

PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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PATERSON STEAM HIGH SCHOOL OFFICIALLY OPENS WITH A SUPER BOWL GIANT AND A BIG DECISION FOR NINTH-GRADERS

Former NY Giants Wide Receiver and Paterson native Victor Cruz gives incentive for students' success

STEAM Choice Day features robotic hands, EV races, and thermodynamics

*****Photos attached: see end of release for captions.*****

PATERSON – The official opening of the district's new Paterson STEAM High School today was far from a typical ribbon cutting as district and city officials welcomed former New York Giants wide receiver and Paterson native Victor Cruz who joined in the occasion. But once the red ribbon was cut, the school's ninth-graders were off to work with robotic hands, thermodynamic towers, electric vehicles, and other activities to help them decide which pathway they would follow for the rest of their high school years.

"This is a very special high school, and you all are very special young people," said Superintendent of Schools Eileen F. Shafer. "It's going to be an exciting day. I hope you enjoy it and I hope you know that there are many people here who care very much about you. We will do everything we can to help you succeed in school."

Students have been attending Paterson STEAM High School since the school year began in September. But today's official opening was a chance to acknowledge the many people who worked to establish the high school program that is dedicated to the study of science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics, or STEAM.

During the opening ceremony, Cruz announced his Cruz Scholars program, which began last fall and gives students incentives to do their best in school. During the holiday season, Cruz brought several Cruz Scholars to a New York Knicks game as a reward for their academic performances. A similar outing will be held in the spring through the Cruz Scholars program.

"I used to walk these very halls when this place was Paterson Catholic High School," said Cruz, feeling a bit of nostalgia.

The former Paterson Catholic football player was coached by N.J. State Assemblyman Benjie Wimberly, who was present at the ceremony.

Cruz shared two pieces of advice with the young students: Never quit and always give back.

"You don't have to be a Super Bowl champion to give back to your community," said Cruz. "There are people who work in everyday society who come back and give their time and effort."

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In her remarks, Shafer thanked Deputy Superintendent Dr. Susana Peron who led the district's high school restructuring initiative, Assistant Superintendent Joanna Tsimpedes who led the curriculum and instruction efforts, the district's Facilities and Custodial Services Chief Neil Mapp who led the preparation of all of the school's labs and other instructional spaces. She also thanked Assistant Superintendent Cicely Warren and District Director of STEAM Education Sarah Sterling-Laldee for their contributions to the efforts to launch the new high school.

After the ceremony, the high school's ninth-graders participated in four different sessions to help them decide on a STEAM pathway. The BrainCo company, a district partner, conducted sessions on brain cognition and robotic "neuromaker" hands. Another district partner, Engineering Tomorrow, engaged the students in races of the electric vehicles they had built from kits during their freshmen seminar in the fall. Teacher Bradley Gold and the Rutgers University 4-H Youth Development program ran a session on solar towers that used the heat of the sun to power turbines.

Board of Education Commissioner Della McCall and Paterson Mayor Andre Sayegh also participated in the official opening of Paterson STEAM High School.

Photo 1: Officials cut the ribbon on Paterson STEAM High School. From left, Assistant Superintendent Cicely Warren, Mayor Andre Sayegh, Superintendent Eileen Shafer, Principal Kelli White, Victor Cruz, and Assemblyman Benjie Wimberly.

Photo 2: Assemblyman Benjie Wimberly shares a story about Victor Cruz. Wimberly was Cruz's head football coach when Paterson STEAM High School was Paterson Catholic High School.

Photo 3: Students work with solar energy turbines as a part of STEAM Choice Day.

Photo 4: Students race cars powered by neuro-cognition as a part of STEAM Choice Day.

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