

Dr. Carrol A. Thomas Consulting, LLC.

November 06, 2012

Dear Superintendent of Education:

First and foremost, I hope that you, your staff and students remained safe during the recent, tragic Hurricane Sandy.

Unfortunately, my school district is familiar with Mother Nature's wrath, having suffered through two Hurricanes – Rita in 2005 and Ike in 2008 — that devastated the Beaumont Independent School District. Naturally, we directed our first efforts toward restoring and repairing our facilities so we could get our students back into the classrooms. That was a herculean effort in itself, and my thoughts are with you as you go through that process.

After the dust settles, so to speak, you will have to deal with your insurance company and FEMA about paying for the damage. I can tell you from personal experience that this process is burdensome and puzzling. As educators, our specialized knowledge does not equip us to deal with disaster recovery claims under insurance policies and grant programs. After Hurricane Ike, my team and I greatly underestimated the school district's insurance claim for wind damage to its buildings. The insurance company balked at paying even the small amount of money we claimed because our rigorous cleanup efforts had minimized the appearance of storm damage. We also became very frustrated with navigating the maze that is the emergency grant process.

We were fortunate to obtain assistance from a consultant to help with those issues, and I recommend him to you. His name is Scott Favre. As a direct result of Mr. Favre's involvement in our insurance and grant claims, the Beaumont Independent School District recovered approximately ten times the amount that I originally estimated for the damage to the district's facilities. Mr. Favre obtained more than 23 million dollars in State Assistance and subsequently recovered more than twice that number through insurance and Federal Program Assistance. Mr. Favre's involvement allowed my staff and myself to continue with the daily operations of the school district and ensured that all of our damage was properly documented, and subsequently compensated through insurance, State Grants and/or Federal Recovery Assistance.

As you read this, you may be thinking that your district fared well during this event and that the damage to your buildings was minimal. I encourage you to contact Mr. Favre and invite him to visit your district. It is highly likely that the storm caused damage to your buildings that is not obvious except to trained professionals. I was amazed at the damage that Mr. Favre discovered in many of our buildings where we originally thought there was no damage. With Mr. Favre's assistance, my school district obtained

payment for all of the damage to our facilities, ensuring that our other dollars could be spent educating our students.

Although you may think that the insurance adjusters and FEMA representatives have your best interest at hand, I have firsthand knowledge that they do not. I was surprised to learn that their first mission is to minimize payments. I originally believed the insurance adjusters and FEMA representatives when they told us the damage to our facilities was minimal. However, that simply was not true. The discussions and negotiations with these representatives became very adversarial and I would not suggest tackling the process without a consultant such as Mr. Favre.

I suggest that you retain a consultant such as Mr. Favre as soon as possible. I know that right now your first priority is to clean up the storm damage. However, it is important that the school district document the damage before, during and after the clean up process in order to protect your insurance and grant claims. Mr. Favre is the right person for that job.

Scott Favre is a tremendous supporter of NABSE. I proudly requested that he attend our annual conferences so that he could share his expertise and direct knowledge about disaster recovery for school districts. His presentations and support during these conferences has been informative and well received from our members. I urge that you contact him as soon as possible for assistance with your disaster recovery efforts.

Please do not hesitate in contacting me on my cell number at 409-838-7252, or at my office at 409-860-5605, if you have any questions. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carrol A. Thomas".

Carrol A. Thomas ED. D.
Retired Superintendent - Beaumont Independent School District
President - NABSE