



Camden City School District

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Paymon Rouhanifard
Superintendent

PRESS RELEASE

New school year kicks off with high-tech security pilot in Camden's two flagship high schools

Camden Mayor and Police Captain join Superintendent in celebrating a new approach to security that promotes positive behavior, increases focus on student learning

August 21, 2014--Office of the Superintendent, Camden, NJ – Superintendent Paymon Rouhanifard today announced that Camden's two largest high schools will feature safer learning environments this year as they are being equipped with new safety systems. This high-tech upgrade is part of Citywide changes aimed at making sure students at all schools feel as safe as possible on their way to and from school and while they are at school.

The *Physical Security, Access, & Identity Management Pilot* will reduce the number of permitted points of egress in each large high school from over 80 to approximately 10 - 15. The pilot program also provides for the first time over 50 cameras to help keep students secure by monitoring hallways and building entrances. In addition, the pilot program introduces electronically-monitored doors to District schools. With this new technology, security officers will be able to better monitor the exterior of the building, making students and staff more secure and comfortable as they work hard to prepare for college and careers.

"This high-tech pilot represents another tangible way that Camden schools are making progress in ensuring students are safe and focused on their learning," said Superintendent Rouhanifard. "While this update is overdue, Camden students and staff will now have the more purposeful security system and safer school environment that they deserve."

Designed to improve safety, climate, and culture, the system will allow Camden's two largest high schools to deploy security officers more effectively throughout the building, and promises to reduce the risk of weapons or unauthorized people entering the building undetected.

"Public safety and public education are the hallmarks of top-class cities, and Camden is making remarkable progress in each of these critical areas," said Mayor Dana Redd. "With these increased security measures, students will be able to devote their attention to what matters most—making sure they are learning and moving forward with their education."

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Smart doors, as they are known, restrict building access to those with pass cards, and automatically alert security officers of unauthorized exits. Similarly, by integrating smart cameras into the building's alarm system, security officers will now be able to monitor activity in real time.

The \$1.3 million pilot also includes a significant investment in server and storage capacity, allowing both schools to save security footage for 50 percent longer in the event that footage of a safety incident needs to be recalled.

The *Physical Security, Access, & Identity Management Pilot* is a critical element of Promise 1: Safe Students, Safe Schools in the [Camden Commitment](#), the District's strategic plan. The pilot program is just one of a series of new initiatives the Superintendent has developed to improve safety for students in and around their schools:

- Superintendent Rouhanifard also released [updated Safe Corridors maps](#) that now include more than two-dozen Safe Havens across the City.
 - o These maps, which will be posted in the entranceway of each District school before the first day of school, guide students and families to routes that are monitored more heavily by police officers during school commute times. The maps now include Safe Havens, locations where students can go in the event of an emergency.
- In addition, Mayor Redd announced that the New Jersey Positive Behavior Supports in Schools pilot was expanding from three schools to four. Rather than focusing on punitive measures and, for example, only contacting families when a student misbehaves, this program suggests a new way to think about student discipline and emphasizes the positives.
- Finally, Captain Gabriel Camacho described his department's increased collaboration with the District. With the recent appointment of Executive Director for School Safety Anthony Bland, the District is now meeting weekly with the leadership of the Camden County Police Department. In the coming weeks, the police officers and school safety officers will begin to share their expertise through joint trainings that are part of the broader redeployment and retraining of school safety officers.

"More and more, Camden is a safer place where children can play freely and adults can worry less," Chief Scott Thomson said in a statement. "Partnering with the school district significantly furthers our efforts to make sure that all Camden residents feel safe. We look forward to this continued knowledge-sharing."

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To learn more, please [visit our website](#) to learn more about Promise #1: Safe Students, Safe Schools.

The Camden City School District's 2014-15 school year begins on Tuesday, September 2. Today's announcement represents the start of the District's back to school campaign – the Great Schools Kickoff. Over the next 12 days, the Superintendent, his Cabinet, and the District's Advisory Board of Education will be meeting parents, teachers and students to make sure families and schools are well-prepared for a successful and productive school year. To learn more about the *Great Schools Kickoff*, or the Superintendent's back to school itinerary, please contact the District Office of Communications.

For photos, interviews, or additional information, contact Maita Soukup from the Camden City School District Office of Communications at: msoukup@camden.k12.nj.us.