

ROOSEVELT UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

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BOARD OF EDUCATION

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December 4, 2009

New York State Education Department
Commissioner David M. Steiner
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12234

Dear Commissioner Steiner:

I am in receipt of your communiqué dated December 2, 2009 concerning the construction project at the Roosevelt Senior High School. I am displeased and disappointed with your decision regarding this matter.

The school nurse has received numerous complaints from students and staff, especially from those suffering with respiratory illnesses, such as asthma. Although the air quality reports and other reports provided by the construction and project managers have indicated that “there is no impact to building occupants from any materials or activities related to the roofing and ventilation activities”, we cannot ignore the complaints received by those persons occupying the facilities on a daily basis. Ms. Wilhelmina Funderburke, Board Trustee, has entered the building on numerous occasions and had to exit the premises because of her inability to properly breathe in the building. On a personal note, I have also experienced many of the same physical symptoms the students and staff have complained about – inability to breathe, watery and itchy eyes, etc. I do not trust these reports.

The Board of Education is working diligently with the Superintendent of School and his cabinet to ensure the safety and well-being of our children and staff, more importantly, to ensure the continuity of our children’s education. We have received proposals from the unions that will assist us in this transition.

On Thursday, December 3, 2009, the Roosevelt Board of Education reluctantly complied with your directive to “take immediate steps to resume work on the high school roofing and ventilation project under the existing contract;” however, the Roosevelt Board of Education will not be responsible for any unfortunate events that may take place as a result of your directive. Your communiqué is a clear indication that you and the New York State Education Department assumes all responsibility from this point forward and, additionally, shows no regard for the health, safety and welfare of our children, employees and to our community.

Sincerely,

Bishop J. Raymond Mackey, Chariman
Roosevelt Board of Education

xc: John B. King
Charles Szuberla
Carl Thurneau
Roosevelt Board of Education
Robert-Wayne Harris, Superintendent of Schools

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