

# Paterson

# EDUCATION

## Fund Report

March 15, 2012

*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.*

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Public involvement. Public education. Public benefit.

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

# **Working Together for Local Control**

**Acting Commissioner Christopher Cerf has made it very clear. He will not return our schools to local control until we dramatically improve student achievement. Our community is equally clear; we want to have local control of our schools. The current board has moved us close to local control and gained the respect of the Acting Commissioner. The members we elect this year must continue the progress.**

**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 than we find out in televised meetings. Unfortunately, our board members have very uneven records of participation. Please see page 5 for more detail.**

**Additionally, the School Board members we elect must work collaboratively with our State Superintendent Dr. Evans and the current members of the Board: Chrystal Cleaves, Wendy Guzman, Dr. Jonathan Hodges, Christopher Irving, Alex Mendez, and Kenneth Simmons.**

**Candidates for 3 three years term include one incumbent, Errol Kerr, as well as candidates Arleen Barcenas, Manuel Martinez, Jr., Joel Ramirez, Corey Teague and Daniel Vergara.**

**Vote on April 17<sup>th</sup> as if our children's futures depend on it, because they do!**

# Paterson School Board Candidates 2012

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.

## Candidates for a 3 year term [2012-2015]. 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: Dawn Treader Christian School, MLK PS#30, Rosa Parks High School, B.S. Administration of Justice, Rutgers University. Family: Immediate family resides in Paterson. Past and Current Involvement in the Paterson Public Schools: Serve on the Paterson Public School Multicultural Roundtable committee and was guest lecturer on career and entrepreneurship for the 1st Annual Valerie Dade Girls Summit Leadership Conference for girls' grade level 5th through 8th. Civic Involvement: Commissioner of the Paterson Restoration Corporation, member of Paterson Public School: Multicultural Roundtable Committee, Executive Board Member of the Paterson Democratic Committee, WE DO (Women Empowered Democratic Organization), LUPE (Latinas United for Political Empowerment), Association

Hijos y Amigos de Colombia, Colombians United in Passaic County, LDLA (Latino Democratic Leadership Alliance of Passaic County), columnist for EcoHispano Newspaper, Mujeres Latinas en Accion de NJ. Number of Board meeting attended in the last six months: 3 (three). Three major issues: (1) It is a fact that we are losing our children at an earlier age in their reading and math scores which are the foundations of their education. It is imperative that we target our educational system with more rigor and innovative academic standards. Afterschool programs, mentoring programs and summer school educational reinforcement programs should be implemented. (2) Parental & Community Involvement: It is everyone's responsibility in the community to serve as an advocate for the educational needs of our students. It is time we all get engaged with our students learning experience to secure academic success. Education begins at home and then transcends throughout different branches of the community that supplement the education experience. (3) Obtain Local Control: The time is now to have full control of our Paterson school system. It is our duty to protect our education, our children and the governance of our school board because only Patersonians know best in identifying our needs and finding solutions for them through the effort our own leadership and the voice of our community.

**Errol S. Kerr, 216 East 30th Street.** Home phone: 973-742-7042. Email: errolesk@aol.com



Employment: Supervisor, Operations Department Glory USA, Inc. Length of residence in Paterson: 33 years. Education: B.S. Degree in Business Administration with concentration in Marketing from Ramapo College New Jersey. Family: Married; wife (Delores) two children and three grandchildren. Past and Current Involvement in the Paterson Public Schools: Currently serving the third year of my second full three year term on the Board. As a member of the Board, I've served in capacities of Board President and Vice President respectively, currently chairs the Board's Fiscal Committee and serves on the Curriculum and Parental & Community Engagement Committees. Civic Involvements: Member of the NAACP, Vice President of the Caribbean Empowerment Program of NJ, Municipal Leader of Paterson's Democratic Committee, member of the Love of Jesus Family Church. Number of Board meetings attended in the last 6 months: All. Three major issues: Improve Instructional Quality across the district: It's time

we take responsibility for what is, and what is not happening in the classroom. The argument of environmental difficulty should not be allowed to frame the issue or substituted for sub-par quality instruction. Early Childhood Education: In keeping with the theme of improved instruction, education must be reinforced at the

**Errol Kerr, continued.** earliest levels of every child's educational experience so as to create scaffolding for later learning. If the foundation is not properly laid, it will not be able to stand the rigors of environmental challenges in the future. Parental Engagement: There is the tendency for schools and parents to work on separate tracks at the expense of our children's education. We must find a way to bridge this gap by working collaboratively together as a unit for the betterment of our children.

**Manuel Martinez Jr.,** 747 Market Street. Cell Phone: 201-410-0871 Work Phone: 973-413-1627. Email:



memartinez@optonline.net or mannymartinezjr22@gmail.com Employment: Owner, Manager- Martinez Memorial Funeral Home, Program Director – New Jersey Community Development Corporation. Length of residence in Paterson: born, raised and educated, 35 years. Education: Holds a B.A. in Elementary Education and B.S. in Mortuary Science. Family: reside in the greater Paterson area. Past and Current Involvement in the Paterson Public Schools: Was a student and a teacher in Paterson Public Schools as well as a teacher at the Community Charter School of Paterson. Civic Involvement: Member of the Passaic County Democratic Committee as well as the Passaic County Board of Funeral Directors. Program Director the Great Falls Youth Corps and the Paterson Youth Council. Advocate and volunteer for the Paterson Community Schools Program in School 5 and The Community Charter School of Paterson. Number of Board meeting

attended in the last six months: 1 (one). Three major issues: (1) Build Better Relationships – One of the overlooked aspects of effective implementation of curriculum is the development and cultivation of strong working and personal relationships between students, staff and families. Improving teacher-student and school-parent relations, and adopting policies that actively encourage students to take rigorous courses are just some of the measures that can be taken. (2) Start Young – Early childhood education is the foundation. Studies show that if a child is not reading on grade level by the third grade, then he or she is very likely to fall behind by the time they reach the eighth grade. By seeing to it that our youngest students are not only on grade level but thriving, we can alleviate some of the problems they could face later on in their educational careers. (3) Upgrade Facilities – Our antiquated schools have a direct impact on the performance of our students. We need to encourage the state to follow through in a timely manner on their promise to build new and better schools in Paterson.

**Joel D. Ramirez, 167 E. 24th Street.** Work Phone: 973-642-3888 ext. 6131. Cell Phone: 973-557-5442.



Email: jdramirez1@verizon.net. Employment: Assistant Director, Admissions Berkeley College. Length of residence in Paterson: 24 years. Education: Bachelors of Science – Marketing – Berkeley College, Masters of Business Administration – St. Peters College. Family: Mom, two brothers and a sister. Past and Current Involvement in the Paterson Public schools: Attended Paterson Public Schools #14 and 2 prior to transferring to school number 3 where I graduated from 8th Grade. I have been a presenter for career day at School #7. As Assistant Director of Admissions at Berkeley College I have worked with the Paterson Guidance Community since 2006. Civic Involvements: Parishioner at Saint John's Cathedral, Commissioner Paterson Task Force, Board of Directors of the Hispanic Research Information Center (Newark, NJ), Pemberton Township

School to Careers Advisory Board, Passaic County Technical Institute Academy of Finance Advisory Board Member, American Legion Boys State Alumni. Three major issues: (1) The tremendously high dropout rate in our city is extremely concerning. Our district needs to offer our students a strong and sound safety net highlighting why they should aspire for more. It is a necessity for us to engage our students by empowering them with a sound curriculum, increase use of technology and educated role models from the community. (2) Poor Academic Performance: we need to increase oversight and demand more accountability of those directly

**Joel Ramirez, continued.** responsible for our schools successes. It is unacceptable to have so many failing schools especially those who serve the most vulnerable neighborhoods. Let's increase our accountability to our children and make sure every school as a success story to tell. (3) Lack of Access: Our students need better facilities in which to learn in. Tutoring programs for those struggling should be a must as well as engaging afterschool programs for our brightest to stay motivated.

**Corey L. Teague**, 65 Prince Street. Home Phone: 973-782-4011. Cell Phone: 973-816-6460. Email: clewisteague@gmail.com or facebook.com/teague2012. Employment: Pastor, New Generation Healing & Deliverance Tabernacle Ministries. Length of residence in Paterson: Lifelong resident. Education: Graduate – PS#21, Graduate - Passaic County Technical Institute, Graduate- Passaic County Community College, Ministerial Degree- Universal Light Church.. Family: Married with 2 children who both attend school in Paterson. Past and current involvement in the Paterson Public Schools: I have been an advocate for better education in Paterson since the age of 15. In 2010, I fought for my children to receive the academic services they were legally entitled to. I won my fight which also restored the jobs of many teachers who were laid off because of the cuts imposed by the State at that time. Presently, I serve as the Vice-President of the Paterson Public School early Childhood Advisory Council. Articles can be found by searching Google, The Herald, The Record and The Paterson Press. Civic Involvements: In 2010, I received an Honorary Degree of Behavioral Therapy from the International Association of Behavioral Therapists in Cincinnati, Ohio. Member of the Paterson Pastors Workshop/Clergy on Fire, The NAACP, The Home School Council for Edward Kilpatrick Elementary School, P.O.W.E.R. Coalition to Stop the Violence, frequent writer in the Paterson Press and the Herald News and a Community Organizer for 15 years. Number of Board meetings attended in the last six months: 3 (three). Three major issues: 1. Building more efficient schools! We need better school buildings in this city. The current ones are literally falling apart. How can the children learn when they are in classrooms with out-dated desks, broken chairs and books that are not up to date? 2. Focus on Student Progress! As a parent, I am very concerned with the test scores that are being published. Our children have not failed, but something has failed our children! The parents, teachers, school administrators and the school board must begin to work together, putting aside all differences and allowing the focus to be directed towards the children and their educational success! 3. Regaining Public Trust! Somewhere along the line, the people at large have lost faith in the public education system. I want to restore that faith. Education is still the key there have been many set backs in the past, but I believe that if we pull up our sleeves and begins to tackle the issues.



**Daniel D. Vergara, “Danny”**, 142 Dixon Avenue. Home Phone: 973-279-4309. Work Phone: 973-321-1488. Email: vergaradaniel145@yahoo.com.fb . Employment: Deputy Chief Inspector City of Paterson, Commissioner Rent Leveling Board. Length of residence in Paterson: Lifelong Patersonian 50 years. Education: Eastside High School, Passaic County Community College. Family: Married with two children, Foster Parent of one. Current Involvements: School Board member 2001-2005 to 2008 Afterschool program basketball league director New Roberto Clemente School. Civic Involvements: leader of Scout Troop 911- 1987 to present, Knights of Columbus member 2004 to present, Elected President of the Puerto Rican parade 1996 and 2005, Youth Director Saint Agnes Church, Recipient of the Jefferson Award in Washington D.C. by Senator Frank Lautenberg for Community Services, Scout-Master of the year award 2006 and 2012 honored by the City Council and Passaic County Freeholders for Community Service. Number of Board meetings attended in the last six months: All via Cable T.V. 4. Three major issues: Board Development, Facilities, Academic Achievement, Advocating for Special Education. We must make the decisions that will determine the fate of all our students in the Paterson School District.



# Paterson Board of Education Members 2011-2012 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 2012	Regular 8 [L]	Workshop 7[L]	Special 8 [L]	Term ends 2014	Regular 8 [L]	Workshop 7 [L]	Special 8 [L]
<b>Errol Kerr</b>	8 [1]	6 [5]	7 [0]	<b>Chrystal Cleaves</b>	8 [1]	7 [0]	7 [0]
<b>Pedro Rodriguez</b>	8 [0]	6 [3]	8 [0]	<b>Wendy Guzman</b>	7 [0]	6 [0]	6 [3]
<b>Willa Mae Taylor</b>	8 [0]	7 [0]	8 [0]	<b>Jonathan Hodges</b>	8 [1]	7 [4]	7 [1]
Term ends 2013				<b>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.</b>			
<b>Christopher Irving</b>	8 [1]	7 [2]	5 [1]				
<b>Alex Mendez</b>	8 [0]	7 [1]	7 [0]				
<b>Kenneth Simmons</b>	5 [2]	5 [1]	5 [0]				

## Some Words About Committee Meetings

Committee meetings are the places 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>. Some committee reports did not provide attendance.

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

## A Note of Thanks



This year two incumbent Board members have decided not to seek re-election.

Board President Willa Mae Taylor is stepping down after serving three terms [9years] on the Board. She has played a significant role in leading the board from fractious behavior with frequent ethics complaints against sitting members to the professional standards of the recent boards.



Pedro Rodriguez steps down after one term to run for First Ward council. Mr. Rodriguez's championship of Gifted and Talented Programs and World Languages will result in new programs in both areas in the new school year.

We thank them for their service and wish them the best in the future.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## How do we pay for our schools?

Our budget in 2012-2013 is planned for \$562 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?

NJSAC or the NJ Quality Single Accountability System sets out the way that any state operated school district may return to local control. Our current Acting Commissioner is working with the State Board of Education to amend the rules regarding NJSAC to focus on student achievement that include student growth measures as well as test scores.

→ 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](http://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](http://www.paterson.k12.nj.us) contains local information.



[www.state.nj.us/education](http://www.state.nj.us/education) contains all the rules governing our schools and our School Report Cards.



[www.edlawcenter.com](http://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. The School Board’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



Ms. Willa Mae Taylor,  
President



Mr. Alex Mendez  
Vice President



Ms. Chrystal Cleaves



Ms. Wendy Guzman,



Dr. Jonathan Hodges



Mr. Christopher Irving



Mr. Errol S. Kerr



Mr. Pedro Rodriguez



Mr. Kenneth Simmons

## 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 17, 2012.**



# **Vote**

**As if your children's futures  
depend on it.**

## **Because they do!**

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Brought to you by **Paterson**  
**EDUCATION**  
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