



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education

350 Main Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-5023

Telephone: (781) 338-3000

December 17, 2002

Harry Harutunian, Superintendent
Reading Public Schools
82 Oakland Road
Reading, MA 01867

Dear Superintendent Harutunian:

You have asked for clarification of the Department of Education's position on the construction of the *new Sunset Rock* project and the *Barrows renovation* school construction project. These projects were approved in FY00 and currently are ranked Number 62 and 78 respectively on the School Building Assistance Priority List.

These projects were approved for placement on the Priority List based on the submittal of a long-range facility plan and application that detailed the need for these projects. In accepting these projects, it was our understanding that *both* projects were needed to resolve the stated need. To date, I have received no official documentation from local officials that indicates to me that the stated need or the plan to address the stated need has changed. We would therefore, expect that *both* school construction projects will move forward.

As I have indicated in the past, the order in which the projects are started is a local decision. Once projects are placed on the Priority list, project construction may start immediately, but state regulations would require that project construction must start when funding is authorized. The Sunset Rock School Project was placed ahead of the Barrows project on the Priority List for a number of reasons. The new school was designed to substantially resolve the stated enrollment issue. In addition, when multiple schools are planned, constructing the new school first would alleviate the overcrowding situation and mitigate the effect of the renovation on students.

I hope this information will be of help. Please contact me at 781-338-6520 if I can provide further clarification.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christine M. Lynch".

Christine M. Lynch
Administrator
School Building Assistance