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LAUNDRY FACILITIES AT KENNEDY HIGH SCHOOL PART OF SCHOOL’S FULL SERVICE COMMUNITY MISSION

Two washers, two dryers part of efforts to combat chronic absenteeism

PATERNSON – Adolescence is a life stage when personal appearance becomes a greater priority. When a teenager doesn’t have clean clothes, it’s a problem that can keep a high school student from coming to school. But now, students at the John F. Kennedy Educational Complex have an alternative to sitting out school days thanks to two washers and two dryers that have been installed at the school and made available for students to use.

The washers and dryers were made available to students through a federal grant that was awarded to the districts in 2018. The $2.5 million Full Service Community Schools (FSCS) grant from the U.S. Department of Education was awarded for programs at the John F. Kennedy Educational Complex and Public School No. 2.

“When a needs assessment indicated that more students would come to school more consistently if they simply had an easier and more economical way to clean their clothes, we knew what we had to do,” said Superintendent of Schools Eileen F. Shafer. “I’m thankful that we had the federal resources and a great partnership with our cooperating agency to get the job done.”

“We are glad to make these laundry facilities available to help make life a little bit easier for our students,” said John F. Kennedy Educational Complex Principal of Operations Michael Hill. “That is really the basis of what makes us a Full Service Community School. We do everything we can to meet the needs of our students so that they can succeed in school.”

“The laundry room at the John F. Kennedy Educational Complex is set up to be almost like a laundromat, with folding areas and lockers to store their laundry during the school day” said Nicole Sweeney, who works for the New Jersey Community Development Corporation (NJCDC) and has been the FSCS site coordinator since April 1. “The students’ use of the facilities indicates that we are fulfilling a need for our students, and that makes it easier for them to attend school.”

Students can use the laundry facilities to wash and dry school uniforms and undergarments by making an appointment between 3:15 p.m. and 5:15 p.m., Monday through Friday. Four appointments are available per day with up to 60 minutes allotted per appointment. Students do not pay for detergent or any other laundry necessities.

Programs and services provided by Full Service Community Schools include: in-school health clinic with medical, dental and mental health services; in-school academic assistance; afterschool and summer programs inclusive of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and performing and
visual arts; programs to support our 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.

In addition to the NJCDC, Paterson Public Schools maintains FSCS full partnerships with several community groups including the Paterson Education Fund, Oasis - A Haven for Women and Children, El Mundo de Colores Child Care Center, Health N Wellness Services, Inc., and Felician University.

Paterson Public Schools has a total of seven FSCS schools. The others are Public School No. 5, the Senator Frank L. Lautenberg School (Public School No. 6), Public School No. 15, the New Roberto Clemente School, and the Dr. Frank Napier School of Technology.

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