



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

**FROM:** Scott Gordon  
Chief Executive Officer

**SUBJECT:** Renaissance Schools - Facilities Notification (Molina 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-8<sup>th</sup> grade school at the Molina Elementary School facility beginning in August 2015. Molina is located at 601 Vine Street, Camden, New Jersey 08102. The facility current consists of approximately 30 classrooms, a library, a multi-purpose room/cafeteria, and an outdoor playground. The facility is located within the approved Renaissance project's urban campus area.

Currently operated by the Camden City School District, Molina Elementary is one of the lowest performing schools in New Jersey with a statewide percentile of 1% 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 Molina Elementary.

We project enrollment next year (2015-16) to be approximately 525 students in grades K-8. We expect future enrollment to increase and will revise our 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 – 8 school at R.C. Molina Elementary School (the “Molina facility”), located at 601 Vine Street, Camden, New Jersey 08102, beginning in the 2015-2016 school year.
- b. Name the school “Mastery: R.C. Molina Elementary School.”
- c. Enroll any rising kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade student in the Molina attendance area who wishes to attend Mastery: Molina, including all special education and bilingual/ESL students.
- d. Offer a first-round interview to any member of Molina’s current teaching staff who is interested in employment with Mastery: Molina in the 2015-2016 school year.
- e. Substantially reconstruct the Molina 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 Molina facility to the Commissioner.
- h. Permit District to post these draft substantial reconstruction plans to the District website.
- i. Permit District to co-locate its pre-kindergarten program with Mastery: Molina in the Molina facility.

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

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

State-Operated Camden City School District

Mastery Schools of Camden

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Paymon Rouhanifard  
State District Superintendent

Scott Gordon  
Chief Executive Officer

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

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

**Exhibit A: Mastery: Molina Attendance Area**

The Mastery: Molina Attendance Area is bounded by the following streets: Ferry Street, Riverside Drive, Pearl Street, North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, State Street, North 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Erie Street, North 7<sup>th</sup> Street, North 10<sup>th</sup> Street, and Linden Street.

