

For Immediate Release

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Paterson P-Tech Soars to Victory at Inaugural Silk City Drone Competition

Paterson Public Schools takes flight as students showcase skill and precision

Paterson, NJ (March 18, 2026) – Paterson P-Tech was crowned champion of the inaugural Silk City Drone Competition on Saturday, March 14, at Joseph A. Taub School, where nine teams from across the district came together for a high-stakes display of aeronautical skill and technical precision. With its first-place showing, Paterson P-Tech advances to the National Aerial Drone Competition, which will take place at Fairmont State University in West Virginia from May 16 to 17.

“The success of Paterson P-Tech students at this competition is a thrilling reflection of the innovation that takes place in our classrooms every day,” said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Laurie W. Newell. “By mastering these complex courses and aerial missions, our students have shown that they are ready to lead in the high-tech industries of tomorrow. We are incredibly proud to have Paterson P-Tech representing the district at the national level.”

The competition challenged students to master teamwork missions, pilot skills challenges, and autonomous flight tasks. Throughout the day, Paterson P-Tech students demonstrated exceptional problem-solving and collaboration, ultimately securing their spot at the national competition.

“I am so proud of the Paterson P-Tech students for their hard work and determination,” said Paterson P-Tech Principal Dr. Charla Holder. “Qualifying for a national competition is an amazing accomplishment and a testament to the talent and dedication of our P-Tech students.”

A first-of-its-kind event for Paterson Public Schools, the Silk City Drone Competition was a resounding success as it showcased the district’s commitment to innovative STEM education and instruction. Paterson Public Schools received guidance and support in launching the inaugural competition from the Robotics Education & Competition (REC) Foundation.

“Watching the students rise to every challenge with focus and creativity was inspiring,” said Paterson P-Tech drone team coach Dr. Carlos Miranda. “Their teamwork and excitement show the bright future of STEM education in Paterson.”

For more information 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. For more information, visit www.paterson.k12.nj.us

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