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SENATOR THOMAS K. DUANE

29th SENATORIAL DISTRICT · NEW YORK STATE SENATE



**STATEMENT BY NEW YORK STATE SENATOR THOMAS K. DUANE
BEFORE COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT 3 EDUCATION COUNCIL
REGARDING THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S
AMENDED CAPITAL PLAN**

December 16, 2009

My name is Thomas K. Duane and I represent New York State's 29th Senate District, which includes the portion of Community School District 3 ("D3") below West 85th Street. I thank the D3 Community District Education Council ("CEC3") for hosting tonight's hearing on the proposed 2009 amendment to the New York City Department of Education's ("DOE") 2010-2014 Five-Year Capital Plan ("the Capital Plan").

The systemic failure of DOE to develop reality-based enrollment projections and utilization rates on which to base capital planning has produced severe overcrowding in many D3 schools. Regrettably, this amended Capital Plan, like the 2005-2009 Five-Year Capital Plan that preceded it, does nothing to correct this long-standing error.

I strongly believe that the continued dismissal by DOE of the need for new capacity in D3 will both exacerbate school overcrowding and make it more difficult to address. Between January 2000 and August 2008, approximately 4,500 new residential units were constructed in Community District 7, which covers most but not all of D3, according to a report on school overcrowding by Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer. Such development has brought hundreds of new school-age children into the area, with no commensurate increase in school seats. Consequently, nearby schools are significantly beyond capacity and many schools face impending kindergarten overcrowding crises. Current conditions are manifestly unsustainable. Moreover, additional large-scale residential development is planned for Fordham University's Lincoln Square campus and for the southern end of the Riverside South development, compounding the impacts of existing population growth.

Nonetheless, DOE has not added any new capacity to D3 in this most recent iteration of its Capital Plan. Indeed, the amended 2010-2014 Five Year Capital Plan adds no new capacity to the district. While I am optimistic that the D3 War Room convened by Borough President Stringer, other elected officials and a number of D3 stakeholders, as well as parallel efforts by the CEC3 Overcrowding and Space Utilization Committee, will yield positive resolutions to some of the district's most urgent problems, the enduring need for new capacity and, likewise, for a more accurate analysis of district needs is clear. Patchwork measures like those implemented last year tear apart communities and do nothing to address the structural

deficiencies that cause overcrowding. I urge DOE to amend the Capital Plan to reflect the ongoing surge in student population and build or lease at least one new facility.

I thank CEC3 for the opportunity to comment on the Capital Plan and I am committed to continuing to work with you, other elected officials, DOE, parents, teachers and principals to alleviate overcrowding without relying on the short-sighted, short-lived solutions that have historically been imposed on D3 schools in lieu of new capacity.