



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Daniel L. Squadron

Speaker Silver and Senator Squadron Announce Passage of Legislation to Help Reduce Overcrowding in New York City Schools

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Measure Would Require the New York City School Construction Authority to Account for Population Growth

Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver and Senator Daniel Squadron announced today that both houses have passed legislation to help address the severe overcrowding problem in New York City schools by requiring the City's School Construction Authority (SCA) to collect population data and use this information in connection with the Authority's five-year educational facilities capital plan (A.10108/S.07873). The bill, sponsored by Silver and Squadron, states that the SCA and the New York

City Schools Chancellor must factor and account for how future population growth might affect the pervasive overcrowding of city schools.

“Overcrowding is a serious problem in New York City schools, especially in our Lower Manhattan community,” Speaker Silver said. “How can we expect our children to get the highest quality education possible when our schools are filled to the brim and classrooms are spilling out into makeshift trailers? Five-year capital plans can be very useful in addressing overcrowding and by integrating current and future population data, the SCA and the City Schools Chancellor will be better able to plan for the needs of our children and accurately assess how much space is necessary to properly educate them and prepare them for a bright and successful future.”

“By the time a school's overcrowded, it's too late for kids whose education suffers and families locked out of their neighborhood choice,” Senator Squadron said. “The best solution is planning ahead, with better information and more community input. The information this bill requires will make a big difference in my district, from Lower Manhattan to Brooklyn, and everywhere in the city where young families are trying to make a life. I thank Speaker Silver and my colleagues for passing this bill.”

This bill would authorize the SCA to enter into agreements and work with New York City's office of City Planning and Departments of Health and Mental Hygiene, Buildings and Housing Preservation and Development to access relevant data and render any services required in order to create uniform, student population projections for a minimum of five years to be used in the creation and implementation of the SCA's five-year educational facilities capital plan, as well as school sitings.

The legislation also requires the SCA to publicly respond to issues raised at Community Education Council (CEC) hearings on both school sitings and in response to the capital plan, including why alternative recommendations were or were not incorporated into the final plans and how any changes made to the proposed plan resulted from issues raised at hearings.

State law currently requires the New York City school district and the SCA to develop a five-year educational capital plan. This plan must describe each project proposed in the plan, an estimate of the capital funding required each year and the expected sources of funding, an estimate of the cost of each project and the year in which construction will begin on each project.