

Dist. 15's "Growing Rumble" Shakes Schools' Budget Plan

By Craig McGuire

School District 15 Superintendent William Casey added his voice to the growing rumble of dissatisfaction concerning Schools Chancellor Ramon Cortines's proposed five-year capital plan.

Casey said he feels priorities established by District 15 at public hearings and submitted to the central board in February, 1993 were disregarded.

Brooklyn Borough President Howard Golden has

also blasted the proposal, saying it shortchanges the borough's schools.

At a hearing last month, and in a written report, Golden told Cortines the \$7.5 billion spending plan was "iniquitable and irresponsible."

The borough president said, "This proposed five-year capital plan is a blueprint for the continuation of substandard conditions in Brooklyn's overcrowded school system... The plan must be rewritten and must

appropriate additional funding for Brooklyn schools."

Adopted by the board on April 28, 1993, the plan must now be approved by the City Council and the Mayor for allocation of funds.

This proposed capital plan, for fiscal years 1995-1999, represents the first five years in a 10-year plan which Cortines anticipates will require a total investment of \$25 billion.

The introduction of the proposal reads, "In this plan, we have attempted, based on priorities established by the Chancellor, to lay out a plan that will provide for an increase in our capacity to accommodate new students entering the system, relieve current overcrowding and... improve the infrastructure of our school buildings."

Golden stated, "It is clear that 110 Livingston Street continues to fail to hear the cries of our superintendents."

District 15

Ignored By Plan

"For one, the schools in this district are in incredible

disrepair," said Casey, explaining that several District 15 schools, built over 75 years ago, need to be upgraded.

"Far more money has to be made available," said Casey, "and far more money has to be requested."

accomplished. First, by funding limitations and secondly, by our capacity to effectively carry out the entire program in a short period of time."

Misdirected Priorities

Casey said the proposed construction of a 180-seat

"If you set aside monies to repair roofing," stated Casey, "specify the exact roofs to be repaired and allocate the exact amount for that project."

"Secondly, this proposal does not clearly reflect priority items in this district," remarked Casey.

"P.S. 124 [515 4th Avenue] and I.S. 136 [4004 4th]

addition to P.S. 1, 309 47th Street, to replace the existing mini-school located in the schoolyard, exemplified misdirected priorities.

"I'm not against replac-

Capital improvements fall into two broad categories in the proposal: specific line projects and lump sum projects.

Roughly 40 percent of the \$7.5 billion is allocated for specific line projects and the remainder for unspecified improvements.

Both Golden and Casey attacked the notion of lump sum projects, a category superintendent call "maddening."

"If you set aside monies to repair roofing," stated Casey, "specify the exact roofs to be repaired and locate the exact amount for that project."

Golden said, "The bulk of this plan is untrackable and if approved, will leave the central board and School Construction Authority 60 percent unaccountable."

District 15 projects include:

- * Construction of a 400-seat school for kindergarten through second grade.

- * Construction of 180-seat addition to rep-