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DISTRICT OFFICIALS PRESENT DATA FROM STATE ASSESSMENTS, OTHER STANDARDIZED TESTS

Numerous supports for students and staff have been launched to resume district's pre-pandemic success

PATERSON – The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on student learning throughout the country, and Paterson Public Schools has been no exception, according to testing data presented by district officials at tonight's Board of Education meeting. But numerous initiatives have been launched to help students and staff resume the district's pre-pandemic success in student achievement.

“Prior to March 2020, when our school buildings had to close due to the pandemic, Paterson Public Schools had established upward trends in the number of students reading at or above grade level, earning college credit eligibility on Advanced Placement exams, and meeting expectations on state assessments,” said Superintendent of Schools Eileen F. Shafer. “The national studies that were highlighted in tonight's presentation show that the pandemic shutdown negatively impacted students throughout the nation, and even more so in districts like ours. The good news is that for more than a year we have had intervention measures in place to help students recover from the pandemic's impact on their learning, and we have been providing our teaching staff with professional development support, as well. The success of these measures will depend on how well all of us – staff, administrators, and parents – work together.”

Assistant Superintendent Joanna Tsimpedes along with her team delivered a presentation that include the following data from the 2022 N.J. Student Learning Assessments (NJSLA), which were administered in Spring 2022 after they had been canceled in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic shutdown. The NJSLA measures how well students meet state learning standards in English Language Arts (ELA), for students in grades 3 through 9, mathematics for students in grades 3 through 8, and Grade 9 students taking Algebra 1, Algebra 2, or Geometry, and science, for students in grades 5, 8, and 11.

In the 2019 NJSLA for ELA, the district's students in five of the seven grade levels tested showed increases in the number of students meeting or exceeding expectations from the year before. This year, after the pandemic shutdown, only one grade showed an increase in students meeting or exceeding expectations from 2019.

In the 2019 NJSLA for math, the district's students in three of the seven grade levels tested showed increases in the number of students meeting or exceeding expectations from the year before. This year, after the pandemic shutdown, only one grade – Grade 9 students taking high school geometry – showed an increase in students meeting or exceeding expectations from 2019.

Data presented on the district's students who took the NJSLA for science showed that the number of fifth-graders who met or exceeded expectations had decreased by 2 percent, the number of eighth-graders who met or exceeded expectations had decreased by 0.5 percent, and the number of eleventh-graders who met or exceeded expectations had decreased by 2 percent.

Prior to the pandemic, the district had achieved a sharply growing trend in the number of students scoring 3 or higher on Advanced Placement (AP) exams, the score often used as a requirement for colleges to award college credit for a particular course. In 2018, the district had 43 students who had earned a 3 or higher on AP exams. A year later, the number doubled to 86. [In 2020, the number more than doubled to 183.](#) Since the start of the pandemic shutdown, the numbers have dropped to 31 in 2021 and 61 in 2022.

Tsimpedes' presentation also included information about the measures the district has taken to help staff resume their pre-pandemic levels of success. Those measures include professional development in digital leadership, social-emotional learning, and training for teachers on utilizing data to adjust pacing and meet instructional needs during the 2021-2022 school year.

Supportive measures for students were also highlighted and they include:

- A Summer Enrichment Program for students in grades K through 8
- A Saturday STEAM Academy for students in grades K through 8
- Tutor.com, which provides 24/7 access to live tutors to support over 300 courses for all high school students.
- An After-School Program for students in grades K through 8 during the 2021-2022 school year and grades 2 through 8 during the 2022-2023 school year.

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