FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS KEEPS STUDENTS, PARENTS AND STAFF INFORMED OF COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS, PREPARATIONS FOR SCHOOL CLOSURES

PATERSON – Since COVID-19, the novel coronavirus, began to spread in parts of the United States, the Paterson Public School District has been proactively keeping staff, students and parents informed of how everyone can take precautions to protect themselves against the virus, and what the district is doing with regard to the possibility of the virus causing our schools to close.

What follows is a review of district actions with regard to COVID-19.

March 4:

The Communications Department added a COVID-19 page to the Paterson Public Schools website. The page provides daily updates on the district’s actions regarding COVID-19, videos and other resources about precautions against COVID-19, and links to resources from the centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the New Jersey Health Department, and the Paterson Health Department. The webpage is updated daily.

Superintendent Shafer issued a letter to district families and staff informing them of precautions that can be taken against COVID-19, informing them of the creation of the COVID-19 webpage, and updating them on actions the Facilities Department is taking in response to the threat of COVID-19. The letter was distributed in English, Spanish, Arabic, and Bengali.

March 5:

Superintendent Shafer recorded and broadcasted a robocall to all district staff and families updating them on the district's actions regarding COVID-19.

March 9:

The Superintendent communicated with parents/guardians via robocall informing them of what the district is doing with regards to COVID-19.

District launched an Information Call Center to receive questions from families and staff about district matters related to the virus. The Information Call Center is able to receive questions in four languages on four separate phone lines, which are as follows: for English, (973) 321-0609, for Arabic, call (973) 321-0610, for Spanish, call (973) 321-0611, for Bengali, call (973) 321-0612. Callers record their questions at the call center and within 24 hours receive a district response. District staff will check messages regularly Monday through Friday. The phone numbers have been posted to the district’s website and social media accounts.

March 10:
A principals meeting was held to discuss the academic plan for health-related closure and district preventive measures.

**PPS Families Home Technology Survey** was created and distributed to district families to determine technology and internet accessibility.

**March 11:**

A district steering committee and task force were created and met to discuss plans of action on prevention and preparedness.

Superintendent Shafer’s video messages to students, staff, and parents were produced and distributed via the district website.

A robocall was broadcasted informing families of a 1 p.m. student dismissal on Friday, March 13, to allow staff to plan lessons to be used in case of school closings.

**March 12:**

District administrators completed the “Paterson Public Schools Health related Closure Preparedness Plan,” and submit it to Passaic County Superintendent Carlos Rodriguez.

A robocall was broadcasted informing families of a 1 p.m. student dismissal on Friday, March 13, to allow staff to plan lessons to be used in case of school closings.

**March 13:**

Students will be dismissed at 1 p.m. to allow teachers to work on lessons and instructional packets to keep instruction moving forward in the event that schools close due to the virus.

A plan for food distribution is scheduled to be finalized today.

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