



# THE PULSE

*The Heartbeat of the District.*

PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS 

MAY 22, 2026 | VOL. 36

## PATERSON STEAM WINS UNIFIED FLAG FOOTBALL STATE CHAMPIONSHIP



The Paterson STEAM High School unified flag football team was crowned champion at the New Jersey Unified High School Flag Football League Championship on Friday, May 15 at the Atlantic Health Jets Training Center in Florham Park, NJ. After defeating Bloomfield in the semifinals, the students topped Parsippany Hills, 30-26, in the championship game. The team's victories on Friday capped off a historic inaugural season and created memories the students will carry with them for years to come.

Made up of students from Paterson STEAM High School and the STARS Academy/T.I.E.S. Program, the unified team was one of four squads in the 18-team league to advance to the playoffs.

“This championship is a historic milestone that showcases the true spirit of Paterson STEAM, STARS Academy/T.I.E.S. Program, and Paterson Public Schools,” said Superintendent Dr. Laurie W. Newell. “It proves that when we intentionally build space for every student to compete and thrive, extraordinary achievements follow. I am incredibly proud of this team for bringing home the championship and setting a gold standard for athletic excellence and inclusion.”

To read the press release, please visit our [website](#).

Greetings Paterson Public Schools Community,

At the Board of Education meeting on May 13, Deputy Superintendent Dr. Rodney A. Henderson presented an update on the district's work related to Lever 5 of the Paterson Progress Plan: parental support. The presentation highlighted year-to-date efforts to support families in promoting consistent attendance and on-time arrival for students.



We were pleased to share that all Lever 5 goals and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), guided by our Corrective Action Plan, are trending positively, with most KPIs either completed or exceeding established targets. These efforts focused on three key goals: launching a districtwide attendance campaign, implementing a support cohort in ten schools, and conducting at least three school-parent attendance workshops. To date, the district has already completed four workshops, with parent participation expected to increase by 25%.

While full validation of certain metrics will come with year-end data, early indicators show a positive impact on student attendance this academic year. Moving forward, our next steps will focus on expanding these initiatives districtwide, strengthening long-term program sustainability, and conducting a deeper analysis into the root causes of student absenteeism.

I would like to thank Dr. Henderson, School/Community Program Coordinator Ms. Sierra Gerald, and the Department of Compulsory School Attendance & Student Accounting for their continued efforts and commitment to this important work.

When schools and families work hand-in-hand, we can maximize instructional time and help ensure our students are present, engaged, and positioned to reach their full potential.

As we approach Memorial Day weekend, our district pauses to honor and remember the brave men and women of the United States Armed Forces who made the ultimate sacrifice to service our country. On behalf of Paterson Public Schools, I wish you and your families a safe, peaceful, and meaningful Memorial Day weekend.

Sincerely,

Laurie W. Newell, PhD  
Superintendent of Schools



## PPS SENIORS ACHIEVE COLLEGE MILESTONE AHEAD OF GRADUATION

Two Paterson Public Schools seniors have reached a remarkable milestone, earning associate degrees from Passaic County Community College (PCCC) through Paterson Public Schools' Early College Program. The students, Alan Benitez and Xavier Gonzalez, are from Paterson STEAM High School.

The rigorous Early College Program is designed for motivated students prepared to meet the demands of college-level coursework, demonstrate academic excellence, and thrive in a higher education environment.

Alan Benitez will attend Rutgers University-Newark, where he was accepted into the Business Management program. He will graduate high school with an associate degree in Psychology. Xavier Gonzalez will attend New Jersey Institute of Technology, to pursue Architecture. He will graduate high school with an associate degree in Communications.

Benitez and Gonzalez were recognized alongside fellow graduates during PCCC's commencement ceremony on Wednesday, May 20. To read the press release, please visit our [website](#).



## INTERNATIONAL HS STUDENTS PARTNER WITH AAPI NJ FOR LOCAL ELECTION

On May 12, students from International High School's International Club partnered with Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) New Jersey to participate in election exit polling in Paterson. The experience provided students with a valuable opportunity to connect classroom learning with real-world community involvement.

As part of the school's ongoing AAPI educational initiatives, students learned about AAPI history, civic participation, and the importance of representation in American society. During the event, students interacted with local community members, observed the democratic process in action, and gained a deeper understanding of how civic engagement strengthens communities. The beautiful spring weather made the day even more memorable as students proudly represented their school while working alongside community leaders and volunteers. Through conversations and hands-on experiences, students developed communication skills, cultural awareness, and a stronger appreciation for community service. The International Club continues to create opportunities for students to become active, informed, and compassionate global citizens. Events like this demonstrate how education, culture, and civic engagement can come together to inspire the next generation of leaders.



## HARD WORK AND DEDICATION PAY OFF FOR FOUR PATERSON STEAM SENIORS



**Elezer Echevarria**



**Casey Johnson**



**Azhir Marte**



**Jaden Rosario**

A select group of Paterson STEAM High School seniors – Elezer Echevarria, Casey Johnson, Azhir Marte, and Jaden Rosario – have been named 2026 Fidelity Scholarship recipients, a life-changing scholarship that provides full financial support for college tuition and housing expenses.

Paterson STEAM school counselor Ms. Vanessa Vega-Gonzalez worked closely with the students throughout the process. She supported the students by helping them organize materials, gather recommendations and transcripts, and showcase their personal stories and accomplishments.

“This scholarship is transformative for our students,” said Paterson STEAM Principal Dr. Nellista Bess. “Coupled with the dedication of our counseling department, this accomplishment is a testament to our students’ hard work and determination.”

## EASTSIDE AUTOMOTIVE PATHWAY SENIORS PASS KEY CAREER MILESTONES



Eastside High School seniors in the Automotive Pathway have successfully passed the entrance exam and are now taking the next step by applying for an auto/diesel technician apprenticeship. Made possible through the IAM CREST organization, this opportunity offers students immediate employment while they work toward earning their National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence certifications at no cost. This is a significant achievement that positions the Eastside students for long-term success in a high-demand, high-skill career field under the Youth Transition to Work Program. Becoming a certified mechanic not only opens doors to a wide range of career paths – from diagnostics to fleet management – but also equips students with lifelong, transferable skills in a field that is essential to keeping our economy moving.

## EASTSIDE MIGHTY GHOST JROTC DOMINATES IN SEASON FINALE

The Eastside High School Mighty Ghost JROTC Battalion finished its season strong as the Cadets turned in a championship performance at “The Ultimate Raiders Championship” competition on Saturday, May 16, at Fort Dix.

Going up against 13 of the top JROTC programs in the state, the Cadets’ physical and mental endurance as a team was tested. Heat, cold, sun, rain, and other variables only added to the challenges the team faced throughout the day. Despite it all, the Mighty Ghost JROTC Battalion returned to Paterson with eight trophies overall. Its victories included Overall Raiders Mixed Team champions and second place overall Raiders Female Physical Challenge Team.

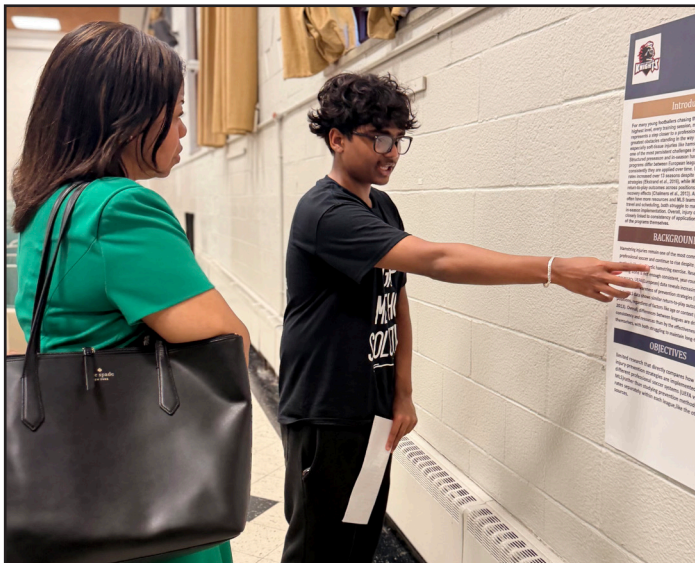
1st place - Overall Mixed Champions; 1st place - Raiders Physical Challenge All Male; 2nd place - Raiders Physical Challenge All Female; 2nd place - 3 km Team Run Female; 1st place - Raiders Physical Challenge Mixed; 1st place - One Rope Bridge Mixed; 1st place - 3 km Team Run Mixed; 1st place - Cross Country Rescue Gauntlet Mixed.



## JFK STUDENTS PRESENT FINDINGS AT AP RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

John F. Kennedy High School students presented the results of their year-long independent research projects at the AP Research Symposium on Wednesday, May 20, inside the JFK Auditorium.

Attended by Superintendent of Schools Dr. Laurie W. Newell and hosted by Ms. Itani, the symposium showcased students’ research findings and academic achievement for members of the school community. AP Research is an interdisciplinary course that encourages students to demonstrate critical thinking and academic research skills through an in-depth investigation on a topic of the student’s choosing.



## SCHOOL 10 BUILDS EXCITEMENT AND CONFIDENCE WITH NJSLA PEP RALLY

School 10 students and staff recently came together for an energetic NJSLA Pep Rally to motivate and encourage students ahead of testing week. The event was filled with school spirit, positivity, and excitement as the school community rallied together to support student success.

The rally featured performances by the School 10 cheerleaders, the talented 6th grade drummers led by music teacher Mr. DeOliveira, and a special, original NJSLA rap performed by Mr. Alex from the school security team. Students and staff also showcased colorful motivational posters created to inspire confidence and teamwork during testing.

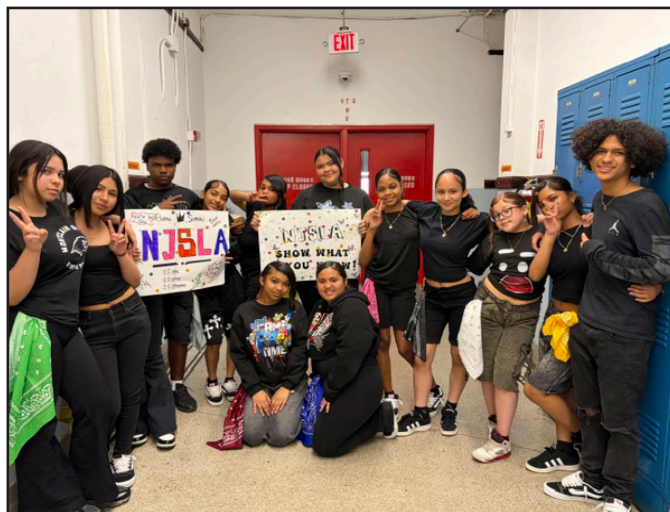
The pep rally served as a meaningful opportunity to build confidence, strengthen school spirit, and remind students that the entire School 10 community is cheering them on.



## DR. FRANK NAPIER, JR. SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY HOSTS NJSLA PEP RALLY

Dr. Frank Napier, Jr. School of Science and Technology recently hosted its annual NJSLA Pep Rally that motivated and encouraged students to arrive to school prepared, rested, and ready to conquer the test.

Teachers and students worked together to create motivational posters, dances, and spirited chants that filled the school with excitement and positive energy. The event served as a fun and meaningful way to remind students of the importance of showing up each day and doing their best, while also reinforcing how much the school community cares about their success.



## SCHOOL 5 STUDENT ARTWORK FEATURED AT WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY

Each year, the Passaic County art community recognizes outstanding young artists through a partnership with the William Paterson University Professional Development School Network. Out of nearly 100 student submissions countywide, only 18 pieces were selected for permanent display at the university. School 5 proudly celebrates two students who earned this honor: Arielis Cruz Tejeda (5th Grade) and Nazar Alam (4th Grade). Their artwork and creativity have brought great pride to the School 5 community.



## STEAM, STARS/T.I.E.S. STUDENTS EXPLORE GROUNDS FOR SCULPTURE

Students from Paterson STEAM High School and STARS Academy/T.I.E.S. Program stepped into a world where art felt alive at Grounds for Sculpture in Hamilton NJ. Spread across beautifully landscaped gardens, the space blended nature and creativity in a way that truly captured the students' attention.

Towering sculptures rose from the grass while hidden pieces appeared along winding paths, inviting students to explore and discover. Dr. Stein guided them throughout the visit, encouraging students to look beyond what they first saw. Dr. Jaymie asked thoughtful questions about shape, movement, and emotion, helping students understand how artists communicate ideas through their work. She reminded them that art is not just about what something looks like, but also how it makes you feel and think.

Throughout the trip, students discussed what they saw, asked questions, and even sketched their favorite pieces. The visit demonstrated that art is not just something to look at, but something to experience, reflect on, and respond to. By the end of the day, many students began to see themselves not only as learners, but also as artists inspired by the creativity around them.



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## DALE AVENUE SCHOOL HOSTS SPECIAL STORY TIME PERFORMANCE

On May 15, Dale Avenue School hosted a spectacular Story Time Performance in its cafeteria featuring the literary works of Mo Willems. Captivating staff, students, and parents alike, the event showcased the talents of the school community as students took the stage, bringing beloved characters to life through expressive and imaginative interpretations of Willems' iconic books.



### PPS IN THE NEWS

[Paterson STEAM Seniors Earn Associate Degrees Through Early College Program Before High School Graduation](#)

May 22, 2026

[Jets Host Third Annual NJ Unified High School Flag Championship](#)

May 18, 2026

### PRESS RELEASES

[Paterson STEAM High School Wins Unified Flag Football State Title](#)

May 22, 2026

[Two Paterson Public Schools Seniors Achieve College Milestone Ahead of Graduation](#)

May 21, 2026

### STAFF REMINDER

#### NEW TEMPLATES NOW AVAILABLE IN COMMUNICATIONS HUB

Paterson Public Schools staff are encouraged to utilize new and updated letterhead, flyer, and Powerpoint templates designed by the Department of Communications. To access the templates, visit the [Communications Hub](#).

#### PowerPoint Templates

Title Slide 1



Title Slide 2



Title Slide 3



## MONTHLY CALENDAR REMINDERS

May 22. . . . . 1:00 PM Students & PEA Staff Dismissal  
May 25. . . . . Memorial Day - District Closed

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

## BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS

A **Board of Education Workshop Meeting** will take place virtually on Wednesday, June 10th. Those wishing to provide public comments are required to register for the meeting. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 6 PM.

The **Board of Education Regular Meeting** will be held on Wednesday, June 17th at John F. Kennedy High School. 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.

**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).

**Paterson Board of Education:** President Joel D. Ramirez, Vice President Della McCall, Commissioner Valerie Freeman, Commissioner Alex Mendez, Jr., Commissioner Hector L. Nieves, Jr., Commissioner Mohammed H. Rashid, Commissioner Kenneth Rosado, Commissioner Kenneth L. Simmons, Commissioner Corey L. Teague

**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](http://www.paterson.k12.nj.us)

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

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