

# Why Are More Schools Closing?

## *What Can We Do About It?*



At least seven public schools across the city have been targeted for closing. From Red Hook, Brooklyn to the Rockaways to the Fordham neighborhood of the Bronx, all doomed by School Report Card grades of D or F, which are based on a single year's achievement scores. The decision was made unilaterally without hearings or community input.

This new round of closings affects more than 300 teachers and nearly three thousand students. It follows six years of school reorganizations under Klein and Bloomberg that have directly affected tens of thousands of students and left more than a thousand teachers still without positions. Teachers in the targeted schools lose their school communities and the relationships they forged over years. Practical knowledge that school veterans have developed is discarded as new schools are set up in their place.

The drama of school condemnation only obscures the deteriorating conditions of learning. Class sizes have increased. Buildings are overcrowded. The *Daily News* recently reported that 17,000 students lack access to a school library. Dozens of overcrowded schools use their libraries as classrooms. Others have librarians working as teachers. Such a dismal lack of the basics is not accounted for on the school report cards. It must be obvious by now that the DOE's obsession with accountability is more about controlling people than the improvement of anything.

Grading schools with yearly achievement scores stifles creative and relevant pedagogy. It leaves no room for setting long-term educational goals. The ever growing pool of excessed teachers is created to keep all educators on the defensive, uncertain and in fear. It's time that we joined in an effort not only to resist more closings but to take back our schools for our students and their communities.

The Independent Community of Educators has recently formed a committee to address both the plight of our colleagues in closing schools and the teacher reserve. We will explore school closings in relationship to:

- the City's failure to provide viable alternatives for poorly functioning schools
- our loss of seniority, due-process and tenure rights
- scapegoating and discrediting of competent educators
- the City's reckless policy of continuing to hire new teachers
- navigating the morass of the open market and the new counter-incentives for hiring ATRs
- valid evaluation of teacher quality and performance
- threatened termination of competent ATR educators and their impact on quality services

Join us Jan. 7 - 5 PM at the Skylight Diner on W 34<sup>th</sup> St, (west of 9<sup>th</sup> Ave) for discussion and planning.

## **ATR Committee of ICE-UFT**

P.O. Box 1143

Jamaica, NY 11421

Tel. 718.601.4901

[atrcommittee@gmail.com](mailto:atrcommittee@gmail.com) ~ [www.ice-uft.org](http://www.ice-uft.org)