



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 270

Resolution calling upon the New York City Department of Education to regularly review the use and condition of transportable classrooms and to limit the amount of time that transportable classrooms are used in New York City public schools.

By Council Members Barron, Treyger and Brannan

Whereas, A transportable classroom is a temporary building installed on the grounds of a school to provide additional classroom space and to address overcrowding issues; and

Whereas, Transportable classrooms are normally removed once the capacity situation subsides, a permanent addition is made to the school building, or a new school opens in the area; and

Whereas, When properly installed and maintained, transportable classrooms can have a long useful life; and

Whereas, Although temporary classrooms can be a quick fix to overcrowding in schools, there are many implications that a transportable classroom has for the learning environment; and

Whereas, In the 2016-17 school year, there were 244 transportable classroom units in use in New York City Department of Education schools; and

Whereas, According to the National Center for Education Statistics, public school principals report numerous problems associated with temporary classrooms including lighting, air conditioning, heating, ventilation, noise control, size, and the physical condition of buildings; and

Whereas, Further, some transportable classrooms are not equipped with proper or adequate bathrooms; and

Whereas, Often these temporary units become permanent fixtures in growing school districts; and

Whereas, When transportable units are deemed the only viable option available, the amount of time they will be used should be anticipated and those units should be constructed out of the most durable materials in order to ensure the longest and healthiest useful life; and

Whereas, As of the 2016-17 school year, New York City's transportable classrooms had a total capacity of 7,823 students and an enrollment of 5,830 students, the lowest number of students since the DOE began reporting this data to the Council in 2005; and

Whereas, It is important to set limits on the amount of time that transportable units can be used for schools in order to deter these provisional structures from becoming a long-term rather than a short-term solution and to further decrease the number of students in temporary classrooms; and

Whereas, Due to the use of transportable units, children may become sick, especially in the winter, due to inadequate heat in the temporary structure or from having to frequently go outside to access the main school building; and

Whereas, The physical condition of transportable units should be closely monitored and any needed repairs should be completed promptly; and

Whereas, The DOE should replace transportable units that are beyond their useful lives with newer ones to ensure that educational facilities are not in disrepair; and

Whereas, The DOE has committed to eventually removing all transportable units across the City; and

Whereas, According to the February 2018 Proposed Amendment to the FY 2015 - 2019 Five-Year Capital Plan issued by the School Construction Authority, to date, 164 transportable classrooms have been removed, and 70 out of the approximately 190 remaining transportable units are identified for removal; and

Whereas, The DOE should reduce to five the number of years that transportable units can be used to supplement space in any school or school building; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York City Department of Education to regularly review the use and condition of transportable classrooms and to limit the amount of time

that transportable classrooms are used in New York City public schools.

LS 101&406/Res 56-2014

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