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PRESS RELEASE

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Camden District High School Students to Receive Laptops for At-Home Learning, Thanks to Major Gifts from Camden Philanthropic Donors

(Camden, NJ) – Today, Superintendent McCombs announced that high school students across all six district high schools will soon receive a laptop, thanks to \$400,000 in donations from the Camden Education Fund, Townsend Press and Campbell Soup Company.

“In these extraordinary times, we are seeing individuals and organizations step up to support Camden families,” said Superintendent Katrina McCombs. “As educators, we have always known that the digital divide is an equity issue. Now, with students at home and schools closed, it is more important than ever. With this generous gift, I’m thrilled to announce that all of our high school students will be able to continue their learning at home, prepare for critical exams like the SAT, and complete college essays and applications,” she said.

The Camden Education Fund, a non-profit organization whose mission is to support progress in Camden’s public schools, committed \$200,000 to the effort. George E. Norcross III, Chairman of the Cooper University Health Care Board of Trustees and Executive Chairman of Conner Strong & Buckelew, led the efforts to secure financial commitments from Campbell Soup and Townsend Press.

“Camden has made outstanding gains in public education over the last five years, and we cannot let the current Covid-19 crisis set the city back. With this gift, Camden’s high school students will be equipped not just with technology, but with opportunity. Camden’s graduation and post-secondary attainment rates, like the city itself, will continue to rise.” said George E. Norcross III, Chairman of the Cooper University Healthcare Board of Trustees and Executive Chairman of Conner Strong & Buckelew.

Camden Education Fund is pleased to support Superintendent McCombs’ vision of prioritizing equity and access to technology, according to Executive Director Naeha Dean.

“As we consulted educators on how to best support the school district at this unprecedented time, all conversations returned to the digital divide. In 2020, our secondary students should have access to technology to support their learning, crisis or not. I am grateful for Superintendent

McCombs' advocacy on this issue and proud to join our philanthropic partners in making a laptop available for every high school student in the district," said Dean.

John Langan and Judith Nadell, founders of Berlin Township-based Townsend Press, have long supported charitable efforts in Camden, especially in education.

"Judith and I feel blessed to be able to help students in this time of crisis. Today's high school students are tomorrow's leaders, and it's critical that they have all the resources they need to be successful," Langan said.

Campbell Soup has been supporting the city of Camden since its founding in the city in 1869.

Campbell's President and CEO Mark Clouse said, "Campbell is honored to be able to assist students in our hometown continue to learn and develop during this crisis. We are in this together and will work to provide the support needed in Camden and all the other communities where we operate."

Campbell has also committed more than \$1 million in financial support and food assistance to help communities respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the Food Bank of South Jersey and the Cathedral Kitchen in Camden.

The \$400,000 gift will allow the District to purchase Dell Chromebook 3100s, along with licensing fees for the Google platform. Laptops will be purchased for all students in grades nine to twelve at the following schools: Camden High School, Woodrow Wilson High School, Big Picture Learning Academy, Brimm Medical Arts, Creative Arts Morgan Village Academy, and Pride Academy. Internet access will be available through Comcast Internet Essentials and free Xfinity hotspots.

City leaders applauded the announcement.

"It's a testament to the character of our great city that in these uncertain times people are coming together to support each other," said Camden Mayor Frank Moran. "I am grateful for the relentlessness of our District leadership, the generosity of our philanthropic community, and especially for the resilience of our students and families," Moran said.

Additional fundraising coordination was provided by Cooper's Ferry Partnership and The Cooper Foundation.

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