

# Wadsworth

CITY SCHOOLS

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October 25, 2018

Ms. Melanie Drerup  
Chief of Planning  
[melanie.drerup@ofcc.ohio.gov](mailto:melanie.drerup@ofcc.ohio.gov)  
Ohio Facilities Construction Commission  
30 West Spring Street, 4th Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Ms. Drerup:

I would like to thank you for taking time last week to meet with our board of education. I am writing this letter in response to the October 24, 2018 letter I received from you. On behalf of our board of education, we acknowledge the language you reference in your letter that is part of our 2009 segmentation agreement. There is another section within the same agreement (VI. K.) that addresses the enrollment issue as well. The language is as follows:

- *“The procedures provided in Commission Rule 3318-4-02 shall be implemented to modify the scope of work or total budget for the Project in situations where the student enrollment declines to such an extent that additional classroom facilities are not necessary to house the total student population at the time the Project is complete. The School District Board and the Commission agree that time is of the essence with respect to any changes in the Segment One Facilities Plan and that all decisions regarding changes shall be expedited. The School District Board’s actual enrollment status will be monitored annually and enrollment report updates may be requested by the Commission which may result in revisions to the Facilities Plan.”*

Our belief, based upon the input of many of those in our district that were involved in the planning process in 2008/2009, is that the enrollment language dealt with grade-level bands, not total district enrollment. What I mean by this is that once the master plan was created and identified eight (8) schools, our understanding was that enrollment would be reviewed and adjustments may be made to the size of each building. We never understood that an entire building could/would be removed from the master plan because students could be dispersed to other buildings. Had we understood this at the time when the decision was made to segment, a different decision may have been made on how to proceed as the possibility of losing state funding for a building may not have been worth

the risk. When we make the comment, as we have to you at our meeting, that we believe how excess space is interpreted by the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission has changed, this is what we are referring to. Is there documentation that you can provide that demonstrates that the language included in our 2009 segmentation agreement was presented in the context of total district enrollment, with the possibility of losing access to future funding for a full building if enrollment did not increase or declined, rather than the understanding of those in our school district, as presented above?

Under our understanding of what we agreed to, we believe that we should not build a new Central Intermediate School for 867 students as projected ten (10) years ago. Rather, we should build a new Central Intermediate School for the updated projected number of 685. We do not agree that the school should be eliminated from funding consideration nor do we agree that we could disperse all 685 students into our remaining buildings if Central Intermediate School disappeared.

In addition to the interpretation issue, there are other issues we discussed last week that I think are worth noting so they are not lost as we work through the interpretation issue. The other issues are as follows:

- Based upon the conversation at our meeting, we believe that it was acknowledged that the OFCC capacity used for each building is not accurate for all buildings. In particular, if I understood what Mr. Prenosil shared at the meeting, it appears the capacity limits are based upon the premise that the entire master plan was completed, which it was not. This means that there is space that doesn't currently exist in some buildings, "phantom space," that is being used to determine if our buildings have the capacity to absorb all the students from Central Intermediate School, as has been preliminarily presented by your organization. It is my understanding that Mr. Prenosil will reevaluate the capacity limits for the buildings that were segmented out of phase 1 of our project, in order to determine the true capacity for each building as it currently exists.
- Based upon the information we sent Ms. Healy to complete the new enrollment projection report for our district, she has our 2018-2019 grand total for enrollment at 4,710. I see that you note this number is slightly higher than the number shown by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). As there are many ways to calculate student enrollment; can you direct me to the source from ODE that you reviewed? Yesterday, I sent the spreadsheet Ms. Healy used to determine the total count to Mr. Prenosil.
- Based upon our conversation at our meeting, it is my understanding that your organization will work with us to factor our increased special education population into the capacity limit projections as well. Included on the spreadsheet I sent to Mr. Prenosil is our total special

education population enrollment number and the number of students by each disability category. Since the 2009-2010 school year, our special education population has increased by eighty-nine (89) students. In addition to this, we have moved students back into our district that were previously placed in programs outside of our district because we did not offer the program they required, per their individual education program. As an example, we have added emotional disturbance/cross categorical and multiple disability classrooms for all grade span levels throughout our district rather than sending students identified with these type of disability to programs outside of our district. As I shared at our meeting, there is a good chance that the square footage formulas you use to calculate space are showing a ratio of 25:1 for the rooms these programs occur in when Ohio Administrative Code requires much smaller ratios (depending on the disability type the ratios can be as low as 8:1).

- Based upon our conversation at our meeting, it is our understanding that your organization does not consider future phases of our master plan to be an amendment to the initial agreement, as stated in Section I. H. of our 2009 segmentation agreement:

*“Future Segment. In the event the School District Board desires to proceed to an additional segment of the Project after completion of Segment One of the Project, the School District Board shall make application to the Commission for funding for such future segment. Any future segment, after Segment One of the Project, if undertaken by the School District Board, is subject to the availability of state funding and will be agreed to through an amendment to this Agreement. Any future segment will utilize the same respective state and local shares and other provisions as set forth in this Agreement. Assistance for any subsequent segment shall not include any additional work on a building included in a prior segment unless the district demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Commission that the district has experienced since the completion of the prior segment an exceptional increase in enrollment in the grade levels housed in that building.”*

What we heard you say at our meeting, when you were asked this question, is that your guidelines have changed since the agreement, and the new guidelines trump any previous agreement.

We believe that as a segmented district, whose initial project is still active and not closed out, that we should not be considered as starting over with our new request. Rather, our application that is referenced in the language above should give us the ability to indicate we would like to proceed with the next phase, and our segmented status should allow us to be given priority to enter back into the planning process with you. Said a different way, we should be considered an active district, not a district that is looking to apply for the first time and has to wait.

Ms. Melanie Drerup  
October 25, 2018  
Page 4

In your letter, you write about fiscal responsibility. We share the same concern. What is ironic about all of this is a major factor in why our district decided to segment was that we did not feel some of the items included in the facilities included in the master plan for update had reached the end of their useful life, as some buildings were roughly nine (9) years old at the time of segmentation. We made a decision that it would be fiscally irresponsible to ask our community and state to pay for items that were not needed at the time. Now, with the recent developments we are experiencing in trying to move into phase 2 of our master plan, we feel we are being punished for making a fiscally responsible decision in 2009.

In conclusion, we appreciate that you have a difficult job to do as you attempt to provide equitable access to limited money in a time of unprecedented requests for your assistance. That said, we do not feel that there should be the ability to eliminate a school from the agreed upon master plan as decisions were made by our board of education, district leadership, and community based upon the understanding that the master plan involved eight (8) schools. We welcome further dialogue on these issues and we look forward to your response to our questions and the updated building capacity limits, as described above.

Sincerely,



Andrew J. Hill, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

cc: Wadsworth City School District Board of Education  
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