Come postre	17 Consigue una nueva planta para la casa	18 Recoge flores y luego prénsalas
19 Crea un espacio al aire libre para ti	20 Simplifica tu horario de citas	21 Prepara una bandeja de frutas o verduras	22 Busca un nuevo pasatiempo al aire libre	23 Prueba algo nuevo para ti	24 Embárcate en una mini aventura	25 Toma una siesta bajo el sol
26 Pedir comida para llevar	27 Haz una limpieza de primavera	28 Limpia el almacenaje de tu dispositivo digital	29 Cambia la energía de tu hogar	30 Pon música y siéntate afuera	This information is provided to you by: DATERSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS Department of Student Support Services 81C and Social Emotional Learning 98 Delaware Avenue, Paterson NJ 07653 Office: (973) 321-6094 info@daterston.k12.nj.us	

PPS PARENT UNIVERSITY: STRENGTHENING FAMILIES, SUPPORTING STUDENTS

Help your Child Succeed in School

“Strengthen Your Skills to Support Your Child”



Department of Family & Community Engagement

Paterson Public Schools' Department of Family and Community Engagement is proud to introduce the district community to PPS Parent University, a program designed to empower, educate, and support families that are on the go. PPS Parent University offers a variety of online and in-person workshops designed to help families support their children through their educational journey.

PPS Parent University focuses on building stronger partnerships between families, schools, and communities by providing practical strategies for both home and school. It also allows individuals to gain confidence as both a parent and a partner in your child's education. By building routines and skills that foster academic success, families can create a supportive environment for learning at home. Additionally, our program helps parents connect with other families and supportive community networks to share experiences and grow together.

The goal of PPS Parent University is to strengthen parent-school partnerships and build robust family networks through collaboration, empowering you with the leadership skills and practical tools needed to foster student success both at home and in the community. Explore PPS Parent University today and learn more about its mission and programs.

Did you know?

You can read past editions of The Pulse by visiting the Communications Hub.

[Click Here](#)

PPS IN THE NEWS

Paterson Public Schools Launches “Parent University” to Empower Families and Boost Student Success
March 27, 2026

PRESS RELEASES

Paterson Public Schools Students Debut Unified Flag Football Team
March 25, 2026

MONTHLY CALENDAR REMINDERS

April 13rd Marking Period Ends
April 2	1 PM Student/1:20 PM Staff Dismissal
April 3Good Friday - District Closed
April 6-10 Spring Break - District Closed
April 21.	Report Card Parent Conferences 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM (Grades PreK-8)
April 23	Report Card Parent Conferences 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM (JAT, NRC, DHA, Grades 9-12)
April 24.1 PM Student Dismissal/Staff PD

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

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS

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 Pulse 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 the Communications Hub at www.paterson.k12.nj.us

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

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