



THE PULSE

The Heartbeat of the District.

PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS 

MAY 28, 2026 | VOL. 37

CONGRATS TO CLASS OF 2026 VALEDICTORIANS AND SALUTATORIANS!

Paterson Public Schools

Eastside High School

Valedictorian: Harbie Rosario Martinez



Salutatorian: Esmilna Nolasco Mendez

International High School

Valedictorian: Camil Fermin Sanchez



Salutatorian: Sadiya Hossain

John F. Kennedy High School

Valedictorian: Doha Essaghir



Salutatorian: Sumayar Chowdhury

Newcomers High School

Valedictorian: Sury Aquino Mercado



Salutatorian: Enerliz Ferreira Jimenez

Paterson P-Tech

Valedictorian: Jonathan Colon



Salutatorian: Shakil Ahmed

Paterson STEAM

Valedictorian: Nicole Salazar



Salutatorian: Blanca Gonzalez

Rosa L. Parks School of Fine & Performing Arts

Valedictorian: Katherine Concepcion Paulino



Salutatorian: Henry Rodriguez

STARS Academy

Valedictorian: Walfrys Castillo Anciani



Salutatorian: Mariely Urena



Class of 2026 Valedictorians & Salutatorians



Paterson Public Schools is proud to announce the Class of 2026 valedictorians and salutatorians, recognizing the top academic achievers from each high school. These student leaders exemplify academic excellence, dedication, resilience, and leadership across the district.

This year's honorees earned the highest grade point averages in their respective graduating classes while balancing extracurricular activities, community service, and leadership roles.

"We are incredibly proud of our Class of 2026 valedictorians and salutatorians," said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Laurie W. Newell. "These extraordinary students represent the very best of Paterson Public Schools. Their achievements are a testament to their hard work, perseverance, and the unwavering support of their families, teachers, and school community. As they prepare and embark on their next chapters, they carry with them the pride of our district."

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

Greetings Paterson Public Schools Community,

This month, Paterson Public Schools continued its community engagement efforts through a series of forums and roundtable discussions focused on the future of our schools and ongoing district planning initiatives.

On May 20, the district, in partnership with the Paterson Education Fund, hosted a virtual Community Forum focused on the continued implementation of the Middle School Cohorts model, including upcoming school configurations and what families can expect in the years ahead.

The district also hosted Long-Range Facilities Plan (LRFP) Community Roundtables on May 21 and May 26 to gather feedback from families, staff, and community stakeholders as we continue planning for the future of our learning environments and school facilities.

These conversations reflect our ongoing commitment to transparency, communication, and meaningful community engagement as we work to provide safe, modern, equitable, and high-quality learning environments for all students.

Recordings and additional information from the virtual sessions are available on the [district website](#) for families and community members who were unable to attend live.

We understand that district transitions and long-term planning efforts naturally bring questions. Our goal is to continue providing families with clear information and updates, so our community remains informed and prepared for the years ahead.

Thank you for your continued partnership and shared commitment to the success of Paterson's children.

Sincerely,

Laurie W. Newell, PhD
Superintendent of Schools



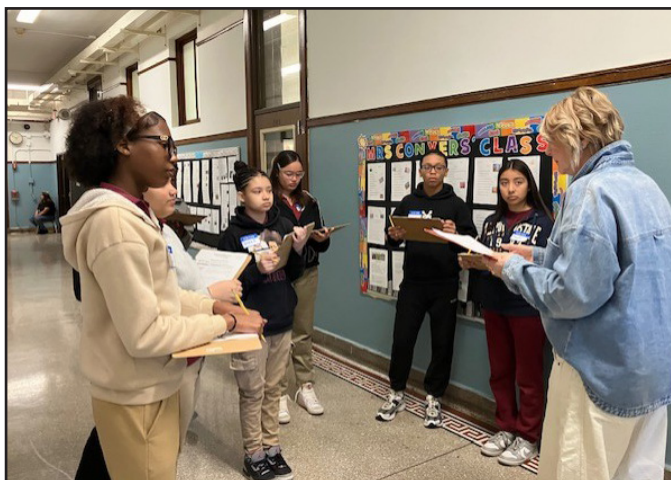
A promotional banner for the Long Range Facilities Plan 2026-2031 Community Roundtable. The banner features the Paterson Public Schools logo at the top left, with the tagline "Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow" and a graduation cap icon. The main text reads "Long Range Facilities Plan" in large blue letters, followed by "2026-2031" in a dark blue box, and "COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLE" in white text on a dark blue background. The background of the banner shows a group of diverse students in a classroom setting, looking towards the right.

To view the Long Range Facilities Plan Community Roundtable that took place on May 26, [click here](#).

STUDENT LED INSTRUCTIONAL ROUNDS AT SCHOOL 12

Students at School 12 recently had the opportunity to take this year's theme of empowerment to another level. Ten middle school students joined Core Collaborative researcher Joanne Buckheit and four of their teachers to examine teaching and learning through a different lens.

Before visiting classrooms, students discussed prior classroom experiences that they found meaningful. They shared how teachers shaped those experiences and how they were able to grow as a result. Equipped with those reflections and a low inference data collection tool, the 10 observers visited classrooms and engaged with students. During the debriefing session, students remarked on how much work goes into planning an effective lesson, and the amount of care and support they observed from their teachers. The participating teachers were gratified to hear the feedback and proud of the insightful commentary from the students. Dr. Dobbs and the School 12 staff helped make this intergenerational learning experience a reality.



PATERSON EDUCATOR RECEIVES NATIONAL STUDENT SUCCESS GRANT

Dr. Frank Napier, Jr. School of Science & Technology educator Lois Powell was recently selected as a 2026 National Education Association (NEA) Foundation Student Success Grant recipient, one of only four educators in New Jersey to receive the honor.

Mrs. Powell's award-winning initiative, "Voices in Motion: SEL Through Arts & Storytelling", is a schoolwide program designed to strengthen Social-Emotional Learning through creative expression, student voice, and leadership development. Through visual art, storytelling, music, and reflective activities, students build empathy, self-awareness, collaboration, and emotional regulation skills in meaningful and engaging ways.

The initiative incorporates rhythmic music experiences and opportunities for students to showcase their reflections, artwork, and digital stories — making student voices visible, valued, and celebrated throughout the school community. This project also aligns with the district's Youth Empowered Stewardship (YES) Program, reinforcing leadership while empowering students to become compassionate leaders and responsible community members.

Dr. Frank Napier, Jr. School of Science & Technology proudly celebrates Mrs. Powell's dedication to innovation, student wellness, and educational excellence. Her continued commitment to uplifting students through creativity, inclusion, and leadership reflects the very best of the school community.



NRC CELEBRATES COMMUNITY AND LEADERSHIP BEFORE FIELD DAY

Tie-dye, Field Day, and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) — what do they have in common? At New Roberto Clemente School (NRC), the answer is simple: an unforgettable celebration of community, growth, and school spirit.

In the days and weeks leading up to the annual Field Day event at Baurle Field, students dove into a series of SEL activities designed to build connection, teamwork, and self-awareness. Those SEL activities culminated in a vibrant tie-dye event, where students created one-of-a-kind shirts that they'll proudly wear on Field Day. Every swirl of color is a reminder that each student brings something unique to the NRC community. This year's event carried extra meaning with the inclusion of two special milestones: the induction of new members into the National Junior Honor Society (NJHS), and the welcoming of new School Ambassadors. These recognitions were woven seamlessly into the festivities, honoring students who exemplify excellence and leadership in NRC's school community.

NRC's guidance team and Full Service Community School staff spearheaded the efforts that brought the event to life. Their dedication to making NRC a place where students feel seen, celebrated, and supported is what makes moments like these truly special. So what do tie-dye, Field Day, and SEL have in common? At NRC, they're all woven from the same thread, a commitment to nurturing the whole student and building a school community worth celebrating.



DR. FRANK NAPIER SCHOOL INSPIRES STUDENTS DURING NJSLA PEP RALLY

Dr. Frank Napier, Jr. School of Science & Technology's school community came together for its annual NJSLA State Testing Pep Rally that encouraged and motivated students ahead of state testing. The event focused on building confidence, reducing stress, and reminding students that they are prepared to do their very best.

Students performed motivating chants and cheers, listened to uplifting messages from staff and school leaders, played minute-to-win-it games, and enjoyed music. The pep rally emphasized the importance of trying their best effort during testing week. It brought everyone together, enhanced school spirit, and built community.



SCHOOL 20 PROUDLY PARTICIPATES IN GIRLS ON THE RUN, HEART & SOLE 5K

Students from School 20 proudly participated in the Girls on the Run and Heart & Sole 5K event held on May 16th in Sparta, NJ. The nationally recognized program, first established at School 20 in 2021 by former school counselor Mrs. Stephenson and teacher Mrs. Ritter, continues to positively impact students each year.

Girls on the Run inspires girls of all abilities to develop self-confidence, create healthy relationships, and strengthen important life skills through physical activity and teamwork. Throughout the season, participants engaged in lessons that combined movement with meaningful discussions centered on resilience, personal growth, and leadership. This spring season was led by School 20's dedicated volunteer coaches: Mrs. Artis-Stone, Mrs. Olivares, Mrs. Akinwole, Ms. Tetro, Mr. Pinto, and Ms. Arvay. Seventeen girls in grades 3 through 8 successfully completed the program and celebrated their accomplishment by participating in the 5K event.

As part of the program, students also completed a Community Impact Project and concluded the season by running the celebratory 5K together, creating a lasting sense of achievement and empowerment. School 20's practice 5K also received local media recognition and was featured by [NorthJersey.com](#) and [News12 New Jersey](#).

The program was made possible through support from an NJEA grant that helps provide students with opportunities to build confidence, leadership, and teamwork skills through fitness and personal development activities. School 20 congratulates all participants and coaches for their hard work, dedication, and outstanding achievement throughout the season.



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SFLS STUDENTS RECOGNIZED AT WILLIAM PATERSON ART EXHIBIT

Senator Frank R. Lautenberg School (SFLS) is proud to celebrate the artistic achievements of its talented students. Mattie Vega (7th Grade) and Cedrick Lambert (8th Grade) were selected to have their artwork displayed at William Paterson University's Annual Professional Development Schools Art Exhibit. Only 18 pieces were chosen for this distinguished showcase, making this recognition an outstanding accomplishment.

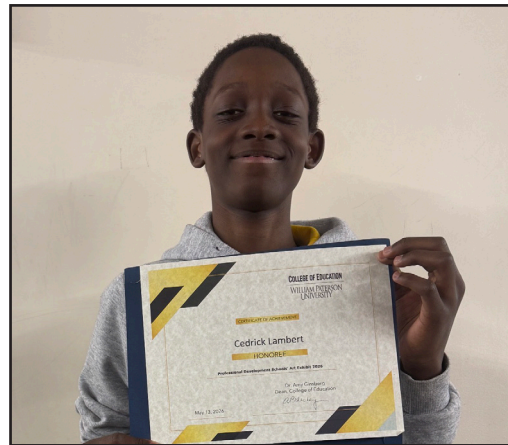
This year's showcase theme, "Through Young Eyes: 250 Years and Beyond", invited students to create artwork reflecting on the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence while incorporating established art standards. Through their creativity and artistic expression, students explored history, identity, and their vision for the future.

SFLS art teacher Mr. Jerome introduced students to the art of collage making, believing it would provide them with the strongest opportunity to creatively express their ideas and perspectives connected to the theme. His guidance and artistic instruction helped students bring their visions to life in meaningful and imaginative ways.

Additionally, Kelsey Sanchez (7th Grade) earned Honorable Mention recognition for her artwork, further highlighting the creativity and talent of SFLS student artists.

Students had the special opportunity to meet with the dean of William Paterson University's College of Education Dr. Amy Ginsberg who presented certificates and offered congratulations in recognition of their impressive achievements.

SFLS congratulates Mattie, Cedrick, and Kelsey for representing their school community with creativity, pride, and excellence.



PPS IN THE NEWS

Paterson STEAM Seniors Earn Associate Degrees Through Early College Program Before High School Graduation

TAPinto Paterson | May 22, 2026

See photos from Paterson School 20's Girls on the Run event

NorthJersey.com | May 14, 2026

Girls on the Run program helps Paterson students build confidence through fitness

News12 New Jersey | May 14, 2026

PRESS RELEASES

Paterson Public Schools Honors Class of 2026 Valedictorians and Salutatorians

May 27, 2026

EASTSIDE HONORS 388 STUDENTS AT TRIFECTA BREAKFAST

On May 21, 388 students from Eastside High School were honored at the school's special Trifecta Breakfast, a celebration that recognized students who achieved Honor Roll status for all three semesters during the school year. The event highlighted the dedication, perseverance, and academic excellence of students who consistently worked hard to reach this impressive goal.

During the breakfast, students enjoyed a delicious meal while being honored for their accomplishments among peers, teachers, and staff. The atmosphere was filled with pride and excitement as students were celebrated for not only their grades, but also for their commitment to success throughout the entire year. Events like the Trifecta Breakfast help inspire students to continue striving for excellence both inside and outside of the classroom.

The achievements of these students serve as a reminder that hard work truly pays off. Eastside continues to foster a culture of determination, achievement, and pride within the school community.



MONTHLY CALENDAR REMINDERS

[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.

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

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

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