



Pablo Muñoz  
Superintendent of Schools

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For Immediate Release

## **PASSAIC PUBLIC SCHOOLS IS TRANSFORMING THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR STUDENTS**

PASSAIC, NJ— On Monday, November 20, 2017 the Passaic Board of Education unanimously voted to approve a significant redesign of the district schools. The changes include transitioning to kindergarten through grade 8 school zones, closing the middle school, and dividing one of the state’s largest high schools into three separate schools.

In a presentation made to the Board of Education and the Community, Superintendent Pablo Muñoz explained the new K-8 school zones will provide Passaic students with a nurturing and supportive environment, encouraging academic and social-emotional growth. He also noted that the new zones would be adopted at a future board meeting.

The shift to a K-8 structure provides a critical opportunity to redesign the high school program, with the promise of alleviating the severe overcrowding at Passaic High School (PHS). Muñoz announced the creation of two new schools, Passaic Preparatory Academy and Passaic Academy for Science and Engineering, expected to house students in grades 6 through 12 with specialized academic programs. With a population of over 3,100 students, Passaic High School has long been challenged by space constraints in a building designed to hold approximately 2,000 students. The new schools will operate in the current Lincoln Middle School buildings.

“Passaic High School has been overcrowded for too long,” notes Board President Salim Patel. “With the addition of two new 6-12 programs, we will be able to offer more college and career pathways, and provide all students with most relevant and optimal learning experiences.”

The announcement comes nearly one year after the school board voted to begin preparations for a K-8 program and high school redesign. Muñoz credits the Board of Education with their commitment to restructure the school district to provide a stronger academic and social-emotional environment for all of Passaic’s students. Muñoz added, “Research clearly supports providing our students with schools that support them throughout their academic career, and I am

proud to work with a Board and City officials that are so committed to doing what is best for our children.”

Muñoz’s presentation began with presenting student achievement data showing the academic growth of Passaic students. In addition to increasing PARCC scores, the high school graduation rate for the class of 2017 was 81%, the highest in recent history. PHS students are participating in more Advanced Placement courses than in prior years, provided as evidence of the district’s commitment to provide students the opportunity to graduate with at least 15 college credits and/or career certification.

Peter T. Rosario, Vice President of the Passaic Board of Education, is proud of the progress he has seen in the schools. “As the parent of a graduate of Passaic High School, I have been vocal in my belief that our students will succeed if we, as a City and a Board of Education, make the right decisions. This is a true transformation of our school system that will place our students on the right path toward success in their college and career choices after high school.”

The administration expects to communicate these changes to students and staff throughout the coming year. Families are being told they should expect to receive notice of changes in K-8 school zone assignments in the Spring. In addition, specific information about choosing and applying to the different high schools will be provided in a variety of ways, and the public is encouraged to speak to the school administrators and monitor the district webpage for updates. The presentation will be posted on the website.

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