

Construction near schools that caused significant negative impacts:

In 2011, PS 51, an elementary school in Manhattan, was moved to a temporary location more than an hour away after nearby construction caused noise disruptions and health complaints by staff and students at the school. The complete relocation of the school for two years occurred after initial assurances, which turned out to be false, that the construction would be quiet and safe and would not interfere with classroom instruction.

In 2012, construction commenced next door to PS 361/PS 315/PS 94 in the East Village, where a 7-story building was completed on Avenue B, along a short side-wall of the school. According to school administration and teachers, the project caused “deafening and maddening” noise in the school during the pile-driving portion of construction. In addition, there were numerous delays in the project as well as community noise complaints.

Construction near schools where negative impacts were minimized by concessions by the developers:

In 2005, PS 234 in TriBeCa, an elementary school with a high proportion of socio-economically advantaged parents, and with pressure from the New York City Council, successfully negotiated with the developers of two high-rise buildings to include enhanced noise-abatement measures, including using vibrating hammers, which are less noisy than conventional pile-driving hammers. The developer agreed that the construction noise impacts at the school would not exceed 50 decibels at any point during the construction.

The new PS 281 building in Murray Hill (First Ave. and 35th St.), which opened in 2013, was part of a partnership between the Department of Education (DOE) and a developer. The school was constructed in a suitable configuration with appropriate windows, ventilation, and structural integrity to withstand construction of neighboring high-rise buildings, and construction site loading areas were placed as far away from school entrances as possible.

PS 59 moved into a brand-new building on E. 56th St. between Second and Third Avenues in Manhattan at the start of the 2012-2013 school year, also part of a partnership between the DOE and a developer. This new school building was also configured to minimize negative impacts of the neighboring construction taking place to complete the development project.

Currently proposed construction projects that will have negative impacts on schools:

The proposed construction of a 20-story building directly next to PS 163 on the Upper West Side would have significant negative impacts because of the close proximity (~30 feet) of the construction site to much of the school; half of the classrooms directly face the proposed construction. The builders have estimated that noise at the school will be significantly elevated above acceptable levels for a total of 14 months out of the estimated 30-month construction period.

School of the Future on the corner of 22nd St. and Lexington Ave. also faces a large construction project. A developer has acquired property surrounding the building and will soon begin a 3-year residential construction project consisting of a 12-story building and an 18-story building directly next to the school. The school community is actively lobbying to have adequate mitigations during demolition of existing structures and during the long-duration construction period, but the developer has thus far failed to offer any concrete proposals to the school community.

PS 75 on the Upper West Side is facing a residential construction project next to the school at 95th St. and West End Avenue. A 10-story addition is planned for the top of a 6-story apartment building across from the school. Noise mitigations and other construction-related protections for the school have not yet been put in place and the developer has offered no assurances of same.