



PAYMON ROUHANIFARD
SUPERINTENDENT

CAMDEN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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PRESS RELEASE

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Superintendent Rouhanifard Releases *All Schools Rise: Phase Two of the Camden Commitment* *Updated school improvement plan follows weeks of community feedback; significant steps proposed to continue to turn around long-struggling schools*

September 30, 2015 – Camden, NJ – With parents preparing for Back to School night, Superintendent Paymon Rouhanifard today announced his plan to further improve their children’s education, modernize their school buildings, and enhance safety measures to help them to learn in positive environments.

The plan, entitled *All Schools Rise*, is the second phase of the Camden Commitment, the Superintendent’s strategic roadmap for improving Camden’s public schools. The updated version was created with input from hundreds of students, educators, parents, and residents.

“Eighteen months ago, the District made a series of promises to the community – promises that reflect our commitment to improving school safety, facilities, student and teacher support, parent engagement, and central office effectiveness,” Rouhanifard said. “I’m proud of the progress we’ve made in that time, and I’m also acutely aware of the need to do more.

“*All Schools Rise* was created with the intention of lifting up every school and every student in our City,” the Superintendent said. “In this plan, we’ve defined specific goals and initiatives to deliver on our promises. In the coming months, I look forward to working together to make these goals a reality and ensure that *All Schools Rise*.”

Among the new goals outlined in *All Schools Rise*:

- The percentage of students who feel safe in and around their schools will increase by at least 10 percent.
- Twice as many students will attend school in a building that has been constructed or significantly renovated since 2000.
- More than twice as many students will attend high-quality schools.
- The percentage of parents who say they have what they need to help their children succeed will rise by at least 10 percent.
- School community members will have a 90 percent satisfaction rate with the Central Office.

The plan drives toward the overarching mission of all students having the opportunity to attend an excellent school in their neighborhood. According to the School Information Card results from 2014-15, only 14 percent of Camden students currently attend a school rated in one of the top two categories. By the end of *All Schools Rise*—the 2016-17 school year—the District plans to have at least 40 percent of students in high-achieving schools.

The plan outlines three or more action items for each goal. As with the first Camden Commitment, which was created after Superintendent Rouhanifard’s 100-day listening tour, many of the steps come directly from suggestions made by the hundreds of students, educators, parents, and community members who participated in the District’s community engagement process in July and August 2015. For example, the multiple enrollment processes in Camden continue to frustrate parents, so simplifying enrollment is included as an action item, as is reducing out-of-school suspensions, supporting teachers and principals, and increasing parent access to information.

A [one-page overview and a full version of *All Schools Rise*](#) are available in English and Spanish; an [introductory video](#) is also now available.

Superintendent Rouhanifard made the announcement at Octavius V. Catto Community Family School, surrounded by Catto Principal Byron Dixon, educators, parents, students, alumnae, and community leaders.

Camden High School alumnus and valedictorian Dr. Shawana Moore, who is now an assistant professor at Thomas Jefferson University, said, “As a graduate of Camden’s public schools, I am living proof of what is possible in our city, but all too rare. *All Schools Rise* focuses on improving the foundational components – safety, facilities, parent engagement, and instruction – that kids need in order to excel in the classroom. I am confident that Superintendent Rouhanifard and the District, by working with the community, will continue to make progress in these key areas and more of our children will have the tools needed to make their dreams a reality.”

Camden parent Shirley Irizarry said, “With two kids enrolled in Camden public schools, I know first-hand that there are many factors that contribute to a great education. *All Schools Rise* is a comprehensive plan that addresses a range of issues that families face. We need to increase safety and improve support for educators and students, and we really need to simplify school enrollment—it’s too complicated right now. I’m glad that this, along with many other important issues, are a priority for the coming years.”

Superintendent Rouhanifard, who assumed his position more than two years ago, has used the Camden Commitment to guide the District’s top priorities after years of instability and underperformance. Following the release of the first Camden Commitment, the graduation rate increased six points, more children attended pre-K than ever before, and students, staff, and families all reported feeling safer in and around school. Additionally, teachers began receiving regular feedback to strengthen instruction, and parents gained access to important information about Camden public schools, thanks to newly released [School Information Cards](#).

Superintendent Rouhanifard plans to lead a series of discussions throughout October to describe *All Schools Rise* and provide additional information to students, educators, parents, and community members on the Citywide effort to ensure there’s a great school in every neighborhood, for every child.

Click [here](#) to see the original Camden Commitment and quarterly progress reports.