

**THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK**

Office of Facilities Planning, Room 106D EBA Education Building, Albany, NY 12234
Tel. (518) 474-3906 Fax (518) 486-5918
WEBSITE: <http://www.nysed.gov/fmis/facplan/>

November 24, 2009

Ms. Charlotte Gregory
Superintendent
Berlin CSD
53 School Street
Berlin, New York 12022

Dear Superintendent Gregory:

I am writing to clarify the department's position with respect to the district's proposed facilities plan. I have received numerous phone calls from concerned citizens as well as several news articles. As you know my staff and I are familiar with the district's facilities after previous tours and attendance at a board meeting. Additionally, I previously wrote to you regarding the status of the facilities and the serious deficiencies that currently exist.

I have reviewed my letter to you, dated October 20, 2008, in which I discussed the issue of consolidation of the Grafton Elementary and Stephentown Elementary students into a renovated and expanded Berlin Elementary School. After reviewing my comments and the needs of the district, I find no reason to change the decisions I reached at that time.

Absent demographic changes since our discussion and my correspondence to you in October 2008, my decision regarding aid to the district in the event of a consolidation remains valid. This would include additional aid to the district for the construction of ancillary spaces including auditorium, cafeteria, library and teacher's conference spaces. This would increase the maximum cost allowance for the facility by approximately \$1.8 million above the normal renovation allowance.

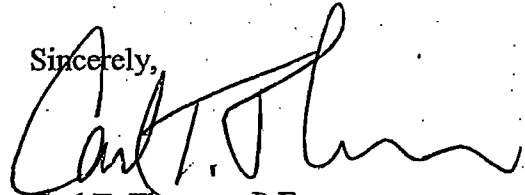
Please note that the above considerations do require board action indicating the closure of both the Stephentown and Grafton facilities by the end of construction at a reconstructed Berlin Elementary School. We are aware that Stephentown is already closed.

Several concerned citizens have raised questions about whether the aid is "final" or "locked in". As you know from our approval process, when we agree conceptually with the direction that a district wishes to take, as we do in Berlin, we estimate the aid that is available for the project. Actual building aid is not "locked in" until final plans and specifications are reviewed and approved, the district signs a construction project and the project is executed. However, the magnitude of the additional aid offered by the department for this project is secure and has now been provided to the district in writing on two occasions, allowing for proper district financial planning in connection with the project.

Questions have also been raised regarding the need to dispose of the Stephentown and Grafton facilities in order to secure aid. We are aware of and satisfied with the district's efforts to negotiate for the eventual transfer of the Stephentown facility and will expect a similar effort with Grafton in the event the plan moves forward. This proposal will save the State and local taxpayers from future capital costs by removing the need to renovate these facilities in the future.

Should you require any further information or support, please don't hesitate to call either myself or your project manager, Curt Miller, at the above number.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carl T. Thurnau', written in a cursive style.

Carl T. Thurnau, P.E.
Director of Facilities

Cc: Curt Miller