

Dear Families,

Representatives from the Task Force that is advocating for SoF around the proposed construction have been meeting with local officials and representatives from the Department of Education. We believe it will strengthen our efforts to gain protections and accommodations for our school if we have a critical mass of families' signatures on a letter that outlines our concerns. We could then distribute and reference the letter at each meeting.

Please read the text and click on the link below if you are willing to have your name included on the letter in the signature. In your response, let us know your full name as you'd like it to appear on the letter.

Thank you!

SOF Construction Task Force
SOFTaskForce@gmail.com

[Click here to add your name.](#)

Text of the letter your name will be added to:

To whom it may concern,

The School of the Future (“SOF”) is a vibrant, highly regarded public middle school and high school serving a diverse student body, one-fifth of which have special needs. SOF is consistently recognized as one of the best public high schools in New York City based on rankings by the *NY Post*, *NY Observer*, and Inside Schools, and is among the few public schools in New York to receive a distinguished Great Schools Rating of 8 out of 10. Over 700 students attend SOF, which is housed in a ten-story, neo-gothic building constructed early in the Twentieth Century to house the Manhattan Trade School for Girls on the northwest corner of 22nd Street and Lexington Avenue.

The school was informed in January that a developer, Toll Brothers, has acquired the property that surrounds the building and will soon commence a three-year residential

construction project. Specifically their plan is to build a 12 story building on 22nd Street and an 18 story building on the Lexington Avenue (Block 878 Lots 15 and 59). We are deeply disturbed by the safety and educational issues raised by this construction, and request that you take all necessary measures to protect the students.

Among the safety and educational concerns are:

- 1 **Structural Collapse**—The construction site would require about 20 feet of excavation along half of the perimeter of the school building, which is fully occupied during normal business hours by 730 students plus teachers and administrators. The school's 10 story building was originally the Manhattan Trade School for Girls which was built in 1905. The school's foundation has not been exposed in some time. Also, the foundation will require underpinning. With the number of building collapses in the recent past, the safety and integrity of the building during the demolition and excavation process simply cannot be assured.
- 2 **Access Dangers**--Construction will occur on both sides of our school building. The staff, students and parents will not be able to access the school entrance without walking by active construction activity. Cranes, material delivery, demolition debris removal and construction trailers may impede access on both sides of school entrances. The increased traffic, materials overhead and general confusion of a construction raises concerns about safety, especially considering that the construction will be ongoing for three years. The most commonly used accesses to the school, from Park Avenue on 22nd Street and from Lexington Avenue from 23rd to 22nd Streets, will be danger zones.
- 3 **Toxic Air Quality**—Demolition and construction are inherently risky to health. Asbestos may very well be removed in the demolition process and air quality may be toxic due to dust and other substances being released. The health of the school community cannot be guaranteed (even with monitoring), since demolition and construction will inevitably have a negative impact on air quality.
- 4 **Noise Disruption**– The demolition and construction will be noisy, regardless of remediation measures taken by the developer. Students and staff will have to struggle with this ongoing clamor in an environment that is disruptive to the school's educational mission. This disruption provokes even more concern because special needs students compose 18 percent of the student body.

The NYCSCA wisely does not allow for work on or around school grounds during school hours. Construction of this magnitude will have a far more severe and disruptive impact

than many of the projects the NYCSA currently bans. We urge the Department of Education and our local officials to act swiftly and effectively in the face of the crisis facing School of the Future.

Sincerely,