



**TO:** David Hespe  
Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Education

**FROM:** Scott Gordon  
Chief Executive Officer

**SUBJECT:** Renaissance Schools - Facilities Notification (McGraw Elementary)

**DATE:** March 25, 2015

This letter is to formally notify you and your department of Mastery Schools of Camden's plans to operate a K-5<sup>th</sup> grade school at the McGraw Elementary School facility beginning in August 2015. McGraw is located at 3051 Fremont Street, Camden, New Jersey 08105. The facility current consists of approximately 16 classrooms, a multi-purpose room/cafeteria, and an auditorium. The facility is located within the approved Renaissance project's urban campus area.

Currently operated by the Camden City School District, McGraw Elementary is one of the lowest performing schools in New Jersey with a statewide percentile of 2% in Academic Achievement on the 2013-14 NJ School Performance report. Through our partnership with the Camden City School District, Mastery Schools of Camden intends to significantly improve the educational outcomes for students currently attending McGraw Elementary.

We project enrollment next year (2015-16) to be approximately 335 students in grades K-5. We will revise future enrollment projection after we receive parent and community input.

Upon approval of our Renaissance School facility notification, Mastery Schools of Camden will submit preliminary plans for substantial renovation to the Commissioner by June 30, 2015. Mastery intends to begin discussing proposed plans with the community in April and May 2015. It is Mastery's understanding that the current building does, and any proposed plans will, comply with facility regulations pertaining to the health and safety of pupils, per N.J.S.A. 18A:36C-4.b(11).

Mastery intends to finance the substantial renovation using Qualified Bonds (e.g., QZABs) and other construction-related financing instruments.

Attached is a draft of the proposed Memorandum of Understanding between Mastery Schools of Camden and the Camden City School District.

**MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT  
BY AND BETWEEN  
THE STATE-OPERATED CAMDEN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
AND  
MASTERY SCHOOLS OF CAMDEN**

This Memorandum of Agreement, dated March XX, 2015, is entered into between the State-Operated Camden City School District, located at 201 North Front Street, Camden, New Jersey 08102 (“District”), and Mastery Schools of Camden (“Mastery”), a New Jersey non-profit corporation.

**WHEREAS**, on July 7, 2014, the Commissioner approved Mastery’s renaissance project application, in accordance with the Urban Hope Act; and

**WHEREAS**, on XXX, 2015, the Commissioner approved Mastery’s proposal to utilize an additional facility for its renaissance school project; and

**WHEREAS**, the Parties desire to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement; and

**NOW THEREFORE**, it is hereby agreed by and between the parties as follows:

1. Mastery will:

- a. Operate a K – 5 school at McGraw Elementary School (the “McGraw facility”), located at 3051 Fremont Avenue, Camden, New Jersey 08105, beginning in the 2015-2016 school year.
- b. Name the school “Mastery: Francis X. McGraw Elementary School.”
- c. Enroll any rising kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade student in the current McGraw attendance area who wishes to attend Mastery: McGraw, including all special education and bilingual/ESL students, up to Mastery: McGraw’s maximum enrollment.
- d. Offer a first-round interview to any member of McGraw’s current staff who is interested in employment with Mastery: McGraw in the 2015-2016 school year.
- e. Substantially reconstruct the East Camden Middle facility, pursuant to the Urban Hope Act, *N.J.S.A. 18A:36C-1, et seq.*, and its implementing regulations.
- f. Host at least one community meeting by June 1, 2015 to discuss plans for substantial reconstruction.
- g. Submit plans for substantial reconstruction of the East Camden Middle facility to the Commissioner, in accordance with state guidelines.
- h. Permit District to post these draft substantial reconstruction plans to the District website.

2. The State-Operated Camden City School District will:

- a. Provide families in the McGraw attendance areas with information on Mastery.
- b. Include Mastery: McGraw in its kindergarten mailing, to be sent to all families of Camden prekindergarten students.
- c. Grant Mastery reasonable access to the McGraw facility prior to June 2015 to allow for planning for substantial reconstruction.
- d. Upon request, provide Mastery with all available facilities-related documentation.
- e. Enter into a lease agreement or deed transfer for the McGraw facility with Mastery, in accordance with the Urban Hope Act.
- f. Designate the McGraw facility as temporary space until substantial reconstruction is complete, in accordance with the Urban Hope Act.
- g. Designate the attendance area attached as Exhibit A as the Mastery: McGraw attendance area.

State-Operated Camden City School District

Mastery Schools of Camden

\_\_\_\_\_  
Paymon Rouhanifard  
State District Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Scott Gordon  
Chief Executive Officer

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

**Exhibit A: Mastery: McGraw**

The Mastery: McGraw Attendance Area is bounded by the following streets: Federal Street, South Crescent Boulevard, Myrtle Avenue, Highland Avenue, Marlton Pike, Rosemont Avenue, Boyd Street, Berkely Street, and 30<sup>th</sup> Street.

