

Building A Better Future For The Next Generation

Governor Christie Returns to Camden to Speak At Cooper Medical School and Camden County College

Today, Governor Christie returns to Cooper Medical School of Rowan University to speak to the school's first graduating class. In July 2012, Governor Christie marked Cooper's grand opening and celebrated a historic moment in the administration's ongoing efforts to create a world-class higher education system.

[FLASHBACK VIDEO: Governor Christie At The Grand Opening Of Cooper Medical School](#)



This school's approach to integrating scientific basics with early clinical experience and patient care is already yielding results. Cooper Medical School's first graduating class will consist of 43 students with 98 percent of the inaugural class starting a residency program next year. The match rate nationally is just 93.8 percent.

Cooper Medical School also has made the City of Camden much more than home. Through the creation of innovative, community-oriented programs, students and faculty are an integral part of the city while in school and then by continuing to practice in the region after graduation.

HISTORIC REFORM OF NEW JERSEY'S HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

In 2012, continuing his strong record of bipartisan cooperation and compromise to put results before politics, Governor Chris Christie signed the bipartisan "New Jersey Medical and Health Sciences Education Restructuring Act" into law,

achieving a long-awaited, dramatic overhaul and strengthening of the state's higher education system that had eluded leaders in the state for more than a decade. This significant and sweeping restructuring legislation has promoted long-term, sustainable economic growth and high academic achievement by fostering three hubs of higher education excellence in the northern, central, and southern parts of the state.

This includes Camden, where the Cooper Medical School of Rowan University is celebrating its inaugural graduating class.

PARTNERING EDUCATION WITH BUSINESS TO FACILITATE JOB TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

Governor Christie will remain in Camden today to meet with Camden County College students enrolled in College Readiness Now. This program is a partnership between high schools and community colleges that provides cost-free remedial classes for college credit to high school students who would otherwise have to pay for remedial classes after graduation.

Initially a pilot program in the 2013-2014 school year, College Readiness Now served 921 students from disadvantaged backgrounds who were not yet college-ready in English and/or mathematics. Sixty-five high schools partnered with 18 community colleges in the program that was funded with \$620,000 in federal College Access Challenge grants from the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE). In the current school year, a total of \$1.25 million in funding was allocated for the program. There are 92 high schools partnering with 19 community colleges to serve 1,860 high school students.

In Camden County, 54 percent of program participants enrolled in Camden County College or a public 4-year college.

Governor Christie has allocated \$1 million for College Readiness Now in the proposed Fiscal Year 2017 state budget. The funding would significantly expand the program, reaching many more students across the state.

Another successful partnership between local school districts and colleges, Dual Enrollment, is also credited with helping over 10,000 high school students transition to college. Dual Enrollment programs offer simultaneous credit for high school and college attendance, again at no cost, saving students thousands of dollars in tuition and fees. National studies show conclusively that if a student completes even one college course while in high school, that student's chances of graduating from college increases significantly.

MOUNMENTAL CHANGE TO CAMDEN'S SCHOOL DISTRICT

Governor Christie has taken 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 Paymon 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.

Camden's graduation rate has increased for the fourth straight year, and stands at 64 percent for the 2014 - 2015 school year. ([Press Release](#), 1/7/16)

- Since 2012, Camden City School District's graduation rate rose from 49 to 64 percent while the dropout rate fell from 20 to 15 percent.
- The graduation rate among Latino students has increased from 44 percent to 66 percent since 2012.
- The graduation rate among special education students rose from 38 percent to 56 percent.

"SURVEY: CAMDEN SCHOOLS MAKE PROGRESS"

"A majority of respondents to a Camden School District survey indicate the city district has made progress on its promise to improve safety, school business, student and teacher support and communication with parents...Camden Schools polled 504 people in a month-long survey this summer to gauge district progress in executing five points for improvement Superintendent Paymon Rouhanifard identified 18 months ago in the Camden Commitment...the district reported "the majority" of respondents believe it made progress on Camden Commitment promises since the initiative rolled out in 2014. Nearly **70 percent** of respondents indicate the district made progress in training teachers and strengthening curriculum. Respondents indicate the district made the least amount of progress in modernizing schools with new technology, according to the district." (Carly Q. Romalino, "Survey: Camden schools make progress," [Courier-Post](#), 8/26/15)