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## **YOUNG MEN’S LEADERSHIP ACADEMY TAKES FIRST STEPS TO GREATER SUCCESS**

*Assistant Superintendent updates school board on progress at turnaround school*

PATERSON – Paterson Public Schools’ Young Men’s Leadership Academy (YMLA), which the district identified as a turnaround school in June, is making progress in improving students’ academic performance, professional development and emphasizing character education and leadership development, district officials reported tonight.

“There is still much work to be done, but Young Men’s Leadership Academy has taken the first steps to becoming the school we know it can be,” said Superintendent Eileen Shafer, who greeted YMLA students and parents at the school’s door on the first day of the 2018-19 school year. “I’m looking forward to seeing how much gets accomplished by the time we reach the end of the school year.”

“We’ve started a process that addresses the total education of these boys,” said Assistant Superintendent Cicely Warren. “With that process underway, YMLA students have a greater chance to develop their character and their ability to lead as well as their academic performance.”

In her presentation to the Board of Education Wednesday night, Assistant Superintendent Cicely Warren highlighted four areas of concentration in making improvements at YMLA. The areas cited were: academics and instruction, professional development, character education & leadership development, and collaboration between staff and parents.

Warren reported that baseline assessments in reading, writing and mathematics have been administered. The data regarding growth will be released early next year in the second quarterly report, Warren said. Meanwhile, an **Attendance Review Committee** has been established to help quell chronic absenteeism, and **curriculum support** for math and English language arts has been developed.

The professional development progress made was that YMLA staff have completed character education and **N.J. Positive Behavior Support in Schools (NJPBSIS)** training. N.J. PBSIS is a collaboration between the N.J. Department of Education Offices of Special Education and The Bogs Center, Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. NJ PBSIS trains cohorts of schools to implement the tiered intervention system known as Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). PBIS is a behavior education model that begins with the idea that students can only meet behavioral expectations when they know what the expectations are. Students learn those expectations the same way they would learn about any other subject in school.

YMLA staff members also attended a summer professional development workshop at **The Eagle Institute**, which teaches staff strategies and practices to effectively educate male students of

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color. This training will be followed up with two on-site school coaching visits to support the implementation of the Eagle Institute's practices.

With regard to encouraging collaboration among staff and parents, Warren said communication with parents has been improved, and that opportunities for serviced and engagement have been made available to parents.

Located in Prospect Park, YMLA has an enrollment of 55 students. While assessment data will not be available until early 2019, district officials have seen a notable decrease in the number of suspensions at the school as compared to last year.

The great strides in character education within the YMLA school community will be celebrated by district officials, board members and parents at the school's upcoming Harvest Festival on Monday, December 10.

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