

NEWSLETTER

CAMDEN PARENT & STUDENT UNION



Wednesday, 27 August, 2025



COMMUNITY TEACH-IN: BUILDING POWER, DEMANDING CHANGE

Our recent **Community Teach-In** brought parents, students, and neighbors together to uncover the truth about Camden's public schools and to build a movement for lasting change.

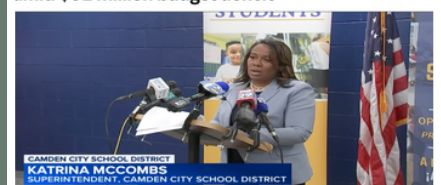
From **school closures and layoffs** to **budget crises and state takeovers**, Camden has endured years of disruption. But our community has never stopped fighting for quality education, equity, and local control.

THE BACKSTORY: FROM TAKEOVER TO TODAY

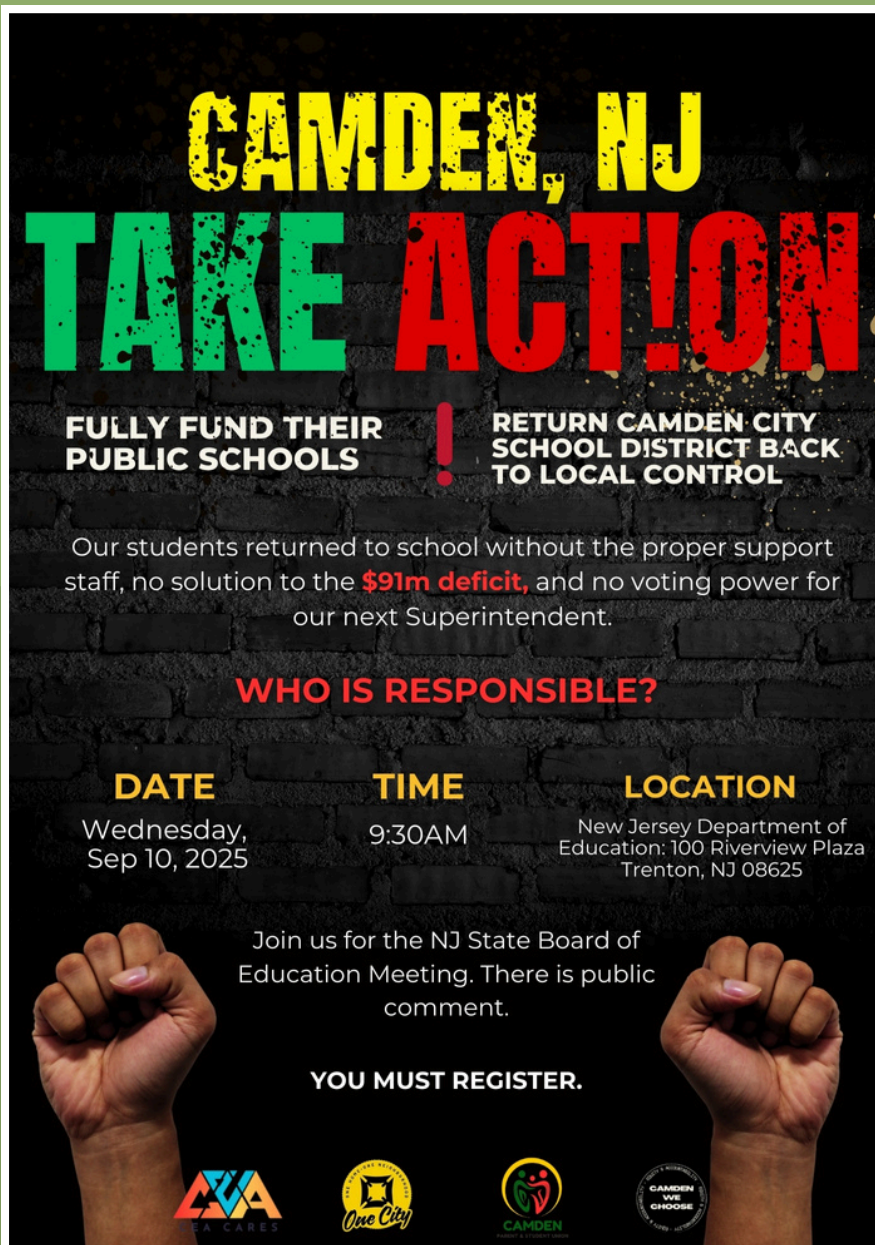
- 2012** The **Urban Hope Act** opened the door for charter networks to expand in Camden.
- 2013 – 2018** Under Superintendent Paymon Rouhanifard's Camden Commitment Plan, **7 schools were closed**, hundreds of educators lost their jobs, and the "One Camden Enrollment" system was launched—forcing families into charters and renaissance schools.
- 2018 – 2025** Superintendent Katrina McCombs inherited a shrinking district. Despite community pushback, closures continued, enrollment dropped from **11,660 in 2013 to just 5,764 in 2024**, and Camden now faces a staggering **\$91 million budget deficit**.
- 2025 – TODAY** The district is in crisis:
- 117 employees cut, including teachers, counselors, climate & culture staff, and dropout prevention officers.
 - Camden High Campus reduced from 4 principals to just 1.
 - Public schools now receive only 17% of the \$417M budget, while Renaissance schools take 39%.



Camden School District makes 'very difficult cuts' amid \$91 million budget deficit



HOW YOU CAN YOU TAKE ACTION

A poster with a black background and a brick wall texture. At the top, 'CAMDEN, NJ' is in yellow and 'TAKE ACTION' is in large green and red letters. Below this, two white boxes with black text are separated by a red exclamation mark. The first box says 'FULLY FUND THEIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS' and the second says 'RETURN CAMDEN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT BACK TO LOCAL CONTROL'. A paragraph follows: 'Our students returned to school without the proper support staff, no solution to the \$91m deficit, and no voting power for our next Superintendent.' Below this is the question 'WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?'. A table with three columns: 'DATE' (Wednesday, Sep 10, 2025), 'TIME' (9:30AM), and 'LOCATION' (New Jersey Department of Education: 100 Riverview Plaza, Trenton, NJ 08625). Below the table, two raised fists are shown on either side of the text 'Join us for the NJ State Board of Education Meeting. There is public comment.' and 'YOU MUST REGISTER.' At the bottom are four logos: 'A Cares', 'One City', 'Camden', and 'Camden We Choose'.

RAISE YOUR VOICE IN TRENTON

Join us at the NJ Department of Education meeting to demand accountability for Camden schools.

Register by **September 4** to secure your spot!



REGISTER NOW

Scan the QR code or tap the button to register today and make your voice heard.

**TOGETHER, WE CAN FIGHT FOR THE SCHOOLS OUR
CHILDREN DESERVE.**

HOW YOU CAN YOU TAKE ACTION

SUPPORT DR. COE-BROCKINGTON

Fill out the quick survey—show that the community believes in her leadership.



scan me

or

TAKE SURVEY
NOW

tap me

*Take the 3-Question
Survey to share your
opinion*



**WE CAN DO THIS!
"WITH A LITTLE HELP
FROM OUR FRIENDS."**



WE CAN DO THIS!

"WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS."

Where community voices come together to shape our concerns and future of Camden High School's Athletic Field.

5:00pm | Tuesday September 9th, 2025

City Council Meeting Camden City Hall 520 Market St.
Camden, NJ

JOIN THE 1:1:1 CAMPAIGN:

Commit to action on the 1st Day, 1st Week, and 1st Month—because change doesn't stop at one event.

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL (SEPT 5, 8:30 AM)

Celebrate our students! Greet them, show love, and post with #BacktoExcellence and #OurFuture.

LEADERSHIP IN ACTION:

Dr. Coe-Brockington's Impact in Just **57 Days**



57 DAYS OF CHANGE: WHY CAMDEN NEEDS DR. COE-BROCKINGTON

Amid this chaos, Dr. Davida Coe-Brockington stepped in as Interim Superintendent.

In just 57 days, she has proven what leadership with vision and integrity looks like:

- ✓ Restored funding to rehire cut positions.
- ✓ Relocated central office staff into Morgan Village to fully utilize public school space.
- ✓ Hosted the first open School Board meeting in July, prioritizing transparency.
- ✓ Introduced teacher-friendly reading & math curriculum.
- ✓ Rebuilt morale among principals, educators, and staff.

BUT HERE'S THE URGENCY:

She has only 66 days left in her interim role.

SHOULD DR. COE-BROCKINGTON BE MADE PERMANENT SUPERINTENDENT?



Take the 3-Question Survey to share your opinion

WE BELIEVE CAMDEN DESERVES A LEADER WHO LISTENS, ACTS, AND RESTORES TRUST. NOW, YOUR VOICE MATTERS

WHY THIS MATTERS

Camden is at a crossroads. With declining enrollment, relentless takeovers, and deep budget cuts, our schools are being pushed to the brink. Yet, in the middle of the storm, we see hope—a leader who has already shown results in weeks, not years.

Now it's up to us:

Will Camden continue on a path of manufactured crises?

Or will we rise and demand leadership that puts students first?

THIS IS OUR MOMENT. THIS IS OUR FIGHT. THIS IS OUR FUTURE.

A LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT TO PARENT & STUDENTS

Dear CCSD Families,

As we begin this school year, I want to take a moment to speak directly with you. Last year, our district faced difficult budget decisions that resulted in the loss of many valued student support staff members. Their dedication and contributions can never be fully replaced. This means that now, more than ever, we must come together as families, staff, and community partners to ensure our students receive the support they need.

This year, our primary focus is on strengthening mathematics and literacy instruction. These skills are critical to the future success of our students, and we are committed to providing a high level of support to help them grow. To further this work, each school will have a Culture and Climate Team made up of teachers, support staff, parents, and community partners. These teams will build positive school environments and maintain strong communication between home and school.

In addition, every school will provide weekly newsletters to keep you informed and engaged in your child's education. Safety will also remain a top priority. Our Culture and Climate Teams will support these efforts, and we want families to know that our schools continue to be safe havens. We uphold our Safe Haven policy, including protections for immigrant families under ICE guidelines.

Here are the safety and security measures in place across our schools:

1. **Secure School Access:** Entrances remain locked during the school day. Visitors must check in with a valid photo ID through our visitor management system, which tracks who is on campus at all times.
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3. **School Wide Security Presence:** Trained security personnel are assigned to every school. They provide visible support and build positive relationships with students.
4. **Surveillance and Monitoring:** Security cameras are in place throughout our schools to deter unwanted behavior and allow for quick response if needed.
5. **Staff Training:** All staff receive ongoing training in safety protocols, including recognizing threats, de-escalating situations, and supporting students in crisis.
6. **Social Emotional Support:** Safety includes emotional well-being. Counselors, mental health resources, and student support teams are available to ensure every child feels safe and supported.
7. **Communication Systems:** In the event of an emergency, families will receive immediate updates through our mass notification system using phone, text, email, and website.



A LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

TO PARENT & STUDENTS

Because our focus is on academics, we are asking for your partnership in supporting our cell phone policy during instructional time. Limiting distractions helps students stay engaged in learning. We also ask for your support in promoting daily attendance. Students cannot reach their full potential if they are not present. While we understand some families may feel uncertain, please know we have strong safety measures in place, and your child's education depends on consistent classroom learning.

We are also expanding mental health services to ensure all students receive the care they need.

School Based Youth Services Program is offered at Eastside High School, Cooper's Poynt, Thomas H. Dudley, and Dr. Henry H. Davis Family Schools. Services include mental health counseling, health referrals, youth development groups, substance abuse prevention, and family engagement activities.

Hazel Health Services provides telehealth-based therapy and counseling for all CCSD students at no cost to families or the district. Services include behavioral health assessments, virtual sessions, crisis consultation, and care management.

Child Assault Prevention (NJ CAP) provides statewide workshops for students, parents, and staff focused on reducing vulnerability to assault, neglect, and bullying.

NJ4S (Statewide Student Support Services) provides wellness services in schools and community locations. These include prevention workshops, early identification, and intensive intervention services.


The Student Assistance Coordinator, Ms. Nefessa Wiggins, provides counseling, prevention services, and referrals through partnerships with county providers such as The Work Group, NJ Performcare, and Camcare Behavioral Health.

Crisis referrals are managed by SBYSP team members, school nurses, counselors, and child study team psychologists and social workers, who complete the paperwork needed for psychiatric screenings.

Our Solution Welcome Center is also available to assist families with resources, district concerns, or connections to support services.

As we move forward, I know this school year may look different in some ways, but what has not changed is our shared commitment to our children. The partnership between home and school will remain strong, successful, and thriving. By working together, we can make sure every child has the opportunity to grow, to learn, and to succeed.

Lighting the path to excellence for all of our students,



Dr. Davida Coe-Brockington
Acting State Superintendent

