

THE ISLAND

Packed summer schools will be cool

■ Board of Ed will spend tens of millions of dollars to keep classes air-conditioned with thousands of additional students expected

By **MARJORIE HACK**
ADVANCE STAFF WRITER

Spurred by complaints that mandatory summer school forces thousands of youngsters to swelter in steamy classrooms or face the onerous alternative of repeating a grade, the city's Board of Education is preparing to spend tens of millions of dollars to air-condition well over a hundred classrooms on Staten Island and thousands more citywide.

The move comes as the Board of Education prepares to institute a new, get-tough policy prohibiting routine promotion for students who can't meet minimum passing standards. The new policy could result in more than 300,000 youngsters hitting the books, rather than the beach, this summer.

"It was decided that in order to teach 320,000 students, they had to make the classrooms conducive to learning," said Board of Ed spokeswoman Margie Feinberg.

Cool classrooms won't come cheap. The tab for supplying air-conditioning for six weeks this summer is expected to run a staggering \$153 million. In contrast, the city spent less than \$100 million last summer simply to conduct the classes.

According to Jerry Cammarata, Staten Island's representative to the Board of Ed, the money to fund the initiative will come from existing mainstream capital funding. Most of the money will be used to pay the electric bill come August and September.

Last year, more than 200,000 students citywide — 6,200 of them on Staten Island — were enrolled in summer programs. Complaints about the heat — which teachers at PS 57 in Clifton, for instance, claimed hovered around 100 de-

es in classrooms on hot July days — were so widespread the Board of Education purchased portable fans to help cool things. Many of the fans arrived too late on Staten Island to make much of a difference, though.

Less than 20 percent of the city's approximately 1,100 schools are equipped with central air-conditioning.

On Wednesday, members of the Board of Ed took the first step toward implementing the system-wide cool-down by approving an allocation of \$660,000 to purchase enough portable air-conditioning units to serve 120,000 youngsters in 1,000 classrooms.

According to Leonard Del Rio, director of operations for School District 31, Staten Island's public grade schools have currently been allotted 127 of those units, though more could materialize. Last summer, the district had to use about 100 rooms in 20 schools to accommodate some 2,600 youngsters.

"We requested 200 [air-conditioners] in priority order," said Cugini, noting that the request was made on the assumption that enforcement of strict standards and increased public awareness of the summer school programs might bump up the number of students attending. The district plans to use those summer classes in 20 schools again this summer.

The units will be installed first in 12 schools that district officials consider high priority. If extra units are available they will be installed in remaining classrooms. Schools were prioritized based on their academic performance levels and the number of students served by a given school. Most of the high-priority schools on Staten Island receive Title 1 anti-poverty funding and serve North Shore youngsters.

Portable units will not be needed at PS 13 in Rosebank, PS 33 in Annadale and PS 56 in Rossville, if they're used this year, because these schools have air-conditioned spaces.

It is unclear how many air-conditioning units will be given to Staten Island high schools, according to Ronald Mangano.

Mangano, newly hired away from New Dorp High School by the Brooklyn and Staten Island Schools (B.A.S.I.S.) high school su-

Cool schools

Summer schools slated to have air-conditioned classrooms:

PS 16, Tompkinsville
PS 18, West Brighton
PS 29, Castleton Corners
PS 31, New Brighton
PS 44, Mariners Harbor
PS 46, South Beach
PS 57, Clifton

Prall Intermediate School, West Brighton
Dreyfus Intermediate School, Stapleton
Markham Intermediate School, Graniteville
Morris Intermediate School, Brighton Heights

perintendent's office to oversee security and facilities for seven of the Island's public high schools and 20 others in Brooklyn, confirmed that summer classes for Island students will once again be offered at New Dorp, Port Richmond, McKee and Staten Island Technical high schools. He said classes may also be offered at Curtis High School this summer.

With the exception of New Dorp's interior classrooms, none of the high school classrooms proposed for use this summer are equipped with central air-conditioning.

Most of the units the Board of Ed intends to install will be window-style models, but an unspecified number of alternative styles will also be purchased to accommodate the needs of schools with different physical plant requirements. The units are being obtained from Luce, Schwab and Kase, Inc. of Fairfield, N.J. and AirPac, Inc. of Front Royal, Va.

Ms. Feinberg added that engineers from the division of school facilities have surveyed schools to make sure the electrical capacity of the facilities can accommodate the new units.

Anne Marie Caminiti, president of the Staten Island Federation of PTAs, welcomed the introduction of air-conditioning. They've responded, she said, "so let's make the best of it."

But she said many Island parents are already complaining. "Parents are worried that teachers will be arguing over which classrooms are going to get what as the school year comes to a close," she said. "And what about June when it's hot? Will they turn them on then?"

Ms. Caminiti said complaining about the allocations was "just looking for trouble."

Cugini called equipping classrooms with air conditioners "a good thing," especially with talk of an extended school year for all students mounting.

"Will it attract more kids? Sure it will. Will it attract more teachers? Sure it will," he said.

Cugini said District 31 is planning for as many as 3,000 summer students this year, since failing youngsters in grades 3 to 8 who are remanded for remedial summer help must attend. The Board of Education estimates it will need about 17,000 teachers — up 6,000 from last summer — to teach summer classes this year, according to Cammarata.