



PATERSON BOARD OF EDUCATION

Our children, our future

THE GRADUATE



Paterson Public School District, united in our diversity and guided by a commitment to educational excellence, through community partnerships and world class instructional practices, develops our students into successful life-long learners who are globally competitive in a broad spectrum of endeavors.

Recognizing Outstanding District Parents

The Department of Family and Community Engagement's Parent

Recognition Breakfast at LaNeve's Restaurant brought together a group of highly dedicated parents from around the district. With each school delegating a local "Parent of the Year," this annual event culminates in the selection of a single, district-wide Parent of the Year. This year's winner, Ms. Janet Brieva, represents the standard for involved, active parenting. Ms. Brieva, mother of International High junior Celina Brieva, was selected based on her volunteerism, enthusiasm and dedication to being actively involved in her child's education. She works as president of the school's Parent-Teacher Organization and volunteers to assist the principal in hosting parenting events.

The October 16th event also featured

a keynote address from Paterson Councilman-at-Large, Mr. Benjie



Mr. Kemper McDowell, with Parent of the year, Janet Brieva

Photo courtesy Renee J. Lee

Wimberly. Councilman Wimberly talked to parents about his own personal story and about being a "survivor". He called

on the parents to remember the great history and resilience of Patersonians,

and challenged parents to never give up on their children. As a Paterson resident who was educated in Paterson Schools, Councilman Wimberly delivered a moving and motivational speech, calling to mind a time when neighbors worked to together and helped each other through hard times.

This year's event had over 225 attendees including principals, administrators, and teachers, as well as friends and families, all there to support the celebrated parents. Other attendees included school board commissioners, City Council members, Assemblywoman Nelli Pou, the office of Assemblywoman Elease

Evans, Superintendent Dr. Donnie Evans and Mayor Jeff Jones.



13th Annual Parent Awareness Day

The Definition of "Family"



Students performing on Parent Awareness Day

Hundreds of parents, care-givers, teachers, and administrators gathered to take part in this year's Parent Awareness Day. Under the theme, "We are Family", attendees enjoyed a wide variety of engaging

presentations and workshops.

The day began with a presentation of the flag by Eastside's JROTC followed by several amazing performances from the students of Rosa Parks, Academy of Performing Arts at School 6 and School 15. The keynote address was given by Paterson native

and a graduate of Eastside High School, Yvonne Harvey-Williams. Ms. Williams, an energetic and no-nonsense motivational speaker, delivered a message of perseverance and unconditional love. She also challenged parents to never give up on their children although at times academic and life issues may seem to be insurmountable. She discussed her own personal experiences as a mother who chose to ignore those who told her that her child would not make it. Today, with much hard work and dedication, her son is now a college graduate.

Attendees were also able to choose from several break-out sessions. Parents heard from a number of experts on parental education and guidance. These sessions included: Parents Meeting the Challenge, The Social/Emotional Curriculum for Parents, Paying and Preparing for College, "Boys to Men Strategies in Raising Young Men,

Understanding Bilingual Education, and Understanding Your Child's Individualized Education Program. Teachers attended workshops entitled "Answering the So What Question" and "The Teachable Moment." And the children took part in several activities from arts and crafts to interactive workshops on careers, gang violence and self esteem given by Keynote Stewart, an area lawyer and Officer Dalton Price of the Paterson Police Department.

This year's event was held at International High School and was a collaboration of the district's Family & Community Engagement Department, Early Childhood Department, Bilingual Department and a host of community organizations. Board of Education Commissioner Chris Irving was the day's Master of Ceremonies.



IN THIS Issue

- 1 Recognizing Outstanding District Parents
- 2 13th Annual Parent Awareness Day
- 3 Parenting: The Common Thread
- 4 Bullying: Cutting Through the Chatter
- 4 College Forum Stimulates Commitment
- 5 "I Was There"
- 5 A Message from the President
- 6 All that Glitters is not Gold
- 6 BOE Committee List
- 7 Can I Learn to Read?
- 8 BOE Meeting Schedule



Annual Parent Awareness Day
Yvonne Harvey-Williams and Reverend Randall Lassiter

Photo courtesy Renee J. Lee

Parenting: The Common Thread

One of the major concerns of our school district and the larger Paterson community has been how poorly our children test on standardized statewide exams. Judging from our



Crowd gathering for School 25 Community Forum

most recent round of NJASK tests (New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge) our performance once again did not win us any acclaim for improvement. The results show that we remain one of the lowest performing districts in the county and, indeed, the state.

But let us put this into some context. Our performance remained flat despite significant changes to our approaches at the classroom level in delivering quality instruction. We've strengthened our curriculum, increased professional training for our teachers, and made staff more responsive to community concerns. However, because we have instituted these changes, should the latest display of poor performance be dismissed as just another bad outing for the district? The answer is an emphatic no; because we have been performing at that level for far too long! What this should do is force us into

some serious exploration of why we are not making the grade.

Talking with people here in the district, both inside and outside of education, one is left with the feeling that there is a quiet surrender to the notion that we can not improve as a district. In other words, it makes no sense trying because the problems we face are insurmountable. But can we afford to embrace such a position knowing fully well what's at stake? The answer is also a resounding no, because it's our children's future and our legacy which is at stake that must be protected!

It's a given that the Superintendent is the one who usually gets the praise or blame for what happens in the educational system. This is so because he is the embodiment of the system and therefore the easiest target for all of us. However, the intent of this article is not to focus on the Superintendent, but to get us to a place where we see ourselves as part of the larger solution to the district's challenges. The problems we face have many sides, some of which are outside the scope of the Superintendent's control and that's where we need to focus. *Waiting for Superman* is not a prospect for us. Working with what we've got by way of leveraging all the various resources at our disposal is the only salvation on the horizon for us. Speaking

of resources, it should be noted that you, the parent, are an integral part of that pool. For years it has been argued that in order for us to generate real progress in our district we must have buy-in and support from our parents at all levels. This is still the position that must be maintained even now. To prove the veracity of this position we need not look beyond the boundaries of our district. Let us examine some of the higher performing schools versus some of the lower performing ones in the district and identify the common differentiating thread between them. That's right! Parental involvement.

While the need for professional development of our teachers is recognized and valued, we cannot afford to negate all of that high-priced investment with the perennial un-addressed issue of poor quality parenting. There has to be a way that



Parents listening to Dr. Evans discuss the District's Strategic Plan

we can address both issues at the same time to make these two vital parts of the whole complementary to each other.



Bullying: Cutting Through the Chatter

The anti-bullying campaign has picked up steam over the last several months. Regrettably, the national conscious only took notice of the problem after we've lost so many



Students discuss cyber-bullying during MSG Varsity Forum held at International High School

promising young lives as a result of bullying. While the recent efforts to combat the problem state-wide are commendable, much like the war on

drugs, one can not help but wonder if the latest governmental efforts are not just a front to squelch public outrage. For many who have been directly impacted and victimized by this cruel mindless act, there can be no justice because the ultimate price has already been paid. For them no proposed action by government, school administration, or apology from society can mitigate the pain they feel for what was done to their loved ones.

The sad tale of this story is that this problem has been with us for the longest time and we have allowed the gravity of its cruelty to escape our collective consciousness until now. Many can recall in their own lives how they dealt with experiences of being bullied at school or other places. It was

not until the case of Tyler Clementi, the Rutgers University student who committed suicide that we finally found a unified voice to speak publicly on the matter. Our state legislature, in reaction to a rash of bullying-initiated suicides, came out swinging with the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act. This bill is now on the Governor's desk awaiting his signature before it can become law. The question for many of us now is; will this bill by its scope help to curb the reprehensible actions of bullies, or is it just another design to punish those who may still commit these offenses?

By way of a recommendation, another look at the punitive parts of our drug laws could be re-visited and perhaps a page might be taken out of that book. What you'll find is that an over-subscription on the side of punishment by these laws has not stopped mindless people from committing unlawful acts.

(continued on page 7)

College Forum Stimulates Commitment

This September, more than 350 parents, students, and staff joined us at International High School to take part in our Community Forum on College and Careers. As a district family, we heard from various experts of the district and from Monster.com (a career network) about what parents can do in order to prepare their child for the future. We watched with amazement as the lines for registration stretched out the front door and down the stairs of the school. This event demonstrates that parents in this City are more committed than ever to the success

and progress of their children.

With that said, it is important to note that this forum cannot be the only opportunity to prepare our students for college. Our district's director of guidance has assured the Board that our high school counselors are prepared to give students a roadmap to success, beginning in your child's freshman year. Our guidance departments are also equipped with the latest technology and web-based resources to help all students prepare for college.

Presently, we are engaged in putting

together another forum for high school seniors about obtaining college scholarships. The initial thought has been to call this event "Scholarship Saturday", where students will have the guidance/direction needed to work on their scholarship essays and the opportunity to apply onsite for various scholarships. It is our hope to even award scholarships to some of our seniors. This event is a part of our continuing effort to ensure that every child in our district who wants to go to college is able to do so.



A Message from the President

Since the last issue of *The Graduate* a lot of positive things have transpired in the school district. We hosted many successful events including, but not limited to, two Board sponsored Community Forums, six Superintendent Community Forums, The Parent Awareness Day Conference, The Parent of The Year Breakfast, A District Wide College Fair with workshops for all grade levels and one with on-site admissions, as well as a host of board meetings. However, over this same period of time the district has been faced with many challenges that, thanks to your support we were able to stop them from having negative impacts on the quality of education for

our students. The most pressing of issues was the State Department of Education's spending and hiring freeze on the Paterson Public Schools District. As a result of the action taken by the state on the heels of one of the largest budget cuts in the district's history (\$81 million) left a small group of students without certain federally and state mandated educational services. However, thanks to you the parents and your tireless quest for a



Full Service Community School Ribbon Cutting

quality education that your children are entitled to and deserve, that State has granted the hiring of teachers and IA's to fill the vacant positions and restore most of these mandated services. Additionally, there were in excess of 60 teaching vacancies in special education and core academic courses required for high school graduation that needed to be filled. The district (continued on page 8)

"I Was There"

A Message from the Superintendent

In 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his celebrated "I Have a Dream" speech: "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident,



Dr. Evans at School 5

that all men are created equal.'" Yes, Dr. King spoke of dreams, but he was also the voice of hope.

As I think about this critical juncture – a unique moment in time for our school district – I find myself reflecting on Dr. King's inspiring words. I can remember hearing his speech for the first time and trying to envision the world as he described it. Could I dare to believe?

Sometimes I think that the students, parents, and teachers of our school district still struggle with daring to dream or in believing that change is possible.

But what if you were told that this is the year that Paterson Public Schools will change for the better? What will you say when our test scores improve and our students are engaged and anxious to learn more? And who will you tell when your child comes home with a plan

to go to college?

Together, through our District's Strategic Plan, we have already made significant changes throughout the district, and we will continue to make many more. We can and will bring about change, but this requires help and support from each and everyone one of you!

We have a vision to be a leader in educating New Jersey's urban youth. I believe in this vision and I hope that you do too. It is my dream that years from now you will be able to tell your children and grandchildren that the change we had all been waiting for came in 2011 – and "I was there".

Donnie W. Evans, Ed. D.

State District Superintendent



All that Glitters is not Gold

The transformation of Eastside High School is underway. The school has new leadership, new lockers and a set of industrial-strength ovens. The students have been re-packaged into three different versions of the same uniform. The building has a shiny new fence and there are revamped academies. Much of the resultant fanfare encourages people to give the new school a second look; and they have. Parents have embraced the new Eastside and are excited by the many physical changes that are being put into place. The true measure of this transformation will not however, be the paint on the walls or the new lockers. Nor will it be the flagship Culinary Arts - Hospitality/ Hotel Management program's new ovens. The true measure of Eastside's success will be revealed in how rigorous and economically relevant the school's curriculum is.

Sadly the scrutiny that many have so far afforded the school doesn't extend to the depth of the curriculum that it provides to its students. Just across the river, other districts are designing rigorous pre-engineering curricula to enhance the training of their children in response to the increasing competition from students of foreign countries in math and science. They want to inculcate in their children the problem solving skills that this kind of engineering training provides. They are not satisfied with basic core curriculum content standards. They know that the business world's needs transcend the basics. So there is a growing understanding that students must be prepared to compete increasingly with these foreign students, who are

trained to standards and in numbers that currently surpass our own.

Consequently, the Paterson Board of Education will have to look past the fresh paint and focus on what is or is not actually being taught in the building. We cannot simply be satisfied

with the crisp uniforms, precision marching and the anticipated wafting of oven fresh dinner rolls from the brand-spanking new ovens; we must also demand that science, math and yes, even engineering be mastered there as well. Regrettably, (continued on page 8)

PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT Board of Education Committee List

CURRICULUM	FISCAL	LEGAL
Theodore Best, Chair	Errol Kerr, Chair	Christopher Irving, Chair
Jonathan Hodges	Wendy Guzman	Alex Mendez
Errol Kerr	Alex Mendez	Pedro Rodriguez
Kenneth Simmons	Willa Mae Taylor	Kenneth Simmons
*Brenda Patterson	*Mark Kramer, *Frances Finkelstein	*Lauren Moloney

FACILITIES	HUMAN RESOURCES	POLICY
Jonathan Hodges, Chair	Wendy Guzman, Chair	Kenneth Simmons, Chair
Theodore Best, Jr.	Errol Kerr	Wendy Guzman
Christopher Irving	Alex Mendez	Jonathan Hodges
Alex Mendez	Willa Mae Taylor	Christopher Irving
*Donnie W. Evans, *Mark Kramer, *Christopher Sapara-Grant	*Marguerite Vanden Wyngaard	*Marguerite Vanden Wyngaard

GOVERNMENT JOINT EDUCATION	PARENT/COMMUNITY	NEW JERSEY QUALITY SINGLE ACCOUNTABILITY CONTINUUM (NJQSAC)
Theodore Best, Chair	Errol Kerr, Chair	Theodore Best, Chair
Jonathan Hodges	Wendy Guzman	Jonathan Hodges
Pedro Rodriguez	Pedro Rodriguez	Christopher Irving
Willa Mae Taylor	Theodore Best, Ex-officio	Pedro Rodriguez
*Donnie W. Evans	*William McDowell	*Brenda Patterson

LIAISON TO DISTRICT STAFFING UNITS	SCHOOL NAMING
Jonathan Hodges, Chair	Jonathan Hodges, Co-Chair
Errol Kerr	Pedro Rodriguez, Co-Chair
Pedro Rodriguez	Christopher Irving
Theodore Best, Ex-officio	Theodore Best, Ex-officio
*Marguerite Vanden Wyngaard	*Donnie W. Evans

*District Administrator/Liaison Attending

Revised: September 28, 2010

Can I Learn to Read?

At some point in the development of a child, the question usually arises; "Can I learn to read?" Usually the question surfaces after they have been read a story individually or in a group. Of course, the answer to any child asking this question should be, "Sure you can learn to read!" All children can, and should learn to read as soon as they are ready to begin the process.

Although the question usually arises somewhere between the ages of 2 to 3&1/2 years of age, often it is on their minds long before being verbalized. Being exposed to many different types of written material in all aspects of their young lives creates a natural curiosity and desire to join the ranks of readers. The progression toward reading takes place quickly and naturally for children without mental or physical challenges. But even children with special needs seek out and enjoy reading skills and are often very adept at storytelling and verbal expression. In fact, all children appear to be able to play act a story that was read or verbalized to them. The earliest indoctrination to the primitive sounding-out of individual letters, blending of letters and eventual connection to the spelling of words is essential in their development toward reading mastery.

Once the basics are in place, and connections are made mentally between letters, words and images, written language begins to make sense. "Sense" arises when the imaginary pictures and associated written words attain congruency for them and complex written ideas are understood. In the early development of a reader, aligning illustrations along with their

corresponding words is essential. This is when it all begins to "make sense".

As in most disciplines, language arts, mathematics, music, science, art and so-on, exposure is essential. Exposure to reading comes to children via their parents and caretakers when they themselves are engrossed in books, magazines, menus, directories and all other written materials. Children will naturally want to have this wondrous ability that their elders have and this curiosity can be acted upon to great advantage. It is therefore important for the caretakers to READ, READ and READ to their children. Make reading fun for children! Children who have been nourished to have a love for reading early on will have a much easier time when they eventually attend school. Studies have shown that children who read well and often, are 85% easier to employ as adults. Plan to use television and computer related activities as an extension to reading books, not just for entertainment value. Take advantage of after-school time for reading activities. Above all, make and keep reading fun!

Have children recognize that reading is essential to their understanding of all their subjects in school. Parents should reintroduce themselves to their student's various studies as well. This will help them engage their children in conversation about a day's activities at school. Help them develop and enjoy those subjects that they enjoy most and never, never tell them that you "hate" this-or-that subject. Parents who are supportive at all reading levels will have children who are successful readers and communicators.

As a community, we should come together in agreement that reading

should be among our highest priorities for our children. Wherever and whenever we can we must do what we can to help our children read and write to the best of their abilities. Let's shout from the highest hilltop and use every possible medium to express the notion that our children must learn to be good readers! Let's do this... our future generations depend on it!



Bullying: Cutting Through the Chatter

(continued from page 4)

This may be a matter of how some individuals are wired. What needs to be done is a vigorous campaign against bullying, which of course is going to cost more than three days of chatter by the legislators and the resultant inking of that chatter into law by the Governor. It is going to take money and the concerted efforts of all and sundry to rid the state and country of this evil practice.

According to Sharon Seyler, legislative coordinator of the (NJSBA) New Jersey School Board Association, in her testimony of support for the bill to the legislators she said, "The bill would protect students from harassment that would substantially interfere with their education." While many hope so, how will this be achieved if what we are getting in this legislation is another round of unfunded mandates from the state? What would help is the state leading the charge by mandating that anti-bullying practices be taught at every level of every school in New Jersey.



A Message from the President

(continued from page 5)

has recently posted for many of these openings, and we hope to have these teachers in the classrooms after winter break. But we continue to have a void in several areas including guidance counselors, art and music teachers, and librarians. Again your advocacy remains crucial moving forward as we urge the state to release the \$12.8 million in federal funding to restore these much needed teachers and educators.

Without question the biggest news has come with the release of the district's long anticipated NJ Quality Single Accountability Continuum (QSAC) scores. The NJ QSAC is an ongoing evaluation system that grades district performance in a detailed checklist of more than 100 indicators in five areas: governance, fiscal management, personnel, instruction and operations. In our most recent review conducted by Passaic County Executive Superintendent Robert Gilmartin, Paterson scored above 80 (the score needed to return local control) for the first time in three areas, including governance, operations, and personnel. This marks a major change from our first evaluation in 2007, when Paterson scored only 11 percent in the governance category.

The scores means that Paterson has proven itself able and capable and is one step closer to local control ending the state's 20 year occupation over our schools. In the next issue of *The Graduate* I will detail the subsequent steps in the ongoing QSAC process and what we can expect to see under local control. As always stay informed and involved, and together we will bring

positive change to Paterson for all of our children.

Theodore "T.J." Best, Jr.

President, Paterson Board of Education



All that Glitters is not Gold

(continued from page 6)

we have to additionally challenge the administration to plan more carefully and more comprehensively, indeed, augment the flash with some quality. Most importantly, we must raise the

expectations of this community, while getting it to look beyond the superficial gleam of the glitter sprayed over this latest attempted retrofit. We must demand, along with the bright new student uniforms and staff additions, the segmented building and enhanced security, that an education of substance be developed as well. When we succeed in this, then, and only then, will the glow we see will be the shimmering dawn of an educational excellence whose time here has finally arrived.



Board of Education Meeting Schedule

Dates and times are subject to change
Please check our website for latest information

August 4, 2010	Workshop	90 Delaware Ave.
August 18, 2010	Regular	John F. Kennedy High School
September 1, 2010	Workshop	90 Delaware Ave.
September 15, 2010	Regular	John F. Kennedy High School
October 6, 2010	Workshop	90 Delaware Ave.
October 20, 2010	Regular	John F. Kennedy High School
November 3, 2010	Workshop	90 Delaware Ave.
November 10, 2010	Regular	John F. Kennedy High School
December 1, 2010	Workshop	90 Delaware Ave.
December 15, 2010	Regular	John F. Kennedy High School
January 5, 2011	Workshop	90 Delaware Ave.
January 19, 2011	Regular	John F. Kennedy High School
February 2, 2011	Workshop	90 Delaware Ave.
February 16, 2011	Regular	John F. Kennedy High School
March 2, 2011	Workshop	90 Delaware Ave.
March 16, 2011	Regular	John F. Kennedy High School
April 6, 2011	Workshop	90 Delaware Ave.
April 20, 2011	Regular	John F. Kennedy High School
May 11, 2011*	Organization	John F. Kennedy High School
June 1, 2011	Workshop	90 Delaware Ave.
June 15, 2011	Regular	John F. Kennedy High School

Time and Location:

Workshop Meetings – 6:00 p.m. Formal action may be taken if deemed necessary by the State District Superintendent

Regular Meetings – 7:00 p.m. Formal action will be taken

*Organization Meeting – 6:30 p.m. Formal action will be taken