



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1539-2008, **Version:** *

Res. No. 1539

Resolution calling upon the New York City Department of Education to develop a plan for the construction and/or renovation of school gymnasiums as part of its Five-Year Capital Plan in order to comply with New York State physical education requirements and to provide for healthy children and youth.

By Council Members Gerson, Brewer, Dickens, Eugene, Felder, Fidler, Foster, James, Koppell, Liu, Recchia Jr., Sanders Jr., Stewart and White, Jr.

Whereas, A major issue threatening the health of our school age children (pre-K through high school) is obesity resulting, in large part, from a lack of physical activity; and

Whereas, According to the National Center for Health Statistics of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in 2003-04, 17.1% of children and adolescents 2 to 19 years of age (over 12.5 million) were overweight, and 32.2% of adults (over 66 million) were obese; and

Whereas, A 2003 survey conducted by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene found that 43% of all elementary school students in New York City are overweight or obese, which is higher than the national average; and

Whereas, The health implications for being overweight, according to the CDC, include increased risk for hypertension, Type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke, some cancers, high cholesterol, osteoarthritis, asthma and other respiratory problems among others; and

Whereas, There is a direct connection between a healthy body and a healthy mind; and

Whereas, Recent studies by the CDC, PE4life and the California School Boards Association show a link between physical education and academic achievement; and

Whereas, The New York State Education Department requires participation in a physical education program on a daily basis for pupils in grades K through 3, not less than three times a week for at least 120

minutes overall for those in grades 4 through 6, and not less than three times per week in one semester and two times per week in the other semester for grades 7 through 12; and

Whereas, The New York City Department of Education (DOE) fails to provide its students with the adequate and legally mandated amount of physical education according to a 2008 survey by the Public Advocate; and

Whereas, The survey by the Public Advocate found that 96% of elementary schools surveyed violated state mandates requiring daily physical education for children in grades K through 3, 88% violated state regulations requiring 120 minutes of physical education per week for fourth graders, and 69% of middle schools surveyed violated state regulations requiring 120 minutes of physical education per week for sixth graders; and

Whereas, Further, the Public Advocate found that 81% of elementary schools and 48% of middle schools surveyed do not have any extracurricular sports program or athletic teams; and

Whereas, The Public Advocate's office found in a 2004 survey that some schools have no gymnasium at all or have inadequate facilities; and

Whereas, The Public Advocate's finding that physical education facilities are inadequate or non-existent in many New York City public schools is supported by a survey of Manhattan schools by the office of Council Member Gerson, which found that approximately 20%, 55 out of 272 schools, have no gymnasium; and

Whereas, The DOE's 2005-2009 Five-Year Capital Plan, when adopted in June 2004, allocated just \$338.3 million for physical fitness upgrades towards meeting a projected \$1.55 billion ten-year need; and

Whereas, The amount allocated for gymnasium upgrades in the 2005-2009 Capital Plan was just \$48.3 million, compared to the projected ten-year need of \$366.6 million; and

Whereas, Subsequent amendments to the DOE's 2005-2009 Five-Year Capital Plan have reduced allocations for physical fitness upgrades, with the latest 2008 proposed amendment reducing the overall amount for physical fitness upgrades to \$178.7 million and the amount for gymnasium upgrades to \$34.4 million; now,

therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York City Department of Education to develop a plan for the construction and/or renovation of school gymnasiums as part of its Five-Year Capital Plan in order to comply with New York State physical education requirements and to provide for healthy children and youth.

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