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PRESS RELEASE

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Camden Schools Once Again Show Improvement

District and Renaissance schools continue to make steady progress in elementary and middle grades, with English and Math scores improving for the third consecutive year

Tuesday, September 25, 2018 – For the third year in a row, the majority of Camden’s district and renaissance schools improved their results on the New Jersey state test, announced Acting Superintendent Katrina McCombs.

Taken together, District and renaissance school students have improved from 4.3 percent in the 2014-15 school year to 13 percent proficient in math during the 2017-18 school year, and from 6.5 percent to 18 percent proficient in English language arts during the same period. These schools collectively served approximately 10,000 Camden students last year.

The District continued to make steady improvement in the majority of schools:

- This year 57% of our District elementary and family schools saw increases in student performance.
- Four schools that made significant improvements are Yorkship Elementary, Forest Hill School, Dr. Henry H. Davis Elementary, and Creative Arts Morgan Village Academy. Each of these schools have a lead educator providing regular 1:1 coaching with all teachers, and are using student data to provide individualized interventions to support students in reaching the skills they are most struggling with.

“We are excited to share results that show a continued upward trajectory for Camden Students,” said Acting Superintendent Katrina McCombs. “Most importantly, thanks to the hard work of educators across Camden, this means approximately 500 *more* students are reading or doing math proficiently at grade level than were last year. This data also shows us how much work we still have to do. The gap between our students and those across the state remains large, and we must build on and accelerate these results in order to give Camden children the education needed to be truly prepared for success in life.”

The District’s renaissance school partners—KIPP Cooper Norcross Academy, Mastery Schools of Camden, and Uncommon Schools Camden Prep—also shared their students’ PARCC results.

- At Uncommon Schools Camden Prep, English language arts proficiency rose from 20.5 percent in 2015/16 to 49 percent in 2016/17. Math proficiency rose from 28.4 percent to 52 percent over the same period.

- At KIPP’s Lanning Square Campus, which serves students in grades 6-8 in the recently renovated Whittier school building, English language arts proficiency rose from 35 percent in 2016-17 to 42 percent in 2017-18. Math proficiency at the school rose from 22 percent to 23 percent over the same period.
- Mastery Schools spotlighted results from their Mastery McGraw Elementary School, which has seen results improve from 5 percent in 2015-16 to 16 percent in the 2017-18 school year in ELA, and results in math improve from 4 percent to 20 percent during the same time-period.

“That we can see this amount of academic growth in such a short time is a testament to the dedication of our teachers, staff, students and families,” said Giana Solomon, Director of Regional and Community Initiatives at Camden Prep. “We are also grateful for the support of our neighborhood community and the partnership we have with the district and the Superintendent as we unite to serve all of Camden’s children.”

The progress Camden students continue to make in reading and math is in line with other signs of improvement in the City’s public schools. Last year the graduation rate rose to 67 percent, while drop outs fell to 12 percent in the District. Following intensive staff training, the number of instructional days lost to suspension has also fallen in recent years, meaning more students are in class, learning, for more of the school year.

“Five years after the state took over our District, we have only seen positive movement in our schools,” said Councilwoman Sheila Davis. “The graduation rate is up. Suspensions are down. Three new neighborhood public schools have opened their doors. Today we are celebrating that many more of our students are reading and doing math at grade level. Thank you to the principals, teachers, parents, and students who have worked so hard to achieve this progress.”

The announcement was also used by leaders as a rallying cry for further improvements that must be made. The Acting Superintendent pointed to a need for increased investments in district facilities, and new systems to support effective teaching such as shared professional development and citywide educator working groups that would focus on accelerating student progress.

“Today we are here to highlight two things: First, we are recognizing the hard work our educators and students have put in to make this steady progress, and second, we are recognizing how much work we still have to do. Our students deserve a world class education, and as the leader of this district, I am committed to working with our renaissance and charter school partners, our city’s leaders, educators, and our community members to deliver that in the years to come,” concluded Acting Superintendent Katrina McCombs

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