



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas K. Duane

Report by NYS Senator Tom Duane Shows Looming School Overcrowding Crisis in Clinton-Hell's Kitchen

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1,000 Elementary School Children May Be Without Seats by 2019

(New York, NY) — A disturbing new report released by New York State Senator Thomas K. Duane (D-WFP Manhattan), conducted with the help of Manhattan Community Board Four, shows that Clinton-Hell's Kitchen is poised to gain four times as many elementary school-age children over the next decade as there will be available seats in its public elementary schools.

On Tuesday, Senator Duane gathered with elected officials, local parents and children, and community leaders to call on the New York City Department of Education and the School Construction Authority to take proactive steps to avoid what Senator Duane called “a looming crisis.” Attendees offered their assistance in creating a comprehensive plan to address school overcrowding before the crisis peaks.

“We must act now to head off what we believe will be a desperate need for school seats in Clinton-Hell’s Kitchen created by the sheer number of residential buildings planned or under construction in this rapidly expanding neighborhood,” said Senator Duane. “Failure to plan could be a recipe for disaster that would dwarf what we have been seeing in Greenwich Village, the East Side and parts of the Upper West Side. We are sounding the alarm now and we are inviting all parties to work toward a solution.”

Senator Duane and Community Board Four’s review draws upon data available from the Environmental Impact Statements submitted to the New York City Department of City Planning for pending residential construction in the neighborhood bounded by West 34th and 59th Streets, 8th Avenue and the Hudson River. These New York City-mandated documents show that by 2019, the 26 projects currently in the pipeline will have created a total of 11,259 new residential units in Clinton-Hell’s Kitchen, resulting in an influx of 1,350 new elementary school students.

In the best case scenario, a planned expansion of P.S. 51 and existing excess capacity at P.S. 111, both of which currently serve the area, will provide seats for an additional 324 students.

Unfortunately, public school enrollment will soon exceed capacity as new developments come online.

In fact, by 2019, unless additional classrooms are created, 1,026 elementary school-age students will be without seats.

"If we do not plan for the future of our schools in Clinton-Hell's Kitchen we will face significant overcrowding that will pit parents and children against each other in vying for

the scarce number of classroom seats," said **New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn**. "The Department of Education must recognize this growing neighborhood and must plan accordingly for the increased number of students. We need to start planning now for the school years to come so we can be prepared for those seats that will be needed."

"Unfortunately, school overcrowding has become a major issue looming before Hell's Kitchen's present and future," said **U.S. Representative Jerrold Nadler**. "The City must work in concert with the community and its elected officials to ensure that there will be enough space for local children, and that planned developments do not create an untenable density within the schools. A future of severely overcrowded local schools is not an acceptable future for our communities."

"Community Board Four's schools are part of a pattern we see developing around the city. Every Elementary and Intermediate School in this neighborhood has seen increased enrollment in the last two years, and school construction has not kept pace with the influx of families," said **Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer**. "We have to start planning for the future capacity of our city schools before we find ourselves hanging 'No Vacancy' signs on our schoolhouse gates."

"For years, City Planning and the Mayor have been working to help developers build housing for a population boom in Manhattan," said **New York State Assembly Member Richard N. Gottfried**. "Didn't someone in City Hall tell the Department of Education they need a lot more classrooms and desks? City Planning and the Department of Education are both mayoral agencies. They should be paying attention to each other, and responding."

"When the city contemplates massive development in a neighborhood, it is incumbent upon it to plan simultaneously for the public education of the children who will be living in this new housing," said **New York State Assembly Member Linda B. Rosenthal**. "Senator Duane and

Community Board Four's report underscores the challenges of balancing development with the responsibility to provide a sound, basic education with small classes and a well-rounded curriculum for the area's children."

"In my District, we are pushing for a new school in the Riverside South development because kindergarten and early grade enrollments are exploding," said **New York City Council Member Gale Brewer**. "But because DOE insists that on average the entire District is not overcrowded, it refuses to build a school that is already desperately needed. Our children should not be shortchanged by bad metrics and short-sighted policy. We are asking DOE to recognize that these are actual facts on the ground, and to design enrollment policy around needs and not formulas."

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