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## **“Can Camden Students Continue the Comeback?”**

*Camden Education Fund Report shows that After Pandemic Learning Loss, Camden Schools Are Rebounding on Pace with the Statewide Average*

**[April 23, 2024] Camden, NJ** - Local non-profit Camden Education Fund (CEF) today released a [report titled: Can Camden Students Continue the Comeback?](#) This short data brief is an overview of recent education trends in Camden that includes both the progress made in Camden from 2015 - 2019, as well as the learning loss and recovery that occurred between 2020 and 2023 as a result of the pandemic. It also shares survey data that shows what families believe are some of the biggest challenges for Camden students.

“Data shows that despite setbacks from the pandemic, Camden students are on the rise again,” shared Giana Campbell, Executive Director of Camden Education Fund. “We believe that to help our students come back, we needed to have an accurate understanding of where things are. This report provides a citywide look at student learning data - across traditional district, renaissance, and charter schools - to help inform community leaders, educators, and parents on how we can work together to support students moving forward.”

A few core findings from the report include:

1. Camden students fell behind during the pandemic, but data shows they are catching up at a pace similar to the state average in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math.
2. Data shows Camden students have made learning gains over time. Current test scores not only show that students are rebounding but are still outperforming where they were a decade ago.
3. Citywide enrollment has remained constant, but enrollment shifts between school types helped drive learning gains before the pandemic and is now helping with recovery.
4. Families believe teacher shortages, student social emotional well-being, and academic quality are the top challenges facing Camden schools.

“We appreciate this report for casting a light on the hard work of our students and teachers in Camden,” added Superintendent Katrina McCombs. “Despite setbacks, we know they are making progress to rebound from the pandemic and regain the progress made over the last decade. We look forward to working with our school and community partners to use this information to continue to help further accelerate learning for our students.”

Camden Education Fund used publicly available student learning and enrollment data released in January of 2024 to create the report. The analysis combines data from across all school sectors in Camden - traditional district schools, renaissance, and charter schools - to create a better understanding of citywide trends, inclusive of learning results and student demographics. Survey data was collected by a local Camden parent organization, Parents Invincible, in the fall with nearly 300 parents responding.

“This report gives us a great tool to think more about how we can support student learning citywide,” shared Mayor Vic Carstarphen. “As a public servant in this city, I know that our students are gifted, our staff are dedicated, and our city is focused. We are committed to the learning of all of our students, and by working together we can ensure that Camden continues to rise.”

In addition to key findings using student learning data, the report also identified solutions that local educators, community members and policy makers can work together on to further accelerate student learning. They include:

- Invest in Academic Support Strategies that Research Shows are Working
- Provide More Programming and Supports to Students Outside of Schools and Classrooms
- Create a Supportive and Attractive Environment for Educators
- Continue Investment in Healthy and Updated Buildings that Meet Community Needs

“At Uncommon Schools Camden Prep, we remain committed to ensuring all students recover from the learning loss and social-emotional impact experienced during the pandemic. We are grateful to be part of a community of educators focused on providing a quality education for Camden students every day,” said Julie Jackson, Co-CEO of Uncommon Schools. “We are energized by the report’s strong findings, though we recognize that more work needs to be done to improve student academic results.”

Camden Education Fund will use the short brief to inform local policy makers and community leaders and engage in discussions to determine what other supports or investments can be made to support Camden schools and students.

To read the report or learn more about Camden Education Fund see [here](#).

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