



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jose Peralta

## Senator Jose Peralta proposes the construction of a permanent addition to PS 143 to alleviate chronic overcrowding

JOSE PERALTA April 14, 2015

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State Senator Jose Peralta (D-East Elmhurst), joined by about 100 parents, today proposed to build a permanent addition to Corona's Public School 143, The Louis Armstrong Elementary School, to alleviate the chronic overcrowding at the facility. The new annex would replace the current mini-building and the six temporary classroom units (trailers).

“No child should be educated in a trailer,” Senator Peralta said. “Especially in 21st Century New York City, to have kids learning in trailers is just unthinkable and it must stop.”

Senator Peralta noted the area where the building would be constructed belongs to the Parks and Recreation Department. Senator Peralta has continually reached out to Parks, the Department of Education and the School Construction Authority starting two years ago asking the city agencies to work together and consider his proposal.

In response to the proposal, then Deputy Chancellor Kathleen Grimm wrote: “We agree that one potential solution to the overcrowding at P.S. 143 would be to build a permanent addition on site where the mini-building and temporary classroom units (TCUs) are currently located. As you are aware, that land is owned by the Parks Department.”

Last April, in relation to the proposal to build a permanent addition to PS 143, the Parks Department wrote to Senator Peralta and said, “my staff has been in discussions with the School Construction Authority regarding the proposed school expansion that would result in the permanent elimination of a portion of a jointly-operated playground.” The Department added, “Parks and the SCA agreed to work together to address the open space requirements for the school and surrounding community should a permanent school annex be constructed.”

“As of today, there has been no response to the proposal and obviously no action has been taken,” Senator Peralta lamented. “I understand the need for recreational area, but PS 143 is atypical to schools in my community in that there is a good deal of open and recreational space on its grounds and immediately nearby.”

PS 143 was built for about 900 students, and today enrolls about 1,800. Because of this acute overcrowding, the first lunch period begins at 9.50 a.m.

“We, as parents, support Senator Peralta’s proposal. And if the new building becomes a reality, I am sure the academic achievements of our kids will improve because there would be less students per classroom,” said Angelica Salgado, mother of a first and third graders at PS 143 and president of the Parent-Teacher Association. “We need this annex. Our kids deserve better.”

“Our children deserve better,” Senator Peralta, member of the New York Senate Committee on Education, said. “I will not rest until there is a seat for every child. That is the least I can do to ensure that our kids are educated in a decent environment and not in run-down trailers. Good intentions are fine, but time has come to act. And again, I hope the Department of Education, the School Construction Authority and the Parks Department go beyond good words and make the proposal to build a permanent addition to PS 143 real.”