

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS LOOK TO HIRE 17 PART TIME STAFF TO
REDUCE CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM AT THE HIGH SCHOOLS**

PATERSON, New Jersey, July 18, 2018 – The Paterson Public School District has created 17 part-time positions, in a continuing effort to reduce the number of chronically absent students. Chronic Absenteeism is defined as missing 10% of school days or 18 days a year inclusive of sick days and suspensions. The Chronic Absenteeism Specialists (CAS) shall serve the educational process by ensuring students develop and maintain good attendance practices and that parents support the attendance requirements of the school district. Specifically the CAS will work with students who are chronically absent or at risk of being chronically absent. The CAS will develop relationships with and support the students and families in their caseload. They will make calls; send messages and visit parents and students weekly to identify and address root causes of absenteeism. When appropriate the CAS will refer parents and students to community service providers and governmental agencies to support underlining issues affecting a student’s regular attendance.

Ms. Eileen Shafer, Superintendent of Paterson Public Schools has made improving attendance a key priority for her administration. In the Fall, she developed a Chronic Absenteeism Taskforce and began a citywide public awareness campaign dubbed “#PPSShowUp” to enlist parents and the community in the district’s fight against absenteeism. Early numbers showed the success of the campaign with a 43 percent reduction in the number of students chronically absent in the district at the mid-way mark. By the end of the year the district finished with a modest decrease at the elementary level but was unable to sustain the decrease at the HS level which lead the committee to develop the new positions to focus specifically on the high schools.

Mr. T.J. Best, Director of Student Attendance and Anti-Bullying said “The new specialists will have a laser like focus on our HS students, their job is to do ‘whatever it takes’, to get the kids to school every day. Showing up is the first step to student success and we believe that all of our kids can be successful once they get in front of our great teachers.” Ms. Shafer added that “the goal is to hire professionals who understand and represent Paterson’s diverse student population.”

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About Paterson Public Schools

Paterson Public Schools is the second largest school district in New Jersey with over 28,000 students from pre-k through grade 12. The district’s mission is to prepare all children for college and career...together we can! For more information, visit www.paterson.k12.nj.us

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