

CITY

School Board Gives Crew a Report Card

Less Enthusiasm and More Suggestions About Management Style

By ABBY GOODNOUGH

The Board of Education released an evaluation of Chancellor Rudy Crew yesterday that was less enthusiastic than past reviews, with unusually detailed recommendations on how he could improve his management style and take a more hands-on approach to running the city's schools.

Although the criticism was gently worded, it was striking because the board's previous annual evaluations of Dr. Crew were pro forma and almost entirely positive. The new review comes at the end of a year in which Dr. Crew clashed with Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani and with the board, which angered him by rejecting his school construction spending plan in May. A strong ally of the mayor, Jerry Cammarata, led the committee that wrote the evaluation.

The review also comes as Dr. Crew weighs whether to request an extension of his contract, which will expire in June. He said yesterday that he would make his decision over the Thanksgiving weekend, but insisted that the evaluation would not factor into his decision. He has told associates that as a result of the recent death of his former wife he wanted to be closer to his four children. Two of them attend the University of Washington, and he has acknowledged exploring the possibility of an administrative job there.

"My intent is just to stay very dedicated to the work that I know is at hand," Dr. Crew said yesterday, "and then actually start forming my views about staying or leaving based upon a whole host of other considerations."

The board's three-page evaluation praised Dr. Crew for improving reading scores in the schools for three consecutive years, overhauling teacher recruitment practices, ending students' promotions to higher grades regardless of academic performance — known as social promotion — and curtailing the number of students placed in special education classes. The board members also commended Dr. Crew for creating a special district for failing schools, expanding arts education and improving the opening of schools each fall.

But they also called on Dr. Crew to provide stronger leadership, to require more detailed evaluations of teachers and administrators, and to improve relations with parents. The board members also said that Dr. Crew should provide a "comprehensive" professional development program for teachers and administrators, and they criticized him for not creating a committee to monitor the Police Department's takeover of school security.

"It is now time to marshal all of our resources to continue to move this system forward," the board members wrote in the evaluation. "In this ongoing process, we have reached the point at which the Chancellor must strengthen control in driving this performance-driven system."

Mr. Cammarata said yesterday that some of the recommendations were left deliberately vague because the board members did not want to micromanage the school system.

"We want to make sure that in the

way he manages, we will be able to measure the level of improvement that is taking place," said Mr. Cammarata, who is the Staten Island member of the board. "It would not be appropriate for us to dictate how he wants to accomplish that."

Both Mr. Cammarata and William C. Thompson Jr., the board president and a member of the evaluation committee, insisted that the evaluation was just another annual review, not a larger statement about Dr. Crew's entire four-year tenure. Mr. Thompson, an ally of Dr. Crew, said the new evaluation included more recommendations than past ones because the board and the chancellor had more goals.

"Obviously your recommendations are going to increase as you move along," Mr. Thompson said. "I don't think it was a critical evaluation."

Dr. Crew said that he agreed with most of the recommendations, but he grumbled about one that he characterized as purely political: a recom-



Manlynn X. Yee/The New York Times

Chancellor Rudy Crew, left, at yesterday's school board meeting. Also present were William C. Thompson Jr., the board president, center, and Jerry Cammarata, far right, who led the committee that evaluated Dr. Crew.

mendation to develop a "realistic" strategy to secure more school construction funds. In May, Mayor Giuliani persuaded a majority of the board members to reject Dr. Crew's \$11 billion school construction plan, saying that it was based on overly optimistic expectations for financing.

A substitute \$7 billion plan was

devised at City Hall at the insistence of Queens officials, who felt shortchanged by Dr. Crew's proposal.

"When I heard about that one, I thought, 'Wait, you know, that's a stretch,'" Dr. Crew said. "It was just such a political process."

But while he did not object to any of the other recommendations yesterday, Dr. Crew, who has a reputa-

tion for being thin-skinned, hinted that he might not take the criticism too seriously.

"I'm not going to let a process as political or in some cases as complex as this one dictate what I think of myself or my work," he said. "They see it one way, and I will abide by their thinking and be respectful of that, and then move on."