



March 8, 2013

Dennis Walcott
Chancellor
New York City Department of Education
52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

Lorraine Grillo
President
New York City School Construction Authority
30-30 Thompson Avenue
Long Island City, New York 11101

Dear Chancellor Walcott and President Grillo:

As New York State Senators representing the families of PS 87 (160 West 78th Street), we write in support of requests made by the school's Parents Association (PA) in a March 7, 2013 letter to the New York City Department of Education (DOE). Specifically, we urge DOE and the School Construction Authority (SCA) to initiate a comprehensive regimen of air quality tests for PCB contamination and, if the levels exceed federal guidelines, to begin remediation as expeditiously as possible. In addition, DOE must give parents a timeline for this process.

We were dismayed to learn from parents that on December 7, 2012, DOE discovered a "failed" lighting fixture with a burning odor in the school building, which is on the agency's list of schools constructed when PCBs were in regular use, and yet nobody in the school community was notified. Indeed, the fixture was not even replaced. Then, on December 28, 2012, when DOE's Division of School Facilities discovered a PCB leak in the fixture, the agency continued to shirk transparency and accountability until this Monday, when it notified parents in a letter—three months after the initial discovery.

We understand and appreciate that DOE is now prioritizing PS 87 in its plan for the replacement of light fixtures in schools deemed likely to contain PCBs. However, we are deeply concerned that this plan does not address any existing contamination. We share the PS 87 PA's concern that failing to test for and remediate PCB contamination above public health levels established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency would compromise the health and safety of the school community and, particularly, the young students who are most vulnerable to the effects of PCBs.

While we are addressing PS 87 today, we know there are many schools in our districts and throughout the New York City that are at risk of PCB contamination. Replacing light fixtures—especially after a leak has occurred—is a woefully inadequate response to this crisis. We strongly urge DOE and SCA to use best practices learned in other schools with PCB contamination to fully address the contamination at PS 87 and other affected schools, and to keep parents, teachers, staff and administrators informed about any and all steps planned toward that end.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "José M. Serrano". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

José M. Serrano
New York State Senator

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Brad Hoylman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

Brad Hoylman
New York State Senator