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PRESS RELEASE

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Enrollment Application Opens for All Camden Public Schools

New information on school quality released to help parents decide from three-dozen options

Wednesday, February 1, 2017 – Office of the Superintendent, Camden, NJ – District, charter, and renaissance school leaders kicked off the second year of Camden Enrollment today, with thousands of Camden parents again having the opportunity to apply to any of 38 public schools across the City. All District, charter, and renaissance schools are participating in this family-friendly way for parents to enroll their child in the school of their choice. This unified single system replaced an unwieldy approach that involved 17 different applications.

For the first time, families are able to review their options by using information available about school quality from the most recent school year. CamdenEnrollment.org includes the results from the 2016 School Information Cards, which capture how much progress students are making and how effectively other educators believe schools are performing.

“Camden Enrollment is a great opportunity for families to find the best school for their children,” said Superintendent Rouhanifard. “This joint project with renaissance and charter schools helps make decisions easier for families, and that ultimately benefits our students. We’re excited to kick off the application window, and we’re glad parents will have the newest information to inform their decisions.”

School Information Card results are based on students’ academic performance (in which how much progress students make counts twice as much as how well students do) and a school visit by educators from other schools (where they use a checklist to review each school’s learning environment). These results combine to create an overall School Quality Rating, which range from Under Performing to Needs Improvement to Making Progress to On Track.

On the 2016 School Information Cards, three public schools increased their School Quality Rating while two schools decreased and all other schools remained the same. Overall, 31 percent of students in grades K-8 now attend schools that are Making Progress or On Track, which is an improvement from 14 percent in 2015.

Families’ participation in Camden Enrollment is voluntary—all Camden students still have a guaranteed seat at their neighborhood District school. Furthermore, if families are happy with the school their child currently attends, there is no need to take action—their child can stay at that school.

Camden Enrollment is for families whose children are entering kindergarten or 9th-grade, families who are new to Camden City, or any family looking for another public school option. For these families, there is this single, parent-friendly application with a single deadline for the 38 participating District, charter, and renaissance schools.

More than 5,000 families participated in the first year of Camden Enrollment, according to an [independent audit completed by the Center on Reinventing Public Education](#).

Among the report’s findings:

- Families found the new system fair, though more need to know about it.

- Families reported the new system reduced paperwork and effort.
- A large majority of applicants (71%-77%) matched to their first or second choice.
- 65% of surveyed parents were satisfied with their child’s placement.
- Families want strong academics, but they also care about safety, location, positive relationships with teachers, and enrichment opportunities.
- Families used a combination of sources, including the Camden Enrollment web page, experiences of family and friends, and school visits.
- Families want more information about curriculum, safety, and school offerings.”

During the enrollment window, families can speak with enrollment specialists by calling the Enrollment hotline at 856-536-3999, visit the Enrollment Center at 201 N Front Street, and attend school fairs and open houses to learn more about the best options for their child. The second annual Citywide School Fair will be held on Saturday, March 4 at the Kroc Center, with a special 8th-grade preview day on Friday, March 3. Applications, which include up to eight schools in ranked order, must be submitted by Friday, March 31.

All students can participate in Camden Enrollment; students with special needs and bilingual students will receive individualized outreach to make sure their school choices support their learning needs. In addition, Camden Enrollment offers preferences for families that want siblings to stay together in the same school.

Some schools do not have a School Quality Rating because they do not have tested grades or chose not to participate.

Creating a family-friendly enrollment system that gives all families a fair way to access public schools is part of Promise 4 of [Phase Two of the Camden Commitment](#), the District’s school improvement plan.

School Information Cards can also be found at www.camden.k12.nj.us/infocards.

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