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NJDOE RECOGNIZES PATERNSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS’ BILINGUAL MAGNET SCHOOLS AS OUTSTANDING MODEL PROGRAM FOR SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Programs at three district schools earn state recognition that is given once every two years

PATERSON – Superintendent of Schools Eileen F. Shafer announced today that the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) has chosen Paterson Public Schools’ bilingual magnet schools as a 2020-2022 recipient of the New Jersey Second Language Learning Regional Model Programs Initiative. The district schools that received the honor are Public Schools No. 8, 16 and 21. The NJDOE grants this recognition once every two years.

“We greatly appreciate the state’s recognition of the fine bilingual magnet program that we have instituted here in Paterson Public Schools,” said Shafer. “At the heart of public education lies the belief that every student who comes to the district must be educated, and deserves to be educated. That means the district must accommodate students’ needs, including their linguistic needs. I want to commend all of the teachers, principals and administrators who have built the success of our bilingual magnet program by putting their students’ needs first. Nobody enters this work to be recognized by state education authorities, but it sure is nice when it happens. Congratulations to our educators and thank you to everyone at the state Department of Education.”

As a state-designated model program, Paterson Public Schools’ bilingual magnet program will serve as a resource center for other school districts in New Jersey. Educators from throughout the state will be able to witness the district’s exemplary second language practices for English language learners. Administrators and teachers will be able to discuss matters of mutual concern and explore the potential for collaboration on curriculum development and professional development initiatives.

In addition to the superintendent, the district officials who oversee the bilingual magnet program are Deputy Superintendent of Schools Susana Perón, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Sandra Diodonet, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Cicely Warren, Assistant Superintendent of Academic Services/Special Programs Joanna Tsimpedes and Director of Bilingual/ESL/World Languages Lourdes Garcia.

The principals are Sham Bacchus at Public School No. 8, JoAnne Riviello at Public School No. 21, and Nancy Tavarez-Correa at Public School No. 16.
Some of the distinctive work that has been done by the district’s bilingual magnet program teachers includes the following:

- In January, three teachers at School 8 – Martha Cruz, Ivette Soto and Anibal Cintron – led a team of bilingual students to win the state finals of Samsung’s national STEM contest, “Solve For Tomorrow.” The contest had more than 2,000 applicants.

- In September, the New Jersey School Boards Association honored School 21 ESL teacher Jason Velante with their “School Leader Award” for his lesson that started with giving his students a writing prompt: Why I Came to America? His students’ immigration stories were soon published and circulated through the Paterson Free Public Library and the Wanaque Library. They have also been exhibited at the Paterson Museum, and they have received a special commendation from the Paterson Board of Education.

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