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To the Parents of Children in the Collingswood School District:

With regard to the upcoming meeting with borough, police and school officials referenced in my recent letter¹ to you, I would like to provide some clarity as to the reason for this gathering.

In the State of New Jersey, every school district enters into a Uniform State Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) Between Education and Law Enforcement Officials.² This statewide policy is meant to ensure cooperation between education and law enforcement officials, and most importantly protect the educational environment. Just like every other school district, the Collingswood Superintendent and Police Chief signed this agreement.

Article 4 of the MOA requires mandatory referrals to law enforcement for the most serious crimes. All remaining offenses are left to the discretion of school employees to report under Article 4.13 of the MOA. In deciding whether to refer these matters the principal of the school or their designee should consider the nature and seriousness of the offense.

This past spring the attorney for the Collingswood School District asked that my office attend a meeting on May 25th, 2016, regarding reporting requirements under the MOA. The purpose of this meeting was to follow up on a previous training educating schools when they must notify the police of crimes. I sent two assistant prosecutors and a detective to this meeting.

My office has instructed numerous school districts and police chiefs as to when schools should notify police of crimes involving students at meetings and a well-attended seminar last fall. Only the Collingswood School District has had a problem implementing the statewide MOA.

I asked for the upcoming meeting because I am committed to helping the Collingswood School District understand what occurred at the May 25th meeting and to provide clarity for the Collingswood families.

¹<http://camdencountypros.org/letter-parents-children-collingswood-school-district-7116/>

²<http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/law/moa/>

In a recent newspaper article³ regarding the May 25th meeting, a school official said an assistant prosecutor from my office threatened him. However, others attending the meeting said the assistant prosecutor was instructing them on the law and perceived no threat.

This school official also left the meeting believing I issued a directive changing police notification requirements under the MOA. I want to assure you that I never issued a new directive. My office has no jurisdiction over the schools and cannot change the MOA without the consent of all those who signed the agreement.

After addressing this issue with officials last week, the matter was resolved. As memorialized in Mayor Jim Maley's letter⁴ on June 28th, 2016, there was no change to the protocol regarding how schools would notify police to respond to criminal activity under the MOA.

I will use the upcoming meeting to explain thoroughly to school officials that I did not and cannot order them to change statewide reporting procedures under the MOA. And I will also reaffirm with the Collingswood Police Chief that any directive from me is always in writing and addressed to all police chiefs.

As promised in my last letter, we will promptly update the public on the progress and outcome of the upcoming meeting.

Be well,



Mary Eva Colalillo
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³http://www.philly.com/philly/education/20160701_Collingswood_schools_chief_Calling_police_on_kids_not_our_idea.html

⁴<http://camdencountypros.org/memorandum-agreement-issue-clarification-collingswood-62816/>