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Camden City School District Welcomes Acting Superintendent Katrina McCombs

June 28, 2018, Camden, New Jersey — Today Katrina McCombs was appointed Acting State Superintendent of the Camden City School District by the New Jersey Commissioner of Education.

During a hearing before the New Jersey State Board of Education, Mrs. McCombs explained that her passion for social justice and a belief in the power of educators to give young people resilience have driven her up the ranks from a kindergarten teacher, principal, administrator, and now Acting Superintendent of Schools. Most recently Deputy Superintendent McCombs has led our District schools' improvement, seeing the graduation rate rise by 16 points and the number of students proficient in reading and math more than double.

"Katrina is a graduate of our District, and has been serving our students for over 24 years," said Kathryn Blackshear, President of the Advisory Board of Education. "Our schools are getting better, but we are not there yet. Katrina has the experience, insight, and passion to help our kids succeed. She cares so much about our students, because she was in their shoes not so long ago. The advisory board, and the whole city, are behind her."

"Last month Mrs. McCombs and I stood side by side to celebrate the re-birth of a gifted and talented program in Camden public schools," said Mayor Francisco "Frank" Moran. "The program is a testament to Katrina's unwavering belief that our students are more than capable of achieving great things. She is not only an incredibly capable leader but she is a hometown choice who is committed to advancing educational outcomes in Camden. I look forward to partnering with Superintendent McCombs to deliver for Camden's young people and move our city forward."

At the hearing, McCombs told Board Members that she would spend the summer listening to families, staff, and partners to learn what is working in District schools, what more is needed to dramatically raise student achievement.

Mrs. McCombs will announce dates for a community listening tour shortly, and asks all residents with a commitment to Camden kids to come out and let her know what more Camden schools can do to support the City's youth in their education and social development. Learn more by visiting www.camden.k12.nj.us/divisions/superintendent_s_office or following Camden City School District on Facebook @CamdenPublicSchools.

The Department of Education is expected to launch a national search process for a permanent State Superintendent for the Camden City School District. Acting Superintendent McCombs intends to participate in this process.

Ends

Biography, Katrina McCombs, Acting State Superintendent of Schools

Born into a family of Camden educators, Deputy Superintendent Katrina McCombs grew up knowing the power of education in transforming one's life or improving one's circumstances. After attending Mickle School, Bonsall Elementary School, Cooper's Poynt Family School, and Hatch Middle School, Mrs. McCombs graduated from Camden High School in 1987. She attended Lehigh University where she earned a bachelor's degree in Behavioral and Neurosciences, before returning to Camden to work as an early childhood educator.



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After two years in the classroom, Mrs. McCombs returned to higher education to better equip herself with the psychological and mental health skills she felt were necessary to support students who came to school having experienced trauma. She received both her MA and MAEd. in psychological counseling at Teachers College, Columbia University, and became a child therapist. She used her counseling skills to support students as a group therapist and middle school English teacher. She quickly moved up the ranks at Lanning Square Elementary School, from grade level chair to literacy coach, site facilitator, vice principal, and finally principal, a role she served until 2012.

Armed with a Masters of Public Administration in educational leadership from Rutgers University, Mrs. McCombs left Lanning Square to serve as Director of the District's Early Childhood Department. In this role, she led Camden's record levels of pre-k enrollment, and supported the quality of early childhood education by investing in critical training for pre-k providers and early childhood educators.

In her four years as Deputy Superintendent of Schools, Mrs. McCombs has overseen the successful implementation of a revamped college and career readiness program, an annual leadership development program for principals, and a transformation in how District educators are coached and evaluated to ensure excellent instruction in every classroom.

During this time the District's dropout rate has fallen by half, and more students make it to graduation each year. She serves on the Board of Directors for Camden Enrollment, and the Camden County Department of Education's Superintendent's Roundtable. Active in her church and community, outside of work Mrs. McCombs mentors young women, spends time with her husband and two daughters, and sings in her church choir.

Armed with the unwavering belief that Camden students are more than capable of exceeding the state averages in reading and math, Mrs. McCombs will work to make the District accountable to students and schools; dramatically improve students' preparedness for college and career; and ensure excellent classroom instruction in every Camden City School District classroom.



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