

# NEW YORK POST

LATE CITY FINAL

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## ARSON PUTS S.I. SCHOOL OUT OF BIZ

By ADAM MILLER

An arson fire heavily damaged a Staten Island elementary school yesterday, police said.

The two-alarm blaze, which broke out at 4:10 a.m., destroyed eight classrooms at P.S. 36 at 255 Ionia Ave. in the Huguenot section.

The school's 1,200 kids will stay home today.

Beginning tomorrow they'll be assigned to other schools.

It was not clear how long it will be before the school is reopened.

"It's really devastating because the smoke and fire did so much damage to all three floors," said Staten Island's Board of Education member Jerry Camarata.

"There was significant smoke and water damage throughout the building. There's soot on all the walls.

"Countless books, computers and furniture were

destroyed. It's going to take a long time for the school to recover from this. The clean-up is going to be massive," he said.

There was no immediate estimate of how much it will cost to repair the damage.

Two people — a custodian and a firefighter — suffered minor smoke inhalation.

They were treated at the scene.

Authorities said the arsonist set three separate fires on the first floor. They're looking into the possibility that at least one of them was caused by a firebomb thrown through a window.

Cops said they're looking into the possibility the arsonist was a youngster.

Anyone with information on who caused the blaze is asked to call the Fire Marshal's Hotline at (718) 722-3600.

All calls will remain confidential.