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SUPERINTENDENT

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PRESS RELEASE

Superintendent Rouhanifard Hits the Streets to Register Camden's Youngest Scholars for Free Pre-school

Early Childhood Team Makes Final Push in Spring Enrollment Drive, Having Registered More Than 1,780 Students for a High-Quality Pre-Kindergarten Program This Fall

May 26, 2015 – Camden, NJ – Staff from the Camden City School District's Office of Early Childhood Education have spoken to more than 1,000 Camden parents, grandparents, and caregivers in the last six weeks to share information about the City's free, high-quality pre-school programs, which are available to any child who will turn three on or before October 1, 2015.

Today, Superintendent Rouhanifard joined the effort to talk with families in North Camden about the critical foundation that pre-school gives children to succeed throughout school, college, and career. Research has found that participation in pre-k improves high school graduation rates, leads to better performance on standardized tests, and even improves a young person's lifetime earning potential¹. The pre-k outreach effort is a key element of the [Camden Commitment](#), the District's strategic plan, which aims to achieve 100 percent pre-school enrollment by fall 2016.

"The facts are clear: pre-school programs are a great equalizer," Superintendent Rouhanifard said. "High-quality pre-k programs, like those offered here in Camden, give students from low-income, urban communities the best foundation for success when they enter kindergarten. That is why we are working tirelessly to enroll as many of Camden's three- and four-year olds as possible for this fall."

So far this year, the spring enrollment drive has successfully filled 66 percent of available pre-k places, putting the District on-track to meet or exceed last year's enrollment figures of 97 percent by the first day of school. Registration will be open throughout the spring and summer, so it is not too late for parents to enroll their three- and four-year olds in one of a high-quality early learning program for September 2015.

To register, families need to fill out a registration packet, available from the Office of Early Childhood Education, and provide:

¹ National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) at Rutgers University

- three current proofs of Camden residency;
- the parent or guardian's photo ID;
- the child's original birth certificate;
- immunization records;
- physician examination records; and
- custody papers (if applicable).

The Office of Early Childhood Education will be available throughout the summer to support families who do not have all of the required documentation, or have questions about the registration packet. Contact information is included below.

"The bottom line is that access to and preparation for college begins in pre-school," Rouhanifard concluded. "The impact high-quality pre-k education has on at-risk students' life chances is profound. That is why we won't stop until every pre-school place in Camden is filled for the upcoming school year."

Families with questions about their child's pre-K placement for this fall should visit the Camden City School District website or contact Dr. Cheryl Chavis or Lisa Braxton at (856) 966-2000 ext. 38321. For those with additional questions or concerns, please contact Katrina McCombs, Director of Early Childhood Education, at kmccombs@camden.k12.nj.us.

To request interviews, images, or additional information, please contact Maita Soukup from the Camden City School District Office of Communications at msoukup@camden.k12.nj.us or 856-375-4737.
