



PEF News

November

2018

GRADUATING EVERY PATERSON CHILD!

Elizabeth Nuñez says GUFÉ led her to success!



Elizabeth Nuñez was born in the Dominican Republic. She came to live in Paterson with her Mom at the age of 4 and attend School 2 from kindergarten through 2nd grade. She moved back to DR for 3 years then returned to Paterson with all her siblings. Her Dad came also and worked really hard to buy them a house where they are still living in today.

Elizabeth re-enrolled in School 2 for the 5th-grade. She struggled academically due to the language barrier and home environment. Before the house, they moved a lot and that affected her academics. Her turn-around began when GUFÉ (Girls United For the

Earth) was introduced to her 7th grade class. Science was the only class she felt she could express herself in, even with the language barrier. So the opportunity to learn through exploration and curiosity excited her. She continued with GUFÉ through high school at PCTI.

Elizabeth attended Montclair State University and earned a BA in Psychology and Master's in Education, so she could make an impact on students. She believes that her outdoors-classroom, community service and other GUFÉ experiences helped her to qualify for one of very few spots in the Master's program. She started teaching 2nd grade at the age of 22 in the Orange District, then Science for 4th and 5th grades. Science was always her favorite subject to teach and she used her GUFÉ experiences to excite her students.

Being part of GUFÉ and having the support and constant encouragement of her peers and mentors sparked her desire to travel. She went with the group to

Grenada, Costa Rica and several US destinations. Elizabeth said "Now, thanks to my GUFÉ experience, I travel a lot, doing things I never thought I was capable of doing!"

She has made lifelong friendships and is so thankful for the mentorship that has never stopped. Her GUFÉ mentor, Sarah Sterling-Laldee, has taken Elizabeth under her wing and is now her supervisor in Paterson Public Schools' Science Department. PEF's Program Director, Doris Salgado, also served as her mentor professionally and personally. Elizabeth credits The PEF family for helping her on her pathways to and through college and life. We are proud to celebrate Elizabeth's success and her drive to give back!



A Message from our Executive Director

PEF Is Staying the Course on Paterson's Journey to Local Control!

In May of this year, the New Jersey State Board of Education voted to return Paterson Public Schools to local control. We know we've told you this before but we can't stop celebrating! Since the takeover was 27 years, we just may keep talking about it for another 27! But we won't stay there because it's time to move forward!

Now that the district is in a 2-year transition period, PEF is focused on supporting the strategies that will prove Paterson is ready for local control. With that in mind, we took a good look at the transition plan that has been

submitted to the State. We're excited much of our work is already aligned to the proposed transition plan. This includes reducing chronic absenteeism; improving student outcomes; providing meaningful professional development and ultimately ensuring opportunities for success for every child.

PEF will continue to support, monitor and advocate as we have for so many years, ensuring that parents and community members have a voice and that all sectors of the community are working together to bring the best programs and adequate resources to our children.

Our community is ready! As a part of the transition, the community was required to vote for a "Type 1 (Appointed by the Mayor)" or a "Type 2 (Elected by the people)" school board. PEF led a public policy campaign to promote



Type 2. We're grateful to several community leaders who created social media videos and our many partners who shared those videos, which reached 1,777 people. The campaign was successful and the citizens of Paterson voted overwhelmingly to continue to elect their school board representatives, ensuring broader community engagement in education.

Thanks to you, our PEF Family, for supporting our work as we stay the course and continue to create pathways to success for Paterson schools and Paterson children!

Improving Early Literacy

Paterson Reads gets a boost!

Paterson's First Lady, Farhanna Balgahoom Sayegh, has joined our city-wide campaign to get every child reading on grade level by the end of 3rd grade. Farhanna pledged to commit her time and energy to making this initiative a success!



Credit: Paterson Times

A special capacity-building grant from The Henry & Marilyn Taub Foundation has allowed us to convene a diverse cross-section of public and private stakeholders to re-design and expand our Community Solutions Action Plan (CSAP) for Paterson Reads! We

will also be hiring a program manager to help the partners strengthen our coordinated strategies.

More than 10,000 Paterson kids participated in *Paterson Reads* activities last year! *Paterson Reads* is a part of the National *Grade Level Reading Campaign*.



More than 2,000 kids read 50 books last year! Our 50 Book Club celebrated their accomplishment with an annual community fair. Paterson Public Schools launched a new reading program called “Today’s Readers-Tomorrow’s Leaders”. They are giving books to kids at every school board meeting. We expect that this will drive the number of readers up for next year’s celebration.

Creating a College Going Culture

PEF is partnering with Paterson Public Schools and 8 other community based organizations to open college success centers in Paterson. **CAPS (College and Apprenticeship program for Success)** offers after-school drop-in centers where students can get help with college and career planning. Students can stop in for workshops or simply to use a computer and the internet for college research. The young people can get help to complete their college applications, write personal essays, search for scholarships or develop their resumes together.



Fifty-five John F. Kennedy and Eastside high school students received facilitator training and led **College Track** workshops for 661 of their peers. This year’s workshops included every junior at all 7 academies. Additionally, PEF staff led College Track workshop for 150 elementary school students and 65 parents.

Our staff and volunteers led 6 Right Question Project parent workshops in Martin Luther King and New Roberto Clemente schools as a part of the district’s 21st Century Learning program. The workshops were held in English and Spanish to help parents develop strategies to ensure their children get what they need to prepare them for life after high school and beyond.

Journalism students at John F. Kennedy high school produced the 15th edition **College Guide**. 10,000 copies were distributed to 6th through 12th grade students across the district.



Our STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) enrichment programs are helping kids to get ready for higher education and careers. **GUFE** (Girls United for the Earth), **MOTH** (Matter Observed Through Hombres), and **Summer STEAM** all brought in new members and said tearful goodbyes to graduates this year. We can say with certainty that 100% of the students that graduated from our STEAM programs are college bound!



The **Great Falls Teacher’s Collaborative**, hosted by PEF, continues to engage more teachers in peer-led professional development and their students in learning through discovery. Now in its 5th year of implementation, the coalition has expanded to include Science, English Language Learners and Special Education teachers as well as school based and central office administrators, community partners and institutions of higher education. Lesson plans, outdoor classroom field guides and additional learning resources have been embedded in the PPS Science curriculum guides and are being used by teachers across the district! Each teacher in the program led a Family Science Night that saw 90 – 95% parent and family participation!



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit our website
www.paterson-education.org

Thanks to our Donors and Volunteers

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Our mission is to stimulate community action for change so that the Paterson Public Schools ensure that all Paterson children achieve high standards.

Keeping Kids First!

OUR Advocacy Campaigns lead to change!

As a part of our efforts to reduce suspension and keep kids out of the school-to-prison pipeline, we are introducing **Restorative Practices** to Paterson Schools and community. Last spring, we collaborated with Paterson Public Schools and Parent Education Organizing Council to provide training for 20 school administrators, security personnel, teachers, parents and community members. Young Men's Leadership Academy (YMLA) has taken the lead in implementation of the restorative practices. They have set up a dedicated "Peace Room" where students can self-select to spend individual reflective time or peer circles. The circle keeper at YMLA will be included in a Paterson team going to Portland OR for site visits and more intensive training in December. To date, 190 students, parents and community members have participated in PEF led circles.

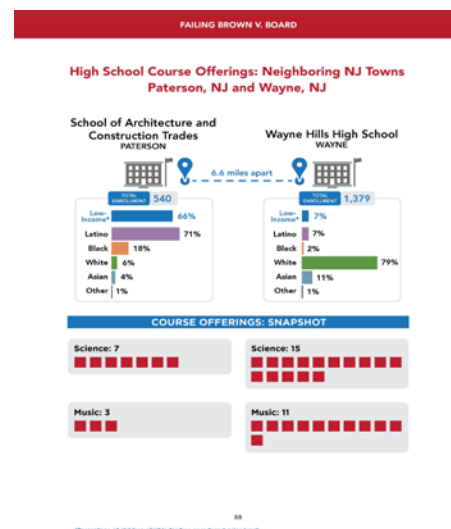


Ensuring that Paterson children and schools benefit from ESSA!

As a member of the PPS ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act)

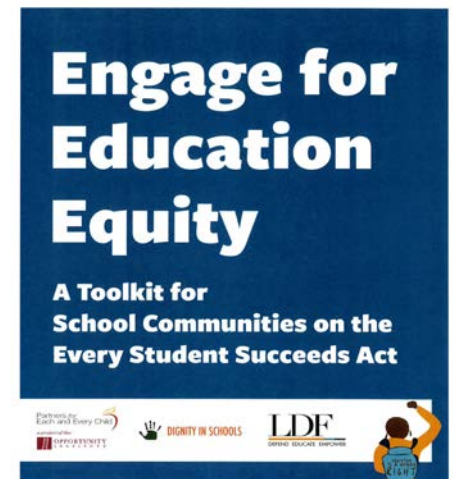
Taskforce, PEF is working with the district to ensure that resources are allocated according to student needs. We advocated that all Full Service Community Schools' (FSCS) ESSA plans must include their lead partner as a member of the building team. Other schools are being strongly encouraged to identify and include community partners in the planning stage.

PEF continues to contribute to the creation of ESSA policy on the state level through participation in NJDOE's ESSA Stakeholder Engagement Advisory Group and the Title I Committee of Practitioners.



We participated in National advocacy with Dignity in Schools Campaign and Journey4Justice. The Journey4Justice Equity Audit "Failing Brown v. Board: A Continuous Struggle Against Inequity in Public Education" includes a course offerings comparison of Paterson's Architectural and Construction Trades (ACT) Academy and Wayne Hills High School. A copy of the full report can be viewed or downloaded at <https://www.j4jalliance.com/failing-brown-finding-and-demands/>

We collaborated with Dignity in Schools and Partners for Each and Every Child in the development and release of ESSA advocacy guides which are being used by parents and organizers across the country. In addition to participation in the national press conferences, we collaborated with Parent Education Organizing Council to host workshops for Paterson parents and community members.



Kids need Art!

For many years Paterson Public Schools cut or eliminated Arts and Music due to state underfunding. Two years ago, PEF formed an **Arts Education Taskforce** to develop and implement a plan for expanded arts education in Paterson!

As a result of our Arts Education advocacy, every PPS child has access to the arts in schools and community advocacy has yielded the reinstatement of the Paterson Grass Roots Arts Council. We will continue to advocate for expanded opportunities and access for all children, in and out of school.

Linda Reid and Cindy Czesak Awarded National Council of Champions Status in 2018

PEF made submissions to Grade Level Reading Campaign and we are pleased that Linda Reid and Cindy Czesak have been named to the National Council Champions for their work with Paterson Reads.



Cynthia Czesak has been a lead partner in Paterson Reads since the initiative was launched. In her role as Director of Paterson Free Public Library, she fully embraced the charge and has been a true champion for engaging other community partners in the work. Under Cindy's leadership, the library's summer reading program has become one of the key campaign strategies. The program has expanded to include all the

Paterson Public Schools summer programs as well as the City of Paterson's recreational summer programs. As a result of advocacy for the Paterson Reads partners, Paterson Public Schools built daily 30-minute reading blocks into their summer program for the past four years. Every year, the library recruits 30 volunteers to read to preschool students, one hour per week for six weeks. Twenty-five community based preschool centers have participated in the summer reading program which has reached 28,000 students over five years. 133,000 staff and volunteer hours have been dedicated and kids have checked out 68,000 books.



Linda Reid has been working with PEF as program manager since 2007. Prior to that, she was a parent volunteer with the organization since 1999. Through her work with PEF and her later involvement with Paterson Education Organizing Council (PEOC), Linda has sharpened her facilitating and organizing skills and is currently the Organizer of PEOC. When the idea of Breakfast After the Bell was first introduced to Paterson, many said it couldn't be done. Along with several organized groups, Ms. Reid led the parent advocacy which led to the pilot. After a successful pilot, parents continued to push until the district found a way to implement the program in all schools. Paterson has seen a marked increase in attendance over the past two years and we hold firmly that Breakfast After the Bell is one of the major contributors!



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