



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ELEVEN DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ACCEPTED INTO PRIVATE PREP’S “LEARN TO THRIVE” SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Program will help students prepare for and navigate the college admissions process

Photo caption below

PATERSON – Eleven college-bound students were honored at City Hall today for being accepted into Private Prep’s “Learn To Thrive” Scholarship program, which will provide them will resources, tutoring, and coaching for the college admissions process.

Among the requirements for the program are a strong desire to go to a four-year college or university and a minimum unweighted 3.5-grade point average. The eleven students accepted into the program are:

- Leonna Morris, Paterson STEAM High School
- Effie Purisima Ocampo, Paterson STEAM High School
- Amelia Griffiths, Paterson STEAM High School
- Evelyn Hernandez - International High School
- Kemya Beltran - International High School
- Nairenny Jimenez - International High School
- Rashel Medina - Rosa L. Parks High School
- Diamond Anderson - Rosa L. Parks High School
- Dayanara Menendez - Rosa L. Parks High School
- Ab-i-Shai Landle - Eastside High School
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“Each of these students has been putting their best efforts into achieving their dreams of attending college. The Private Prep program recognizes that hard work and is designed to bolster their opportunities,” said Superintendent of Schools Eileen Shafer. “I congratulate all of them for this achievement and wish them luck as they complete the college admissions process. I want to thank the district’s Director of Guidance Tamisha McKoy and everyone at Private Prep for their dedication to our student’s needs and dreams”

“Preparing for college entrance exams and navigating the overall college admissions process is complex and confusing for anyone,” said Paterson First Lady Farhanna B. Sayegh, the Paterson point-person for the Private Prep program. “Many of our students are the first generation to go through this process, and the cost is prohibitive for most of our families in Paterson. The families

in of the surrounding affluent neighborhoods pay thousands to prepare their students for college admission preparation - leaving our students at a disadvantage. When we talk about equity, it's not just about providing any SAT prep or any college admissions service, but by providing elevated resources to reach equal outcomes. This what this program in Private Prep does for Patersonian families. It's important that we provide them with the tools and confidence to put their best foot forward. We know that stellar test prep and college admissions coaching can be a game changer for many of our star students. Winning this scholarship is the first step, now the dedication has to happen.”

Sayegh said that typically, students who are accepted into the Private Prep program are invited, with their parents, to the Paterson Mayor's Office.

“We congratulate them on a wonderful academic career thus far and encourage them to keep up the great work,” she said. “We also want our student recipients to fully grasp how important this is.”

The Private Prep “Learn to Thrive” Scholarship Program empowers students from backgrounds that have been traditionally underrepresented in higher education. Its goal is to combat the systemic inequities, particularly race-based inequities, of the American education institution by helping our students develop and employ skills that will allow them to create greater opportunities for their futures.

The program provides test prep for the SAT or ACT that includes one-on-one tutoring for up to six months, materials for independent work, proctored practice test and analysis of results. It also provides comprehensive one-on-one college admissions counseling that includes helping the students choose where to apply, write their college essay, and navigate the admissions process.

All services are provided one-on-one, in-person and online. Private Prep tutors and coaches meet with students according to what is convenient for their schedules. For test prep tutoring, tutors meet with students weekly for 90-minute sessions. For writing college essays and completing college applications, Private Prep coaches meet frequently with students and provide written feedback. For more information, <https://privateprep.com/>

Background

As Paterson First Lady Sayegh tells it, the Private Prep story begins with Paterson native and *Real Housewives of New Jersey* star, Dolores Catania. “She’s a great friend and always thinking about how she can give back,” said Sayegh. Catania connected Sayegh with Jessica Gorlin, who runs Private Prep’s New Jersey program. Since making that connection, Sayegh has been actively working to raise public awareness of Private Prep’s opportunities for students, contacting high schools and driving awareness through social media. She also credits Superintendent Shafer and Deputy Superintendent Susana Perón with supporting her efforts.

PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Photo 1: (L-R) Private Prep Director Jillian Korn, Dolores Catania, Nairenny Jimenez, Mayor Andre Sayegh, Evelyn Hernandez, Kemya Beltran, Diamond Anderson, First Lady Farhanna Sayegh, and Private Prep NJ Partner Jessica Gorlin

Photo2: (L-R) Rashel Medina, Mayor Andre Sayegh, Dayanara Menendez, First Lady Farhanna Sayegh, Private Prep NJ Partner Jessica Gorlin, and Private Prep Director Jillian Korn.

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