



CAMDEN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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PAYMON ROUHANIFARD
SUPERINTENDENT

PRESS RELEASE

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District, Renaissance Schools Show Improvement

Nearly all District schools make progress while transformed schools run by renaissance school partners see the biggest gains; early signs that two-track strategy is working

Wednesday, September 21, 2016 – Office of the Superintendent, Camden, NJ – Nearly all District schools made progress on the New Jersey state test, and most renaissance school partners leading former District schools made significant gains, Superintendent Paymon Rouhanifard announced Wednesday. The scores showed for the first time how hundreds of former District students achieved on PARCC after the District transformed several schools to renaissance schools in 2015.

The District gained in progress and proficiency:

- Progress—All but two District elementary/middle schools made progress in math, and all but one District elementary/middle schools made progress in English language arts. High school students made progress in the Algebra II and English language arts exams.
- Proficiency—the percentage of students scoring 4 or 5, the results that indicate college and career readiness, rose from 4.3 to 7.4 percent in math and 6.2 to 10.9 percent in English language arts, across grades 3-8.

“These results are an early indicator that the hard work our students and staff are leading is beginning to pay off,” said Superintendent Rouhanifard. “Test scores are one of many ways we measure progress, and it’s a good sign to have hundreds more students earning proficient results. I’m proud of our kids, our teachers, and our parents, and I’m eager to build on this progress—we have a long way still to go.”

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

For Uncommon’s Camden Prep and KIPP, which did not serve students in testing grades in 2015, this year’s PARCC results are the first statewide scores available. As such, determinations of progress can be best made on a student-by-student basis, comparing the results of students who attended a District school in 2014-15 and a renaissance school in 2015-16.

- Uncommon’s Camden Prep— while only 3.0 percent of the students had been proficient in English language arts when they attended a District school in 2015, 27.0 percent *of the same students* were proficient when they attended Uncommon’s Camden Prep in 2016. In math, the percentage rose from 2.8 to 16.7.
- KIPP—while only 4.9 percent of the students had been proficient in English language arts when they attended a District school in 2015, 22.1 percent *of the same students* were proficient when they attended KIPP in 2016. In math, the percentage rose from 2.5 to 8.2.

“We are very proud of the progress that Camden Prep students have made in one year,” said Michael Ambriz, Chief Operating Officer of Camden Prep, part of Uncommon Schools. “These promising results demonstrate that our students’, families’ and teachers’ hard work is paying off. We also know that we have a lot of work ahead of us to raise achievement for even more Camden students.”

“Our 2015-16 PARCC results for our KIPP Lanning Square Middle School scholars show that clear progress is being made and we're proud of our students for rising to the challenge of this rigorous test. We also know that there is work to be done and we will intensify our efforts to help our scholars achieve further PARCC proficiency,” said Drew Martin, Executive Director, KIPP Cooper Norcross Academy.

For Mastery, which had test results last year, results are available on a year-over-year comparison.

- Mastery—all four of its schools improved in English language arts, and three of its four schools improved in math.

“We partnered with the Camden community in three transformation schools last year and we believe the early signs point to being on the right track. We are proud that the effort our students and our teachers put in last year resulted in progress,” said Joe Ferguson, Chief Operating Officer for Mastery Schools of Camden. “However, we clearly recognize that our schools have a long way to go, and we must work tirelessly to ensure that every student attending a Mastery renaissance school in Camden receives the support they need to be successful in achieving their full potential.”

Overall, the broad progress is a sign that the two-track strategy Superintendent Rouhanifard laid out in the District’s strategic plan, the [Camden Commitment](#)—to dramatically improve District schools while introducing new public schools with strong track records of success—is showing signs of effectiveness.

“Our students, teachers, and staff have worked hard to improve the quality of our schools, and today’s results are a sign that we’re heading in the right direction,” said Mayor Dana L. Redd. “Strengthening our public schools is critical to moving Camden forward, and I applaud the Superintendent for his steadfast leadership in working to make progress across the city.”

“This progress is hard-earned, and I salute our school communities on these results,” said Martha F. Wilson, president of the Board of Education. “We must continue to support our students, engage our families, and improve on these results.”

Taken together, District and renaissance school students combined improved from 4.3 percent to 7.7 percent in math and 6.6 to 12.0 percent in English language arts.

In District schools, families will receive a copy of their child's results by October 26. For questions, parents should contact their school's family & operations coordinator—contact information is [available on the District website](#).

Renaissance school partners serve about the same percentage of special education students as the District—for the 2016 PARCC results, 21 percent of District students, 24 percent of Mastery students, 19 percent of KIPP students, and 18 percent of Uncommon's Camden Prep students receive special education services.

Since KIPP and Uncommon's Camden Prep are still growing, they had fewer test-takers in 2016—122 and 36/33 (for math/ELA), respectively—than Mastery and the District—377/375 and more than 3,000, respectively.

From 2015 to 2016, more than 400 additional District students took the English language arts exam, and more than 500 additional District students took the math exam—a more than 20 percent increase in each subject.

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