



PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Office of the Superintendent of Schools
90 Delaware Avenue, Paterson, NJ 07503
Office: (973) 321-0980 Fax: (973) 321-0470

Laurie W. Newell, PhD
Superintendent of Schools

July 1, 2026

Dear Paterson Public Schools,

It is with great joy and enthusiasm that I welcome you to the 2026–2027 school year. Each new school year brings renewed energy, fresh opportunities, and a shared commitment to ensuring that every child in our district is prepared for success in school and in life.

As we begin this new year together, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the meaningful progress we made during the 2025–2026 school year—a year defined by thoughtful planning, bold action, and a deep commitment to our students and community. This past year marked the successful advancement of three major district goals that are shaping the future of our schools.

Five-Year Strategic Plan: We proudly introduced our new strategic plan, *Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow*, which will guide our district from 2025 through 2030. This plan represents the voices and priorities of our entire school community, developed through extensive collaboration with students, families, staff, and community stakeholders.

Grounded in data, research, and shared vision, the plan prioritizes academic excellence, student-centered learning, equity and access, strong partnerships, operational transparency, and leadership development. It now serves as the foundation for all major district decisions, ensuring that our efforts remain aligned, focused, and sustainable as we move forward together.

Continuation of the Middle School Model: We continued transforming our school structure to better meet the developmental needs of our students. This work includes transitioning from K–8 configurations to a more intentional model of PreK–5 elementary schools and dedicated middle schools serving grades 6–8.

During the 2025–2026 school year, we advanced Phase 2 of this transition. School 8 and School 9 shifted to elementary configurations, while Dr. Hani Awadallah School was reestablished as a dedicated middle school. We also adjusted attendance zones to support balanced enrollment and improve access to programs across the district.

These changes are designed to provide our youngest learners with stable, nurturing environments, and to give our middle school students access to specialized instruction, expanded electives, and greater independence, better preparing them for success in high school and beyond.

Districtwide Data Dashboard: To enhance transparency and support data-driven decision-making, we began implementing a real-time districtwide data dashboard system. This year, we completed critical infrastructure work and installed dashboard displays in multiple high schools. These dashboards provide timely information on key indicators such as attendance, enrollment, assessment results, and staffing. This system has improved communication within our schools, and it is helping leaders make more informed, responsive decisions that directly benefit students.

Alongside these efforts, we also made steady gains in academic achievement, expanded programming opportunities, and strengthened the systems that support our students and staff. These initiatives represent transformational work that will continue to shape the future of Paterson Public Schools.

As we begin the 2026–2027 school year, our focus remains clear: to provide every student with a high-quality, equitable education in an environment that supports their academic, social, and emotional growth.

I am excited to welcome students back and to continue working at fostering their growth, curiosity, and success. I deeply value the partnership of our families, the dedication of our staff, and the support of our community partners, all of which are essential to student achievement. Together, we will continue building a district where every child can thrive. I wish everyone a joyful, safe, and successful school year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laurie W. Newell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L".

Laurie W. Newell, PhD
Superintendent of Schools