



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael Gianaris

Sen. Gianaris, Council Member Constantinides Announce P.S. 85 to Receive New 476-Seat, State-of-the-Art Annex Building

MICHAEL GIANARIS April 25, 2019

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ASTORIA, N.Y. — Council Member Costa Constantinides, the Department of Education, and the School Construction Authority joined with community leaders, educators and parents today to announce that a state-of-the-art learning annex will replace the trailer classrooms at P.S. 85 — The Judge Charles Vallone School.

Removing these trailers means that all temporary classrooms will have been eliminated from Council District 22, fulfilling Constantinides' more-than-five-year pledge to enhance school facilities. For photos of this announcement, [click here](#).

"No longer will any child in this Council District have to shiver through a math lesson with his or her coat on, or suffer through hot temperatures in one of these trailers," said **Council Member Constantinides, Council District District 22**. "Thanks to our partnership with the Department of Education, the School Construction Authority, and dedicated parents we can construct a new building that better serves the students of P.S. 85. We have been committed to removing these trailers from schools within our Council District, and I can proudly say today that our goal will be accomplished."

"This new annex will provide much needed relief for the students and staff at P.S. 85 allowing us to remove Transportable Classroom Units (TCU's) and provide students with a comfortable and nurturing place to learn," said **Lorraine Grillo, President and Chief Executive Officer of the New York City School Construction Authority**. "Today demonstrates how strong partnerships with local leaders, parents, and community members can enhance our children's learning environment and prepare them for success. As part of the SCA's steadfast commitment to remove all TCUs across the City, 94 TCUs have been removed in Queens, and an additional 31 have been identified for removal."

P.S. 85 — The Charles Vallone School currently operates at 140% capacity with more than 100 pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students learning in what were intended to be short-term facilities, officially known as Transportable Classroom Units. These trailers have been in place for decades, despite complaints that they lack proper heating, cooling or technology for western Queens students to learn in a constructive environment.

This trend will end with a new 476-seat building, which will serve as an annex for P.S. 85. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2020, as the project is currently in the design phase. A new gymnasium-auditorium is included in the plan to replace older existing facilities.

Constantinides and Grillo made the announcement this morning alongside State Sen. Michael Gianaris; Assembly Member Aravella Simotas; Dr. Philip Composto, Superintendent for School District 30; Ann Gordon-Chang, Principal of P.S. 85, and school administrators; and Marie Torniali, Chair of Community Board 1, Queens.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mayor Bill de Blasio, Chancellor Richard Carranza, Queens Borough President Melinda Katz, NYC Councilmember Costa Constantinides, State Senator Michael Gianaris, Assembly Member Aravella Simotas, our principal, Mrs. Ann Gordon-Chang and our Community Educational Council who have worked tirelessly to get a new learning annex for Public School 85 Queens," said **Dr. Philip Composto, Superintendent of School District 30**. "This addition will eliminate the trailers in the schoolyard. We can also count on the School Construction Authority to build a state-of-the-art building for our young people. This new building will provide our children space for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics, which allows us to prepare our children for the 21st Century."

"There are few things as important as providing our children the space they need to learn and get on the path towards a more successful future. I'm glad the students at PS85 will now have that chance, but there is more to be done. Let's keep working," said **Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris**.

"It is about time that students and teachers have the facilities they deserve. A child's academic career is enriched by their classroom experience and I am glad that students in this district will learn in a proper environment that reflects the growing community of Astoria,"

said **Assembly Member Aravella Simotas**. "Children between the ages of 2 and 6 have a unique aptitude for learning and we have to foster that by ensuring that their kindergarten experience is not interrupted."

"Schools are a home away from home for our kids and trailers are neither welcoming nor conducive to learning," said **Marie Torniali, Chair of Community Board 1, Queens**. "A new annex to serve our children and their teachers is a proud moment for Astoria. Kudos to Council Member Constantinides, the Department Of Education, and the School Construction Authority for getting this done."

Since taking office in January 2014, Constantinides has remained committed to replacing classroom trailers with actual school facilities. Constantinides announced in October 2017, through a partnership with Borough President Melinda Katz and the SCA, that a modular building at P.S. 2 in East Elmhurst will be replaced with a permanent facility. Earlier in the year, Constantinides, Katz, and Grillo announced 11 trailers at P.S. 151 in Woodside would also close.