



For Immediate Release

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Paterson Public Schools Honors 45 Parents at Annual Family Breakfast Conference

District recognizes Parent of the Year honorees and highlights the essential role of family engagement in student success

Paterson, NJ (June 12, 2026) – Paterson Public Schools recognized 45 outstanding parents from schools across the district during its annual Title I End-of-Year Family Breakfast Conference on June 6 at Eastside High School, celebrating the critical role families play in student achievement and school success.

The event brought together parents, educators, administrators, Superintendent’s Cabinet members, Board of Education Commissioners, and community leaders for a morning dedicated to recognizing the exceptional contributions families make to the educational journey of Paterson students.

“Family engagement remains one of the strongest predictors of student success,” said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Laurie W. Newell. “This annual celebration gives us an opportunity to recognize the parents who partner with our schools every day to support learning, encourage achievement, and help shape the future of our students.”

The celebration culminated with the presentation of the 2025-2026 Parent of the Year awards, recognizing an exceptional parent from each district school for their leadership, advocacy, and commitment to supporting student success. The Districtwide Parent of the Year was presented to Elvia Gonzalez of Dr. Hani Awadallah School, following a districtwide vote by the school community.

“This celebration is a reminder that education is a shared responsibility,” said Assistant Superintendent of Special Education and Services Cheryl D. Coy. “We are proud to honor the families whose commitment and support have been essential to our schools.”

Beyond the celebration, families were provided valuable information on Title I federal funding and district initiatives designed to strengthen student achievement. A highlight of the morning was an inspirational keynote speech by community leader, motivational speaker, and author Tamika Riley-McReynolds, who delivered a powerful message urging parents to believe in themselves despite external challenges.

The conference was spearheaded by Ms. Coy, Executive Director of Family & Community Engagement William Kemper McDowell, and Districtwide Community Outreach & Special Projects Coordinator Bridget Arrick, whose leadership helped bring together families from across the district for a meaningful day of recognition and learning.

The annual conference reflects Paterson Public Schools' ongoing commitment to strengthening family-school partnerships and creating meaningful opportunities for parents to engage in their children's education.

The following individuals were recognized as Paterson Public Schools' 2025-2026 Parents of the Year:

Parent of the Year	Name of School
Adriana Machado	Dale Avenue School
Anisa M. Silva	School 12
Asma H. Sheikh	Charles J. Riley School/School 9
Auelina Jimenez de Reyes	New Roberto Clemente School
Beatriz Estrada	Senator Frank R. Lautenberg School
Beatriz Santana	STARS Academy/T.I.E.S. Program
Cadree Tomlinson	School 26
Catherine Villavicencio	International High School
Cerice Crawley	School 10
Claudia Lopez	Joseph A. Taub School
Elsy Ramirez	Roberto Clemente School
Elvia Gonzalez*	Dr. Hani Awadallah School
Erica G. Suazo	School 18
Fadaysha Hansford	Edward W. Kilpatrick School
Franchesca Morales	John F. Kennedy High School
Frances Rodriguez	School 27
Gabriela Mazon	School 19
Jania Riddick Swindell	Maria Magda O'Keefe School
Jennifer Mejia, Jose E. Garcia	Anna Iandoli Early Learning Center
Jhonatan Tati	Full-Service Community Center
Jillian Rae Olbis	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Educational Complex
Joan Vazquez	Paterson P-Tech High School
Jonathan Caraballo, Maria Correa-Celiness	School 7
Kenya Easton	Rosa L. Parks School of Fine & Performing Arts High School
Kerry Ann Blake	School 5
Kimberly Maldonado	Young Men's Leadership Academy
Kyranisha Williams	School 2
Latoya Brunson	Dr. Frank Napier, Jr. School of Science & Technology
Maria R. Medina	School 1

Maria Morales	School 15
Maritza Elizabeth Valverde	School 13
Maritza Hernandez De Perez	School 16
MaryAnn Surita	School 21
Mary Krish Gamonal	School 28
Megan Binns	Norman S. Weir School
Melissa Muniz	School 8
Nashawn Mayes	School 20
Patrece Rivers Hines	School 25
Rashin Lendsey	Alonzo "Tambua" Moody Academy for Social Change
Senaida Vazquez	Alexander Hamilton Academy
Tiffany Rodriguez	Eastside High School
Trenee Douglas	Paterson STEAM High School
Yalissa Monero	Newcomers High School

*2025-2026 Districtwide Parent of the Year

For more information about Paterson Public Schools, visit: 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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