

Staten Island Advance

Saturday, January 21, 1995

School solution stalled

Plan to ease South Shore overcrowding still being reviewed

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With the Board of Education giving serious consideration to year-round school as a way to battle overcrowding, a much less ambitious plan on Staten Island seems to be stalled in limbo.

St. Aloysius, a soon-to-be-empty school on the grounds of the Mission of the Immaculate Virgin, Mount Loretto, in Pleasant Plains, has been billed as the temporary fix to overcrowding at PS

1 in Tottenville, PS 3 in Pleasant Plains, PS 4 in Arden Heights and PS 36 in Annadale.

But Board of Education engineers who are supposed to review the school don't even know about the plan.

In a unanimous vote Jan. 9, the Staten Island Community School Board — eyeing a projected 1,200 student increase come September — directed the superintendent to request an engineering review of the school by the Board of Educa-

tion.

But the request never made it to the Board of Ed's School Facilities Division, according to assistant director Michael Burke.

Staten Island Superintendent Christy Cugini said he didn't know he was supposed to fill out a request form. He said he will straighten out the matter.

Opposition to the plan could provide another stumbling block.

While conceding the proposal is "worth exploring," South Shore

Councilman Vito Fossella raised questions about whether St. Aloysius has enough recreation and cafeteria space to accommodate the South Shore overflow.

South Shore Assemblyman Robert Straniere said renting classroom space would be "disruptive."

"The students sent to Mount Loretto would be isolated," he said, noting it also would cost money to hire a supervisor for the school.

Susan Fink, the PTA president at PS 3, said, "I don't think the parents at PS 3 would want to have certain classes moved over

there."

Overcrowding is not only a Staten Island problem.

In fact, it's so rampant citywide that a commission appointed by Cortines will recommend that the school system begin a pilot program of year-round education in September.

Districts would be given incentives to join the year-round program on a gradual basis, said Francisco Rivera-Batiz, a professor at Columbia University, and a co-research director of the commission.

Students would go to school the same number of days, 180, but would have several short vacations instead of one long summer break.

Jerry Cammarata, a Staten Island school board member who sits on the chancellor's panel, said year-round schooling is "a great concept."