



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 192

Resolution calling upon the New York City Department of Education to conduct a feasibility study on the acquisition of former Catholic school buildings as sites to house special public education programs, charter schools and traditional public schools.

By Council Members Dickens, Chin, Comrie, Fidler, James, Koppell, Lander, Recchia, Vann, Rodriguez, Mark-Viverito, Nelson and Halloran

Whereas, Overcrowding has historically been a problem faced by New York City public schools; and

Whereas, According to the latest data available from the New York City Department of Education (DOE) the citywide average utilization rate for elementary schools is 95% with many individual elementary schools across the City at more than 100% of capacity; and

Whereas, For high schools, the most overcrowded school level in the City, the situation is even worse, with the citywide average utilization rate for high schools at 99%, with many individual high schools well over 100% of capacity, according to the latest DOE data available; and

Whereas, The creation of new charter schools has added to the need for new capacity and exacerbated the competition for scarce school space; and

Whereas, Finding sites for the construction of new school buildings is extremely difficult in New York City, where real estate prices are high and locations uncontaminated by environmental pollutants suitable for schools are in short supply; and

Whereas, Construction of new schools is costly and far more expensive than leasing and renovating or retrofitting existing school buildings; and

Whereas, Furthermore, in the current economic downturn, City and State funds are severely limited and budgets are being cut; and

Whereas, In recent years, many Catholic schools throughout the nation and the City have closed due to declining enrollments; and

Whereas, The Brooklyn Diocese alone has shuttered nearly 40% of its grade schools in the past seven years according to a January 13, 2009 New York Times article; and

Whereas, In Washington and other areas in the nation, some closing parochial schools have been converted into charter schools; and

Whereas, Many parochial school buildings throughout New York City sit vacant or underutilized; and

Whereas, The City's public school system has not taken advantage of this mostly untapped space resource; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York City Department of Education to conduct a feasibility study on the acquisition of former Catholic school buildings as sites to house special public education programs, charter schools and traditional public schools.

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