

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS READY TO OPEN
New Attendance Campaign (#PPShowUp!)
Addresses Chronic Absenteeism

PATERSON, New Jersey August 23, 2017— The Paterson Public School District released its “Readiness to Open Schools Report” at tonight’s Board of Education meeting. The report outlines key operational and instructional activities that have been completed (or are near completion) that will enable a smooth opening for the State’s second largest school district. Additionally, in its efforts to address chronic absenteeism, the district announced the launch of an “Attendance Matters” campaign targeted to all Paterson children – from pre-k to grade 12.

“It has been a very busy and productive summer; and I am confident that this district is ready to start the new school year off on a positive note,” said Eileen Shafer, Acting Superintendent. “I want to assure this community that I am fully committed to the academic success, and the health and safety of the 28,000 children under our care each and every day; and we will continue to move this district forward toward the return of local control.”

School Opening Highlights Include:

- The district has been actively hiring to replace vacancies and currently has only 12 teacher vacancies to fill (not including late resignations or retirements and any new hires that will result from the recent \$4.3 million additional funding);
- Every school will have a school nurse and the district has added 15 additional security guards;
- The Facilities team has been working diligently to successfully relocate Great Falls, Newcomers and the Young Men’s Academy to different school buildings. Additionally, district-wide water testing has been completed; and remediation for nine water outlets will be completed prior to the start of school;
- Central Registration has extended its hours to handle its busiest time of year. Evening hours are available through September 14th. Families registering kindergarten children or who are new to the district need to call 973-321-2501 for an appointment.

**The full “Readiness to Opens Schools Report” and a Central Registration flyer are available by visiting – http://www.paterson.k12.nj.us/11_parents/parents.php*

Addressing Chronic Absenteeism

Paterson’s new “Attendance Matters” campaign – which will include social media promotion (#PPShowUp) and banners placed in all City Wards – is designed to remind families that when a

child misses one school day, he or she misses 7 hours of instruction; miss a full week and that's 28 hours that are not easily made up. The district has also put together a comprehensive plan to target students who are chronically absent (miss 10% or more days). Superintendent Shafer noted, "It's imperative that we change the mindset of our families so that they understand that children, no matter what age, must come to school. We are working hard to address any perceived barriers because ensuring a quality education for every child is our most important work. But that begins with showing up!"

Paterson opens its doors on Tuesday, September 5th for staff and Thursday, September 7th for students. To learn more about Superintendent Shafer's plans for the upcoming school year, please visit the district website on Wednesday, September 6th for a special video message – www.paterson.k12.nj.us .

About Paterson Public Schools

Paterson Public Schools is the second largest school district in New Jersey with over 28,000 students from pre-k through grade 12. The district's mission is to prepare all children for college and career...together we can!

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