



EARLY LEARNING CENTER

March 18, 2019

Barbara Romano
School Principal/Early Childhood Coordinator
Barrington 220 School District
40 E. Dundee Road
Barrington, IL 60010

Dear Cook County Commissioners,

This letter is in regards to File #19-2240, proposed firehouse hearing on March 20, 2019 at 10:30 at 118 North Clark St., Room 567. As the School Principal of the Early Learning Center I am writing this letter on behalf of my students and their welfare. The Early Learning Center also known as the ELC going forward in this letter serves preschool children ages 3 - 6 with skills ranging from age typical to the severe and profound range of Developmental Delay and a need for Special Education services. Nearly half of our students are living at the poverty level and suffer from the chronic stress and trauma that hunger and uncertainty causes. The ELC strives each day through professional development and specific planning to provide a Trauma Informed and Trauma Sensitive learning environment for our young learners. The construction of a firehouse literally 50 feet from our East entrance, classrooms and playground will change our safe, calm learning environment into an unpredictable and scary place for our children. Our special needs students flee, hide, cry and tantrum when alarms and sirens are near. Programmatic changes to protect our children will include closing the playground during construction. We will no longer be able to load buses on the East side of the ELC due to construction and the sound of firehouse alarms and sirens. Our ELC program serves children from 14 communities and we rely on bus service for them to attend school. The students will lose valuable instructional time due to the lengthier bus loading necessitated by the proximity of the firehouse to the ELC. This is in violation of their right to a Free and Appropriate Public Education by decreasing instructional time due to safety concerns. Closing the playground goes against the implementation Rules for the At-Risk Block Grant Preschool For All program. Children have a right to feel safe when they go to school, especially our most fragile and youngest learners. My request is for you to picture a preschool child you know in this situation. Thank you for your consideration of this concern for the physical and mental health of our preschool children.

Respectfully,
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Early Learning Center

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