



For Immediate Release

Contact: Aida E. Rosario

aerosario@paterson.k12.nj.us

Paterson Public Schools Celebrate 198 Seniors Earning New Jersey State Seal of Biliteracy

Students recognized for proficiency in English and additional languages as district continues to expand opportunities for multilingual achievement

Paterson, NJ (June 3, 2026) – Paterson Public Schools is proud to announce that 198 graduating seniors have earned the prestigious New Jersey Seal of Biliteracy, a distinction awarded by the New Jersey Department of Education to students who demonstrate proficiency in two or more languages by high school graduation.

The Seal of Biliteracy recognizes students for their academic achievement, multilingual skills, and cultural awareness while preparing them for college, careers, and global engagement. To earn the Seal, students must meet specific criteria in both English and a partner language.

“Earning the New Jersey State Seal of Biliteracy is an outstanding accomplishment that reflects our students’ hard work, dedication, and perseverance,” said Superintendent Dr. Laurie W. Newell. “In Paterson Public Schools, we proudly celebrate the many languages and cultures represented throughout our district. We congratulate these students on this well-deserved recognition and commend them for their commitment to multilingual achievement.”

This year’s recipients represent the district’s continued commitment to supporting multilingual learners and expanding equitable access to academic opportunities that celebrate language diversity and cultural inclusion.

“This recognition represents the collective efforts of our students, families, educators, counselors, and administrators who work together every day to support multilingual achievement,” said Liza M. Rios Otto, Director of Multilingual Learners. “We are incredibly proud of our students for embracing biliteracy as a strength and for demonstrating the importance of multilingualism in today’s world.”

Among this year’s honorees is Doha Essaghir of John F. Kennedy High School, who earned the Seal of Biliteracy in both Arabic and French, making her trilingual and further highlighting the exceptional linguistic talent found across the district.

Special recognition is extended to Ms. Kayla Khaled, Supervisor of World Languages, whose leadership helped coordinate the Seal of Biliteracy testing and student identification process throughout the academic year. In partnership with multilingual supervisors, school administrators,

counselors, and World Language teachers across the district, Ms. Khaled played a key role in supporting students through the certification process.

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

###