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DISTRICT, LOCAL OFFICIALS OPEN JOHN F. KENNEDY EDUCATIONAL COMPLEX AS NEW JERSEY’S FIRST FEDERALLY-FUNDED FULL SERVICE COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

Laundry facilities, medical clinic, counseling center among the new available services

PATERN – Superintendent of Schools Eileen F. Shafer joined with many other local officials and community leaders today to open the John F. Kennedy Educational Complex as New Jersey’s first federally-funded Full Service Community High School.

“The Full Service Community Schools model comes down to a very simple idea: we will help you get what you need to succeed,” Shafer said. “As a public school district, we know that we cannot simply turn our backs on students and families in need. At the same time, we know that we cannot meet all of the different needs alone. That is why the opening of the John F. Kennedy Educational Complex as New Jersey’s first federally-funded Full Service Community High School is the epitome of my slogan, ‘Together We Can.’ To have a facility that goes above and beyond in meeting student and family needs, it truly does take a village.”

In September 2018, the Paterson Public School District was awarded a $2.5 million grant to start two new Full Service Community Schools, one of which was the John F. Kennedy Education Complex.

A Full Service Community School’s services can include in-school health clinics, in-school academic assistance; afterschool and summer programs, programs to support students’ transition to elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education; internship opportunities for high school students; career pathways exploration program; chronic absenteeism mentorship; anti-bullying/violence prevention; Restorative Justice; family nights; parent workshops; adult education programs such as ESL and workforce development; and access to social services.

Every Full Service Community School has a partnering lead agency. The John F. Kennedy Educational Complex’s partnering lead agency is the New Jersey Community Development Corporation (NJCDC), a Paterson nonprofit organization led by Robert Guarasci.

Health care and behavioral health services are provided in the school building through Health N Wellness, LLC, which is led by Denise Hajjar.

The St. Paul’s Community Development Corporation, led by Richard Williams, provides food pantry services.
Academic support services for students are provided through the efforts of Dr. George Abaunza, Dean of the Felician University School of Arts and Sciences.

At a news conference today, Superintendent Shafer acknowledged the efforts of the district’s administrators who oversee the district’s Full Service Community Schools including Deputy Superintendent Susana Peron, Kemper McDowell, executive director of Family and Community Engagement and Full Service Community Schools Department; Gilman Choudhury, supervisor of Full Service Outreach and Special Projects in the Family and Community Engagement and Full Service Community Schools Department, and Full Service Community Schools Director Jenna Goodreau.

Among those who participated in today’s news conference were U.S. Rep. Bill Pascrell, Jr. (D-NJ-9) and Paterson Mayor Andre Sayegh. The news conference was followed by a tour of all of the areas in the school building where services are provided.

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