

For Immediate Release

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Paterson Public Schools Responds to U.S. Department of Education Decision on Full-Service Community Schools Grant

Community partner raises concern over loss of student support services

Paterson, NJ (December 30, 2025) – Paterson Public Schools confirms it has received the U.S. Department of Education’s decision denying the district’s request for reconsideration of the non-continuation of funding under the Full-Service Community Schools (FSCS) grant program. The district received the decision on Monday, December 29.

The grant supports critical, school-based services for students and families in Paterson and Passaic, including academic enrichment, health and behavioral health supports, after-school programming, and family engagement initiatives.

Statement from Superintendent Dr. Laurie W. Newell:

“We are deeply disappointed by the Department’s decision to deny our request for reconsideration. Paterson Public Schools acted in good faith and with full transparency, demonstrating that all grant-funded activities were allowable, non-ideological, and directly focused on improving academic outcomes, attendance, and student well-being.

For more than a decade, our district has successfully implemented Full-Service Community Schools initiatives under multiple administrations, consistently meeting federal requirements and delivering meaningful results for students and families. The sudden loss of this funding puts at risk the essential services that our school communities rely on every day.

While we will follow all required federal steps to close out the grant, our commitment to supporting the whole child and removing barriers to learning remains unwavering. We will continue working with our partners and elected officials to advocate for the resources our students deserve.”

Paterson Public Schools is currently reviewing next steps and assessing the impact of the decision on affected schools and services.

“Pulling these services after they were promised and put in place is unconscionable. Children should not lose access to care and enrichment because of shifting federal priorities. We stand with Paterson Public Schools in calling for this decision to be reversed and will continue advocating for sustained investment in the students who need it most,” said Rosie Grant, Executive Director of the Paterson Education Fund, Inc.

For more information about Paterson Public Schools visit our website at www.paterson.k12.nj.us

About Paterson Public Schools

Paterson Public Schools serves over 22,000 students from pre-K to 12th grade in New Jersey's third-largest city. About 71% of the student population is Hispanic, 16% are Black, 6% are Asian, and 5.0% are Caucasian. Recognizing its proud traditions, diverse community, and strong partnerships, the mission of Paterson Public Schools is to provide an academically rigorous, safe, and nurturing educational environment that meets the social, emotional, and academic needs of all students. The district is committed to preparing students for post-secondary education and careers. Despite the Paterson community being classified as low-income, many of its students achieve high academic success. A growing number of elementary school students are reading at or above grade level, and more high school students are earning college credits through Advanced Placement exams and enrolling in college-level courses before graduation. Paterson Public Schools is distinguished as one of only 17 school districts in New Jersey to offer the competitive International Baccalaureate program and is among just four districts with a P-TECH high school. In collaboration with IBM and Passaic County Community College, the P-TECH program allows students to graduate with an associate degree in applied science and valuable tech sector experience.

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