

Keeping Our Promise To The Children Of Camden

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With The Camden Promise Initiative, Governor Christie Continues To Act On His Commitment To Provide Every Student With A High Quality Education And The Tools For Future Success

"I love this city and I believe that families in this city deserve better than what's happening right so we're going to work hard together to get there and do it together."

- Governor Chris Christie, 9/10/13

Today Governor Christie joined Camden School Superintendent Paymon Rouhanifard to announce the State's formal partnership with the Center for Family Services Camden Promise Program. The partnership reflects Governor Christie's commitment to expanding opportunities for students in communities across New Jersey in and out of the classroom.

Bringing Historic Change To Camden's School District:

Believing further inaction in the face of a broken system to be immoral, Governor Christie took decisive action to reform the Camden School District. The Christie Administration, through the new state-appointed superintendent and leadership team, and in coordination with local and community leaders, is taking direct oversight in implementing the necessary reforms of the school district to start delivering better results for Camden students and their families.

Superintendent Rouhanifard has brought renewed energy to the district and implemented a number of significant steps to begin that reform in his first school year:

The formation of a safety-corridor initiative along with Mayor Dana Redd, that creates safe walking routes for students to and from school;

Tackling the issue of the district's school drop-outs by going door-to-door to re-enroll students;

The creation of three new technology demonstration centers to give students access to computer labs and tools needed to prepare for success in a 21st century economy;

A successful 100-day listening tour which resulted in the participation of hundreds of students, parents and community members who came together on behalf of the future Camden and its schoolchildren;

Launched first annual Parent Survey to increase feedback; over 1,800 completed during Parent-Teacher conferences;

Increased feedback for teachers and more individualized instruction for all students, especially students with disabilities.

Providing Students And Their Families With The Resources And Tools Necessary For Success:

The Camden Promise Program will join Paterson and Newark as part of the New Jersey Promise Communities Initiative. These programs are intended to result in a positive long-term, sustainable model for how resources are effectively utilized to help children succeed in urban communities across New Jersey.

Built on the core principles of the Harlem Children's Zone model and in partnership with the New Jersey Community Development Corporation (NJCDC), NJ Promise Communities create a comprehensive continuum of services designed to prepare young people to succeed, from the cradle to college and a career, not only to deliver on needs in the classroom, but before and after school as well.

The program will continue the work already begun in the past few months in Camden to expand services and offerings for all school-age students and their families. By utilizing the participation of community partners and stakeholders, the Camden Promise Program will serve to actively engage students and their families in a number of different areas and support the reform efforts already under way in the Camden School District.

Partnerships already exist with more than 15 local organizations in Camden with plans in the works to increase local outreach within the community.

Promise Community Efforts Are Positively Supporting Camden Families:

Promise Neighborhood Family Success Center: Funded by the Department of Children and Families to provide access to a myriad of services including financial literacy, tutoring, resume and job search support, family dinner night, parent support meetings, parent advisory groups, and fatherhood support programs.

Baby's Best Start: A nine week program that works with parents and family members to ensure newborns get off to the best possible start. After the completion of the program, staff continues to follow up with families through regular home visits and phone calls on a monthly basis.

Born To Read: Part of the national Campaign For Grade Level Reading effort, Born To Read is a collaborative effort to ensure more Camden children are reading at grade level by the end of third grade. Born to Read has established partnerships with the City of Camden, Bookmates, schools, health providers, social workers, community nonprofits, faith-based groups, business and civic leaders, and local foundations to achieve their goals.

Food Access: A virtual grocery store that enables Camden residents to order groceries online - either independently, or through the outreach efforts of the Family Success Center. This service is provided through partnerships with the Christie Administration, the Camden City Office of the Mayor, Center for Family Services and ShopRite.

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