

# Staten Island Advance

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## 2 schools may go all year

### New Dorp High School, PS 4 eyed for pilot program here

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New Dorp High School and Arden Heights's PS 4 could conduct year-round classes under a pilot program expected to start this summer.

Schools Chancellor Ramon Cortines said yesterday that he will set up pilot programs to combat crowding in several elementary, intermediate and high schools throughout the city.

The chancellor will choose

from among 31 New York City schools that have air-conditioning, including the two on Staten Island.

"The growth in New York's student enrollment is like a train roaring down the track toward us. If we cannot find a way to throw on the brakes, the crash is likely to be very big and painful," Cortines said.

Enrollment in public schools is expected to jump by 250,000 students over the next eight years, he

said.

Under the year-round plan, students would attend school 180 days, the same number of days required now, but they would have several short vacations instead of one summer break. Sessions would be staggered so that when one group is on vacation, another would be in school.

The chancellor said the new program would be a "tough push" among parents and educators. Schools will have the opportunity

to volunteer their participation, but if there aren't enough takers in the most crowded areas, he said, "benign dictatorial decisions will be made."

Year-round schooling was one of the recommendations made by the Citizens Commission on Planning for Enrollment Growth, a panel set up by Cortines. In a report released yesterday, the commission also recommended leasing space to deal with overcrowding.

Staten Island school officials have asked the Board of Education to consider renting an ele-

mentary school at the soon-to-be vacated Mission of the Immaculate Virgin, Mount Loretto, in Pleasant Plains.

The Board also is expected to start a new elementary school this September at the College of Staten Island's Sunnyside campus. Overcrowding is so severe in many schools that teachers conduct classes in cafeterias, gymnasiums, libraries, auditoriums, and in one case, a locker room.

"Overcrowding threatens to turn our schools into factories, to

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make our children anonymous to the teachers and school staff charged with helping them learn and grow," Cortines said.

Neither New Dorp High School nor PS 4 have top-notch air conditioning systems.

PS 4 principal Marc Harris said the three-story building has air-conditioning only on the first floor.

Summer-school students at New Dorp sweltered last year because of numerous breakdowns in the air-conditioning system there.

Neither school is overcrowded. New Dorp is at 71 percent capacity and PS 4 is at 85 percent capacity.

Cortines' spokesman John

Beckman said the chancellor has not ruled out a year-round schedule that would draw students from nearby schools.

An estimated cost of the year-round experiment was not available yesterday. The Board would have to hire additional teachers and supervisors, or pay existing staff overtime rates to work beyond 180 days, Cortines said.

A teachers union representative said the union is not opposed to year-round schooling.

"We're perfectly willing to talk about it. But year-round school is no substitute for an adequate construction budget," said Susan Arnlung, a spokeswoman for the United Federation of Teachers.

"I like the idea," said Staten Island High School Superintendent

dent Noel Kritfcher. But he said he doubted New Dorp High School would be chosen for the pilot program considering that the average Brooklyn high school is much more crowded, operating at 122 percent capacity.

Staten Island Community School Board member Jerry Carmarata, who served on the commission which recommended year-round schooling, said the school system should develop a partnership with businesses to allow more flexible vacation policies.

Year-round schooling is a growing trend in the U.S. Among other places, it is widely used in Los Angeles and in several schools in San Francisco.