



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shirley L. Huntley

10/28/2008: Senator Huntley and Principal Patricia Mitchell of PS/IS 48Q

SHIRLEY L. HUNTLEY October 27, 2008

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State Senator Shirley L. Huntley and Principal Patricia Mitchell of PS/48-Q.

For years, students at PS 48 in Jamaica had to eat lunch, take gym classes and hold school events in a crowded, multi-purpose room. Administrators tried to get the 72-year-old building renovated to have the necessary facilities for their 360 students, but it was impossible.

"It's well-maintained, but it's old and can't sustain the upgrades we need," PS 48 Principal Pat Mitchell said.

Last week during Community Board 12's monthly meeting, parents and community members learned that the school is not only going to get those facilities, it will be getting a new bigger, state-of-the-art building. State Senator Shirley L. Huntley (D-Jamaica) and the city School Construction Authority (SCA) announced on October 17 that plans are underway to build a new school building next to the school at 155-02 108th Avenue

The building will teach students from kindergarten through eighth grade, feature air-conditioned rooms and have 650 seats, according to the School Construction Authority.

"For years these kids were not able to play sports or graduate in a proper space," Huntley said. "This is a done deal."

Huntley said she began talking with officials from the School Construction Authority in February after she had many meetings over the rezoning plans for the Jamaica area. The Senator believed that a new school was needed to complement the future development of the neighborhood.

"Since Jamaica is changing so much, we could use the additional seats. It's been something I've had in my brain for a long time," she said.

Board members applauded Huntley and the SCA for working hard to bring a much-needed educational boost to the children in southeast Queens.

"She is truly doing what she said she'd do when she went to Albany-serve our community,"

said the board's third Vice Chairman, Adjoa Gzifa.

The school will be built in the playground of the current facility, located on 155-02 108th Avenue, according to Kendrick Ou, the director of operations for the SCA. Although a construction timeline is not yet set, Ou said the SCA is looking to open the school between in about two to three years.

"We've started the design process and begun looking at ideas," he said.

Parents and community members are also welcome to share their thoughts on the construction since the SCA will be taking comments from them until November 19. Senator Huntley and the board have organized a meeting where parents can voice their thoughts on the school construction to Department of Education officials on October 29 from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. at Praise Tabernacle Church at 108-11 Sutphin Boulevard

"I encourage everyone to come to the meeting," Ou said. "Every comment we get is read and taken into consideration.

As for the old building, Huntley said it would not be demolished since it is eligible for preservation through the city's Landmarks Preservation Commission. The senator said that she hopes to continue using the building to serve the educational needs of both children and adults.

For more information on the October 29 meeting call Senator Huntley's office at (718) 322-2537.

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