

Paterson

EDUCATION

Fund Report

March 23, 2011

The Paterson Education Fund (PEF) is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to stimulate community action for change so that the Paterson Public Schools ensure that all Paterson children achieve high standards.

Our Goals

To build our community's civic capacity to support monitor and advocate education reform.

To educate and enable community leadership to understand and act on changing educational needs.

To provide a forum for the community to effectively participate in the decision making processes concerning education

Paterson Education Fund is a member of the Public Education Network (PEN), founded in 1991. The mission of PEN is to build public demand and mobilize resources for quality education for all children through a national constituency of local education funds and individuals. The Paterson Education Fund is a founding member.

*Paterson Education Fund
152 Market Street Suite 208
Paterson, NJ 07505
973-881-8914 voice
973-881-8059 Fax*

www.paterson-education.org

Public involvement. Public education. Public benefit.

An Educated Voter's Guide to Paterson's School Board Elections:

So Very Close to Local Control: Who Can Move Us Forward?

Our community is very clear; we want to have local control of our schools. The current board has moved us close to local control, as we wait for the State to affirm our QSAC ratings for 2011. How the board moves forward depends upon your vote on April 27.

Our Board of Education members must carry out their duties faithfully within the law. Each time they don't, Paterson takes a step backwards. In order to receive local control, our board members must report their finances, participate in training, follow the standards for ethical behavior and adopt policies that improve student achievement.

Much of that work is done behind the scenes in committees. In the committees, board members meet with key staff members. They learn about the policies and challenges in much more detail that we see in televised meetings. Unfortunately, our board members have very uneven records of participation. Please see page 4 for more detail.

Additionally, the School Board members we elect must work collaboratively with our new State Superintendent and the current members of the Board: Christopher Irving, Errol Kerr, Alex Mendez, Pedro Rodriguez, Kenneth Simmons and Willa Mae Taylor .

Candidates for 3 three years term include incumbents: Wendy Guzman and Dr. Jonathan Hodges; as well as newcomers: Arleen Barcenas, Chrystal Cleaves and Ramon Pagan.

Vote on April 27th as if our children's futures depend on it, because they do!

Paterson School Board Candidates 2011

The following information was provided by the candidates. Where there is no information, the candidate did not respond. PEF has not verified the information but publishes it as a public service.
Address questions directly to the candidates or to Irene Sterling, PEF at 973-881-8914.

Candidates for a 3 year term [2011-2014]. Choose 3.

Arleen Barcenas, 338 East 29th Street, Home phone: 201-463-3353. Email: Arleen4paterson@gmail.com



Employment: OJT Specialist, Passaic County One Stop Career Center. Length of residence in Paterson: Lifelong. Education: B.S. Administration of Justice, Rutgers University. Family: Immediate family resides in Paterson. Past and Current Involvement in the Paterson Public Schools: Product of the entire Paterson School system and proud graduate of Rosa Parks High School. Civic Involvement: Member of both local and statewide women and civic organizations, also have directed many voter outreach awareness programs both statewide and locally. Active in local municipal committees. Number of Board meeting attended in the last six months: 4 (four). Three major issues: Our Paterson curriculum needs much continued attention so our children can continue to excel and graduate at higher rates. Through collective community effort and with increased parental involvement, we must continue to bring back excellent academic standards starting

from early childhood education while carrying all students into their high schools years until they successfully graduate. Our students should all equally inherit the essential tools to move up in this global competitive world, pursue their dreams through higher education and their career path of choice. Our classrooms need to reflect that these fundamental tools are being provided through updated textbooks, state of the art equipment and technology; while bringing back music and arts into our core curriculum. We're facing critical times with looming school budget cuts. However, we must be fiscally responsible for what is being allocated while at the same time not sacrificing the future and education of our children.

Chrystal Cleaves, 812 East 24th Street. Home phone: 973-742-0744. Email: chrystal4paterson@gmail.com.



Employment: Length of residence in Paterson: 46 years. Education: B.S. Business Administration from Voorhees College, Denmark, S.C. Family: Theresa and Laymon Cleaves (parents), Rhonda Cleaves-Thompson, Penny and Laymon Cleaves (siblings), Ivy Cleaves-Clarke (daughter), Kenadie Clarke (granddaughter), Chandelle J. Clarke (son-in-law). Past and Current Involvement in the Paterson Public Schools: ONTRACK tutorial program hld at public school #6. Ivy Reading AKAdemy held at Paterson Urban School for Leadership. Literacy for Lads reading program for boys 3rd thru 8th grades. Elementary education from Public School #6, School #24 Graduate class of 1979. Civic Involvements: Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. (PiXi Omega Chapter-Passaic County-Past President). Number of Board meetings attended in the last 6 months: 3(three). Three major issues: 1. Student Achievement: Our children have what it takes to be great academic achievers. Preparing our students through the use of differentiated instruction and

assessing their performance, can address their individual needs of learning. We need to provide afterschool programs that are accountable and can show results. 2. Creating a Safe Environment for learning and teaching: Everyone that walks into our school buildings ought to feel safe and secure. Old out-dated buildings and over crowded schools and classrooms, give off negative energy. It is difficult for anyone to teach or be taught in this type of atmosphere. 3. Community and School involvement: All members of the community need to come together in support of educating and encouraging our students. It is crucial that the parents and the community engage together in making this academic journey successful for our students.

Wendy Guzman, 11 Pennington Street. Home phone: 973-851-0766. Email: wendy@wendyguzman.com



Employment: Senior Bilingual Clerk of the Training Division at Paterson Fire Department. Length of residence in Paterson: Born and Raised in Paterson; 29 years. Education: Public Schools #21 & #15; Passaic County Technical Institute; Bergen Community College and Ramapo College.. Family: Married with 1 (one) daughter . Past and Current Involvement in the Paterson Public Schools: My daughter is enrolled in pre-school & I make sure I attend all of the events & meetings held at her school; Commissioner on the Paterson Board of Education for the past 3 years; currently the Vice-President on the board. Served as part of Superintendent Search Committee, 2008; served on multiple sub-committees of the board of education: NJQSAC Committee, Parental Involvement Committee, Legal Committee, Policy Committee, Fiscal Committee and Personnel Committee. Civic Involvements: Sociedad Pro-Desarrollo de Ranchete, DOPOR (Dominican Political

Representation), NALEO (National American Latino Elected Officials), DAEOCNJ (Dominican-American Elected Officials Caucus of NJ), Silk City Women's Club, and Paterson Scholarship Fund. Number of Board meeting attended in the last six months: I have attended every workshop and regular meeting. Three major issues: (1) Increase Graduation Rates. This district is graduating less than 60% of the students that enter high school their freshman year and that is unacceptable. Our children are our future. They are talented and we need to help and guide them towards the right direction and not loose them to the streets. (2) We need to increase academic standards on Early Childhood Education. Our children graduating from 8th grade are reading 3 and 4 years BEHIND their grade level. The way to change that is to place more academic rigor on early childhood since it's the age and grade level where our children absorb most of their learning. (3) Increase Parental Involvement is a KEY factor needed in our district. Education begins at home and parents need to get more involved with what is happening in our children's schools in order to be able to assist their children with the help they need.

Jonathan Hodges, 32 Overlook Avenue. Home phone: 973-333-5182. Employment: Emergency Room



Physician (11) years: semi-retired. Length of residence in Paterson: 23 years. Education: High School graduate, bachelors degree in biology, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Doctor of Medicine: Wake Forest University, Residency in the Specialty of Family Practice: St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center. Past and Current Involvement in the Paterson Public schools: Guest lecturer, Community member of school Management Team, Long Range Facilities committee, School Board member (9 years), School Board President twice, Chair of Facilities committee (currently) Editor of initial Board Newsletter (The Graduate). Civic Involvements: YMCA Board Member; St. Paul's CDC Board Member; Former PEF Board Member; Former member of the Editorial Board of the Herald News; Former Herald News' Cityscape's Blogger; Former Columnist for Urban News; Columnist for the Passaic County Pulse; Producer and creator of

the Urban Blackboard TV program; Democratic County Committee (current). Number of Board meeting attended in the last six months: ALL of them. Three major issues: 1. Declining academic performance: The most important issue facing the school board as it struggles to throw off the yoke of state control, is the academic performance of Paterson's children. More rigor must be imparted to the curriculum and greater attention must be direct to making our children more effective students. 2. Restructuring of our schools: A new philosophical approach needs to be defined and implemented. Our elementary schools, especially the more challenged ones, need to institute a different educational system, one that supports academic success and challenges students early and ensures that they do not progress in grade without the requisite skills. 3. Upgrading Facilities: The district has to develop a comprehensive plan that addresses the very significant facility issues we face, irrespective of what the SDA is prepared to do. That means crafting innovative approaches that may stretch the bounds of what is currently deemed permissible.

Ramon A. Pagan, 139 East 31st Street. Home Phone: 973-523-2912. Work Phone: 973-930-6347. Email:



mpagan@verizon.net. Employment: Toufayan Bakeries, Inc. Executive Account Manager. Length of residence in Paterson: 22 years. Education: Associate Degree- Sociology- Passaic County Community College. Family: Candida Grullon (wife) Lorraine, Leslie, Nomar. Civic Involvements: Paterson Baseball League Association, Inc., Happy Children Foundation, Inc. Number of Board meetings attended in the last six months: 4. Three major issues: 1. Student's dropout has been a challenge for many years for Paterson School District, and has been even more difficult to eradicate when our District has been under State control since 1991. This practice, encourage juvenile delinquency in our city, being the majority of the crimes committed by youngsters, which ages range between 11 to 17 years old and at some point have deserted from the school system. Furthermore, if we have a city with higher crime incidence, we are obligated to have a greater public safety body, and therefore a higher budget and higher taxes to cover the spillovers of school desertion. 2. Uniform policy should be implemented in the district to keep

our children safe and help Patersonian families, which income per capita is about \$14,000.00 a year, to save some money on the yearly basis. 3. Local Control should be returned to Paterson School District, if we want to attain our academic goals.

Paterson Board of Education Members 2010-2011 Attendance

Attendance record for -workshop meetings, - special meetings and - regular meetings, May – Jan

Attendance and [lateness] is taken from official Board of Education minutes at <http://www.paterson.k12.nj.us/board/board-index.html>

Term ends 2011	Regular 8	Work shop-8	Special 9	Term ends 2013	Regular 8	Workshop 8	Special 9
Theodore Best	8 [L:0]	8 [L:0]	9 [L:0]	Christopher Irving	8 [L: 2]	7 [L:1]	8 [L: 1]
Wendy Guzman	8 [L:2]	8 [L:2]	8 [L:3]	Alex Mendez	8 [L:2]	8 [L: 3]	8 [L:2]
Jonathan Hodges	8 [L:3]	8 [L:1]	9 [L:2]	Kenneth Simmons	6 [L: 0]	5 [L: 1]	7 [L: 2]
Term ends 2012				Lateness has become a concern. L: number indicates the number of latenesses for each category of meetings. Members who are late can delay having a quorum to conduct business.			
Errol Kerr	8 [L:1]	8 [L:7]	7 [L:2]				
Pedro Rodriguez	8 [L: 2]	7 [L:6]	6 [L:4]				
Willa Mae Taylor	8 [L: 3]	7 [L: 1]	7 [L:2]				

Some Words About Committee Meetings

Committee meetings is the place where board members get the details of the actions proposed by the Superintendent by meeting with key staff. Attendance is taken from official Board of Education minutes at <http://www.paterson.k12.nj.us/board/board-index.html>

Number of meetings	Chair	Committee members		
Curriculum [8]	T. Best - 6	J. Hodges - 8	E. Kerr - 4	K. Simmons - 1
Fiscal [5]	E. Kerr - 5	W. Guzman - 4	A. Mendez - 2	W. Taylor -4
Legal [1]	C. Irving -1	A. Mendez - 1	P. Rodriguez -1	K. Simmons -1
Facilities [6]	J. Hodges - 6	T. Best - 4	C. Irving -0	A. Mendez - 3
Personnel [7]	W. Guzman - 6	E. Kerr - 2	A. Mendez - 7	W. Taylor -4
Policy [4]	K. Simmons - 4	W. Guzman - 3	J. Hodges - 3	C. Irving -3

Paterson Public Schools Budget: Making Do without \$54 million

It's budget time for schools across the country. Schools face higher demands and reduced support. And the news in Paterson isn't any better. While our budget increased by \$14 million, its buying power is less. For example, we will lose 250 staff members next year. It's not just the jobs that matter. It's what doesn't happen for our children.

The impact on our children will be considerable: larger class sizes, fewer electives and special courses, shared librarians and art and music teachers, reduced numbers of afterschool and summer programs, just to name a few.

It didn't have to be this way. If the School Funding Reform Act of 2008 were fully funded, Paterson would have an additional \$54 million to provide more services to our children. These are services that our children will not receive any other way. Our parents don't have the money for afterschool enrichment classes or tutors for their children. If a service is not available at school or church, most of our children don't receive it.



The cumulative effect of this lack of opportunity is predictable. Paterson children will achieve less because they lack access to the supports they need in order to soar.

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School Budget Issue March 2011

This chart gives you an overview of pages A2-A4 of the Paterson Public Schools Proposed Budget for 2011-2012[FY12]. For more information about the budget, including individual school budgets, go to www.paterson-education.org.

Paterson Public Schools	Revenue	Revenue	Revenue
Category	2011-12 Proposed	2010-11 revised	2009-10 Actual
General Fund Balance	9,047,945	12,765,929	0
Withdrawal fr. Maintenance Reserve	7,000,000	0	0
Revenue From Local Sources	40,967,310	42,458,039	43,698,342
State Sources	372,953,366	368,171,251	322,470,187
Federal Sources	13,620,569	765,527	59,819,382
Adjust/ Prior Yr Encumbrances	0	2,428,268	0
Actual Revenues (Over)Under Expended	0	0	4,978,524
TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET	443,589,190	426,589,014	430,966,435
Special Revenue-Local	0	0	109,430
Special Revenue-State	49,192,903	49,880,762	46,253,759
Special Revenue-Federal	29,078,728	31,734,434	38,497,021
Debt Service	1,302,835	1,303,133	1,309,900
Total Revenue	523,163,656	509,507,343	517,136,545

Paterson's local school tax levy: \$ 38,955,956

Frequently Asked Questions

How do we pay for our schools?

Our budget in 2011-2012 is planned for \$523 million. Paterson's local tax portion of the school budget, \$38.9 million, is only sufficient to run our academy high schools at Eastside and Kennedy. If the State of New Jersey and the federal government took their funds away, Paterson would have to close all its elementary schools, pre-schools and other high school programs.

How do we return to local control?

New Jersey Statutes Annotated (N.J.S.A.) 18A contains new education law, signed into law in December 2005 regarding the monitoring of schools. It is known as NJQSAC or the NJ Quality Single Accountability System. Part of this law sets out the way that any state operated school district may return to local control.

→ Paterson does not receive any financial benefit from being state-operated. [It did under the original law, but that was amended more than 15 years ago.] Our support from the State of New Jersey is provided by the School Funding Reform Act of 2008, see www.edlawcenter.org for details.

→ Paterson will not lose any state aid because we return to local control. Any additional local taxes will have to be approved by Paterson voters.

How do I get more information?

There is lots of information about the Paterson Public Schools on the following websites:



www.paterson.k12.nj.us contains local information.



www.state.nj.us/education contains all the rules governing our schools and our School Report Cards.



www.edlawcenter.com for information on the School Funding Reform Act of 2008.

For further information, call Irene Sterling at the Paterson Education Fund, 973-881-8914

What can the board of education do?

Under the Constitution of the State of New Jersey, the State is responsible for providing education for its citizens [the “thorough and efficient system of free, public schools” clause]. The State establishes local school boards and requires them to run the schools under its [the State’s] rules. The powers of the School Board are limited; it operates under a very comprehensive set of regulations known as NJ Administrative Code 6A. As a state-operated district, the Paterson School board is advisory and has no power over personnel. It’s actions can be vetoed by the State Superintendent.

→The School Board’s most important role is to hold the school system accountable for educating Paterson children.

Board of Education Members



Mr. Theodore Best, Jr.,
President



Ms. Wendy Guzman,
Vice President



Dr. Jonathan Hodges



Mr. Christopher Irving



Mr. Errol S. Kerr



Mr. Alex Mendez



Mr. Pedro Rodriguez



Mr. Kenneth Simmons



Ms. Willa Mae Taylor

What does the oath of office mean?

Every member of the Board of Education takes the following oath of office:

“I do solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of New Jersey, and that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same and to the governments established in the United States and in this state, under the authority of the people, so help me God.”

I do further solemnly swear that I will impartially and justly perform all the duties of the office of according to the best of my ability. So help me God.”

While school board members are elected by local citizens, they are responsible to the State of New Jersey. Under the New Jersey Constitution, they are responsible for providing a “thorough and efficient” education. Our State Supreme Court has interpreted that to mean an education that makes them competitive in the market place and able to be good citizens.

School Board Election Day is April 27, 2011.



Vote

As if your children's futures depend on it.

Because they do!

An Educated Voter's Guide to Paterson's School Board Elections

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