



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

## Senators Stewart-Cousins and Latimer and Assemblymembers Mayer and Pretlow Announce Passage of Major School Construction Program for Yonkers

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS June 17, 2016

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**Albany, NY** – State Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, the Senate Democratic Leader, Senator George Latimer, Assemblymember Shelley Mayer and Assemblymember Gary Pretlow today announced that legislation they sponsored to help rebuild crumbling Yonkers City schools and invest in new construction has been passed by both houses of the State Legislature. The Yonkers City School District Joint Schools Construction and Modernization Act will authorize financing up to \$523 million for new buildings and improvements to existing structures.

“No student should be forced to attend classes in a building that is crumbling around them,” Senate Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said. “The process started through this legislation will help construct three new school facilities and modernize current buildings. It is crucial that we invest in our school infrastructure so our children have equal opportunities to learn, grow and succeed in the new economy. I was happy to lead the push for this legislation through the Senate and I congratulate Mayor Spano and the students of Yonkers.”

Assemblymember Shelley Mayer (D-Yonkers) said, “The passage of this act signifies our commitment to our schools and to the thousands of students in the Yonkers City School District whose education depends on safe, up-to-date buildings and adequate school space. This is a great first step for our school district and for our community. I am proud to have fought for this important piece of legislation, and I will continue to push for New York State to make the necessary investment in our children and our Yonkers Public Schools.”

Currently, the average age of Yonkers’ school buildings is 75 years old, with the oldest building being 119 years old. Additionally, repair needs due to deteriorating school buildings outpace the school district’s capacity to fund capital repairs. To address this crisis, Senators Stewart-Cousins and Latimer and Assemblymembers Mayer and Pretlow introduced the Yonkers City School District Joint Schools Construction and Modernization Act. This legislation will allow for financing up to \$523 million for the first phase of school facilities renovations and create a 9-member board to implement these projects. Due to increased student enrollment, these funds will also help start the process to authorize construction on up to three new buildings to increase capacity for Yonkers students.

Senator George Latimer, Ranking Member of the Senate Education Committee, said, “The passage of the Yonkers City School District Joint Schools Construction and Modernization Act is a major piece in Yonkers’ revitalization. With the leadership of Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and the strong efforts of my Assembly partners Shelley Mayer and Gary Pretlow, along with the tremendous dedication of Mayor Mike Spano, Yonkers has put in place a cornerstone of that revitalization, ensuring our school infrastructure meets the needs of 21st century education.”

Assemblymember Gary Pretlow said, “For far too long, the students in Yonkers Public Schools have had to make do with crumbling buildings and facilities. I commend State

Senators Andrea Stewart-Cousins and George Latimer and my colleague in the Assembly, Shelley Mayer, for their efforts to change that reality. Their legislation will help rebuild and modernize these crumbling school and ensure that Yonkers students can receive a quality education in the safe and appropriate learning environment that they deserve.”