



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brian Kavanagh

Kavanagh, Colleagues Request DOT Temporarily Suspend Construction Disrupting Learning at PS 8 in Brooklyn

BRIAN KAVANAGH October 23, 2020

| ISSUE: **SCHOOLS, CONSTRUCTION, EDUCATION, TRANSPORTATION, BROOKLYN**



On October 23, 2020, Senator Kavanagh and his colleagues who represent Brooklyn Heights pushed the Department of Transportation to suspend noisy construction activities during school hours that had been disrupting student learning at PS 8, located on the corner of Hicks Street and Poplar Street next to the construction site, until noise could be mitigated more effectively. The legislators also requested that DOT better monitor the noise being produced by construction and report their findings. The text of the letter is below; the original may be viewed via the link above.

October 23, 2020

Polly Trottenberg, Commissioner
New York City Department of Transportation
55 Water Street
New York, NY 10041

Dear Commissioner Trottenberg:

We write regarding ongoing noise concerns resulting from the Department of Transportation's Hicks Street Retaining Wall construction project in Brooklyn Heights.

Previously, our offices raised a number of concerns about this project (see our October 7th letter, attached for your reference), beginning with the fact that there was inadequate communication with the affected community, especially with Public School 8, which is located near the site. In response, DOT met with us, the PS 8 administration, and the Parent Teacher Association to discuss the project. During these conversations, representatives of DOT promised to monitor noise levels and air quality, and provided assurances that for many people in the area construction noise would not meaningfully exceed the level of ambient noise of BQE traffic and, in any case, noise would not significantly disrupt normal educational activities at the school, even those activities that would be conducted outside the school building due to COVID-19 concerns.

Unfortunately, we have received complaints from PS 8 and a resident on Poplar Street that the noise from the construction site is extremely loud and disruptive. The school administrators have reported that the noise has been so disruptive that teachers need to use microphones and speakers to communicate with students being educated in person in classrooms with windows on Poplar Street. This is unacceptable and inconsistent with DOT's

assurances.

It is our understanding that DOT has recently reported that noise levels are below standards; however, to date we have received only very limited summary data from the noise monitoring, which is not sufficient to discern how significant the noise levels are near the school or at other locations. We request that that DOT provide more detailed data on levels of noise that are being recorded by the monitors and your assessment of the effect those levels would be expected to have on the school and the community. In addition, we ask that DOT tell us the status of the noise mitigation measures that are currently in place, and what additional measures can be implemented to mitigate the noise experienced by the staff and students at the school and residents of Poplar Street. Finally, we request that DOT immediately suspend noisy construction activities near PS 8 during school hours until adequate noise mitigation can be implemented to prevent learning from being disrupted.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions or if you would like to discuss the situation, please feel free to contact any of us directly or via Greer Mayhew in Senator Kavanagh's office at 718-875-1517.

Sincerely,

Brian Kavanagh

State Senator

Nydia Velázquez

Congresswoman

Stephen Levin

Councilmember

Jo Anne Simon

Assemblymember

cc: Lara Birnback, Executive Director, Brooklyn Heights Association

Keith Bray, Brooklyn Borough Commissioner, DOT

Patricia Peterson, Principal, Public School 8