

# Who'll Rule Schools?

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## A Board Divided

The seven-member Board of Education has been split between pro-City Hall and anti-City Hall factions with shifts between camps depending on the issue.

### Pro-City Hall Votes



**Ninfa Segarra**  
Board president. Giuliani appointee, 1994-present. Bronx borough president appointee, 1990-94.



**Irene Impellizzeri**  
Mayoral appointee, 1994-present. Brooklyn borough president appointee, 1980-1994.



**Jerry Cammarata**  
Appointed by Staten Island Borough President Guy Molinari, 1995-present.



### Swing Vote

**Terri Thomson**  
Appointed by Queens Borough President Claire Shulman, 1998-present. Voted with Giuliani to dump Chancellor Rudy Crew. Voted against Giuliani to hire Chancellor Harold Levy. Abstained from board president vote, April 4. Asked to resign by Shulman, April 18.

### Anti-City Hall Votes



**Sandra Lerner**  
Appointed by Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer, 1994-present. Losing candidate in April 4 board president vote.



**Irving Hamer**  
Appointed by Manhattan Borough President C. Virginia Fields, 1999-present. Crossed lines to vote for Segarra for board president. Asked to resign by Fields April 9.

### Greg Brooks

Appointed by Brooklyn Borough President Howard Golden April 1. Replaced William Thompson Jr., the former board president, who resigned on March 30 to run for city comptroller. Brooks abstained in April 4 vote for board president.

## Board of Education battles rage as players take sides

By Jessica Kowal

STAFF WRITER

The war for control of the city schools turned red hot yesterday, as Mayor Rudolph Giuliani called Queens' Board of Education member Terri Thomson "an extremely destructive force" and called for her resignation.

Queens parent leaders rallied behind Thomson, who was appointed by Borough President Claire Shulman, in the face of Shulman's call for her to quit.

And Manhattan Borough President C. Virginia Fields said the mayor should "stop spreading lies and throwing up smokescreens" about her own appointee Irving Hamer Jr.'s recent vote for Giuliani's pick for board president, Ninfa Segarra. Fields, too, has asked her appointee to quit.

On Wednesday, Shulman asked Thomson to resign because Thomson abstained on the April 4 vote for president rather than vote for Segarra. Segarra won anyway, with four votes and three abstentions.

Thomson, who has told Shulman she will not resign, did not return calls yesterday. Shulman's office would not comment and the borough president declined a request for an interview.

Hamer, who has also resisted resigning, has met with Manhattan education advocates and NAACP leaders to explain his vote for the mayor's chosen candidate, which infuriated elected officials and others in the borough. He did not return calls.

That left the public stage to the mayor and parents in Queens.

Parent leaders launched a phone chain to call Shulman and threatened a protest outside Borough Hall. They said Thomson had worked hard to build schools, communicate with families and get more translators to help immigrant parents.

"We strongly urge Claire Shulman to keep Terri as our representative on the Board of Education," said Eleanor McNamee, president of the Queens Confederation of High School Parents. "She has worked tirelessly for our children."

"I just can't understand it," added Donna Caltabiano, a member of Community School Board 27. "When we want something, we call her, she helps us out."

But at City Hall, Giuliani said Thomson should resign as her patron has asked.

"The borough president doesn't want her there. I think the borough president has good reasons for it," Giuliani said, refusing to be more specific. "If you ask me my opinion, the board would be a lot better off if she resigned."

In her three years on the seven-member school board, Thomson has wielded the decisive vote in nearly every major policy debate.

She often voted with City Hall on operational issues or to get more money for Queens schools. Yet she refused to play ball with the mayor to give City Hall more control of the school board's direction.

Thomson voted with Giuliani's two appointees and the Staten Island board member to fire former Chancellor Rudy Crew in December 1999. A few weeks later, she switched alliances to join members from Brooklyn, the Bronx and Manhattan to hire Harold Levy as schools chancellor, against the mayor's wishes.

Since the vote for board president, Thomson has told associates that she believes Segarra lacks independence from the mayor.

Levy, who some speculate could be the ultimate target of the mayor's machinations, has said nothing about the political infighting. "We're just trying to keep our heads down," an aide to Levy said.

Like Giuliani, Thomson supported the failed attempt to get for-profit Edison Schools to manage five city schools. However, she has never accepted a City Hall plan to use taxpayer-funded vouchers for private schools.

Board sources and observers believe Giuliani wants to grab control of the board for his remaining eight months in office, but he'll need four votes to do it.

It's unclear if Hamer will step down, but City Hall cannot rely on him for a fourth vote because he disagrees with Giuliani on a wide range of issues.