



Bethel Public Schools

1 School Street, P.O. Box 253, Bethel, CT 06801
Fax: (203) 794-8723 – website: www.bethel.k12.ct.us

Christine Carver, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools
(203) 794-8601

Susan Budris
Director
Special Education & Pupil Services
(203) 794-8616

Kristen Brooks, Ed. D.
Assistant Superintendent of Schools
(203) 794-8613

Michelle D. Rutledge
Director
Teaching & Learning
(203) 794-8755

Theresa D. Yonsky
Director of Fiscal Services
(203) 794-8603

Robert Germinaro
Supervisor
Facility & Security Operations
(203) 794-8609

October 5, 2017

Commissioner Currey
Department of Administrative Services
State of Connecticut
450 Columbus Boulevard
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Commissioner Currey,

On behalf of the Bethel Board of Education, we are requesting a Space Standards Waiver from the Department of Administrative Services for the Ralph M.T. Johnson School - Project No. TMP-009-SBQL. The district has worked collaboratively with the Office of School Construction since last Spring and we have made the modifications to the site plans to meet the educational needs of our program and modified plans to fit within the existing envelope of the school building.

The community of Bethel has been working on the renovation of R.M.T. Johnson School for over 10 years. The building (1980), although well maintained has: (1) failing heating and ventilation systems; (2) is not ADA compliant; (3) does not meet current security and safety standards; (4) roof that is at the end of its lifespan; (5) electrical and utility systems are at capacity; (6) building code violations; (7) hazardous materials; (8) site traffic and circulation conditions which are unsafe; and (9) the current school does not meet the educational needs of the students.

Bethel does not have a declining enrollment. Although we conducted a second enrollment analysis by Milone and MacBroom which projected stable enrollment for the next ten years, our actual enrollment is trending higher than projected enrollment. As of today, our actual elementary enrollment (Pre-K-5) is 1482. According to the Milone and MacBroom study, our highest elementary enrollment in the 10 year project was 1370. We are exceeding it this year by 112 students.

The Director of the Office of School Construction was kind enough to come for a tour of the school in the spring of 2017. The space does not provide for the complexity of programs we are required to provide

“Our Primary Purpose is to Improve Student Achievement.”

our students and instructional and non-instructional storage. We do not have adequate intervention or special education spaces and are in violation of student confidentiality. We have worked as a district to create in-district special education programs to create fiscal efficiencies and better programs. In addition to pull out special education programs for students with learning disabilities, spaces were created for students with autism, multi handicaps and behavioral disorders.

The district, with community input, extensively studied the grade configuration of the district. On May 11, 2017 the Bethel Board of Education approved the educational specifications inclusive of a grade configuration which would make R.M.T Johnson a 3-5 school. This is widely supported by the community, as it allows all of our schools to be in three year increments (with the exception of high school). This means that over 200 (addition of a 3rd grade) students will be added to the existing school population. Many other options were considered: Build-as-New; do nothing; changing grade configurations; closing schools, etc.

Our team has met with the Office of School Construction several times to problem solve our space needs. We were able to come up with a solution, which does have some program sacrifices, but allows us to meet the needs of our students. As Bethel is a fiscally conservative community, the design reflects its values by minimizing any impact to the building structure and maximizing efficiencies to meet student needs.

In summary, R.M.T. Johnson School is designed to serve 3-5 students for the next 30-50 years. We have successfully collaborated with the Office of School construction to accommodate our program within the existing envelope of the building. We are respectfully requesting the space standard waiver (1,173 square feet) for the R.M.T. Johnson School.

I am happy to answer any questions you might have regarding the request or any aspect of the project.

Sincerely,



Christine Carver, Ed.D.
Bethel Public Schools

C: Kostas Diamantis, Director of the Office of School Construction
Theresa Yonsky, Director of Fiscal Services
Michelle Dixon, Office of School Construction
Joe Costa, Perkins Eastman
Tina Greco, Perkins Eastman
Bethel Board of Education