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PRESS RELEASE

SUPERINTENDENT, MAYOR, POLICE AND FIRE CHIEFS ANNOUNCE NEW COMPREHENSIVE SAFETY PLAN

Focus on coordinating, communicating to ensure student safety

February 27, 2014--Office of the Superintendent, Camden, NJ – Superintendent Paymon Rouhanifard this morning announced Camden City School District’s new, comprehensive five-point safety plan. Camden Mayor Dana Redd, Camden County Police Chief Scott Thomson, and Camden Fire Department Chief Michael Harper joined Superintendent Rouhanifard for the announcement.

The plan responds to feedback the Superintendent received last fall during his 100-day listening tour, including results from a 2013 survey that showed half of elementary school students do not feel safe in the hallways and bathrooms of their school. The five-point plan also follows the release last month of the [Camden Commitment](#), in which the first promise to families and the community was “Safe Schools, Safe Buildings.”

“Families deserve for their children to be safe on their way to school, at school, and on their way home,” Superintendent Rouhanifard said in the Woodrow Wilson High School library. “We are rethinking our safety efforts—from staff recruitment and training to student support and intervention to community collaboration—and will better serve our school communities through this comprehensive approach.”

The safety plan focuses on five points:

1. Leverage technology to improve coverage and strengthen building access
2. Build a continuum of response
3. Align human capital
4. Build training plan
5. Reinvigorate and rebuild Safe Corridors/Safe Havens

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“Increasing public safety is my top priority, and the release of today’s five-point plan is another critical step forward for the people of Camden,” said Mayor Redd. “Through close collaboration between schools, the central office, and the community, we can build a smarter safety structure.”

Rouhanifard spoke of the blended nature of modern school safety, which integrates technological systems with safety personnel. The district plans to invest in more ID card swipes and surveillance cameras and recruit, train, and reorganize security officers and senior leadership.

Rouhanifard also revealed a [new map](#) showing the zones for the revitalized Safe Corridors/Safe Havens program. These zones will be full of Safe Havens, locations such as schools, places of worship, and fire stations, where children can go in an emergency.

Rouhanifard also focused on building the pilot Positive Behavior Supports in Schools (PBSIS) at three schools. This pilot program, as well as the district’s broader work about establishing a continuum of response, connects to the guidelines issued last month by U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder and U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan on school discipline. With this plan, Camden City School District is moving away from a zero-tolerance approach and toward a more progressive plan involving restorative justice.

“This plan represents Superintendent’s Rouhanifard commitment to taking the lead on school safety issues,” Thomson said. “I know Camden has seen safety plans before, but this plan is more focused and includes greater collaboration than past efforts. My team and I work closely with the Superintendent and his team, and I deeply believe in their ability to improve public safety for Camden students.”

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