

Dear Members of the Cook County Board,

I am a resident of the Village of Barrington, a teacher in Barrington, and the mother of 4 children. My son Noah, age 22, has high-functioning autism, so I know the challenges of raising a child with special needs as well as children who are neuro-typical. The students at the ELC are absolutely amongst the most vulnerable in our town. We are proud of the beautiful building that was finally built to meet their needs, and the incredible staff who work with them. For years, our early learners with special needs were educated at the oldest, most run-down school in Barrington. It was not sufficiently handicap accessible, had mold issues, and plumbing issues. It was truly a relief to honor the needs of these students when a new building, in a much more central location, was built.

If you know anything at all about children with special needs, and of students who have autism spectrum disorders in particular, you know the necessity of accessibility, routine, and a sense of predictability and order for these students. Many/most students with autism spectrum disorders are extremely sensitive to loud noises and flashing lights. If you vote to build this fire station next to the ELC, you will literally traumatize at least a portion of the students educated there every day. Early intervention is absolutely the best way to improve the lives of children. Please do not discriminate against our students with special needs by interrupting the early interventions we have established. This fire station would be inappropriately placed near the ELC. If you're still not convinced, take a ride over there during school drop off and pick up. The traffic situation is already complicated, congested and dangerous. The last thing our village needs is to add to an already existing traffic/safety issue.

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