



For Immediate Release

Contact: Aida E. Rosario

aerosario@paterson.k12.nj.us

Eastside High School Takes First Place at PCCC Cooking Championship

Eastside student-chefs earned the “Dented Pot” trophy following a closely contested competition

Paterson, NJ (June 2, 2026) – The Eastside High School Culinary Arts Program secured first place at the inaugural “Dented Pot” Cooking Championship held on Thursday, May 28 at Passaic County Community College (PCCC). Facing off against Orange High School, Eastside’s student-chefs earned the top prize in a rigorous and timed competition.

The event featured a Market Basket-style format in which students developed original dishes using a mystery selection of ingredients. A panel of graduating seniors from the PCCC Culinary Arts Program judged the teams on several areas, including safety and sanitation, presentation, recipe balance, and desserts.

"This victory highlights the high level of talent, discipline, and professionalism fostered within our Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs," said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Laurie W. Newell. "We are incredibly proud of our Eastside students and staff for their hard work and dedication. This championship reflects the strength of our curriculum and the bright futures ahead for these student-chefs."

The "Dented Pot" Cooking Championship was established through a collaborative partnership among leaders from the three participating institutions: Eastside High School CTE Supervisor Mr. Justin Rogoff, Orange High School CTE Supervisor Mr. Jason Hernandez, and PCCC Chef Luis Hernandez. The Eastside team was coached by Chef Pascal Beric and Orange was coached by Chef Yasmin Mustafya.

The championship-winning team was comprised of students Katherine Mijangos, Bell Julien, Kayla Scott, Melany Fermin, Jaylin Hines, Jatzomi Antay, Lucia Romero, Sharia Cross, and Yosstin Rodriguez, whose creativity, teamwork, and culinary skills contributed to Eastside’s first-place finish. Their names will be permanently engraved on the “Dented Pot” trophy in recognition of their achievement.

Organizers from Eastside, Orange, and PCCC are already planning next year’s championship, which is expected to feature expanded menus, enhanced competition requirements, and additional participating schools.

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

#