



U.S. Representative • 9TH CD, New York • Brooklyn-Queens

ANTHONY D. WEINER

Report

NEW YORK CITY'S SCHOOL SCAFFOLDING SINKHOLE: NUMEROUS SCHOOLS IN NEED OF REPAIR SURROUNDED BY SCAFFOLDS

**Report Prepared By:
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Executive Summary

Walk or drive through New York City and you're sure to come across a school with scaffolding around it. It seems like they're everywhere.

At first glance, you'd think they were a necessary evil—not very attractive and more than a little intrusive, but needed to facilitate repairs. But take a closer look and you'll see something crucial missing from the picture: the repairs.

In fact, throughout the five boroughs scaffolds stand sentry around city schools, while parents, kids, teachers and school administrators wait, and wait, and wait some more for repairs to begin. And in many cases, the repairs are no where in sight.

Meanwhile, the price tag for the scaffolds grows, and grows, and grows some more. In fact, over the past few years, the City has spent millions to maintain scaffolds around schools that are in need of repair, but at which no repairs are being made.

This report provides details about 42 City schools where scaffolds have been erected but where repairs have been left unaddressed.

Among the key findings contained in this report:

- The City is paying to keep scaffolding in place around at least 42 different schools where no repairs are underway. The cost varies widely based on size and location, and ranges from as much as \$12,678 per month (Manhattan's PS 152) to \$240 per month (Brooklyn's PS 45).
- Over the course of a year, it can add up to a lot of money. At PS 152, for example, the City will end up spending \$152,136 on the scaffold this year. At Brooklyn's PS 195

it'll spend \$144,600. At Queens' PS 225 it'll spend \$131,148.

- Many of these scaffolds have been in place for more than a year, driving the cost skyward. At PS 225, the City's spent \$404,373 on scaffolding over the past three years. The scaffold at PS 152 has been up since September 2001, at a cost of \$246,226. At PS 195, it's been up since November 2001, at a cost of \$126,900.
- The City has spent \$2,915,079 on scaffolds erected since September 1999 that are still up around schools that need repairs. This month, the city will spend \$141,056 on such scaffolds. If the City continues to spend at this rate, this year it will spend \$1,692,679.
- It's a citywide problem. Since 1999, the City has spent \$1,248,428 on 17 scaffolds in Brooklyn, \$696,050 on 8 scaffolds in Queens, \$513,039 on 8 scaffolds in the Bronx, \$370,832 on 7 scaffolds in Manhattan, and \$86,730 on 2 scaffolds in Staten Island.

But it's not just the cost of the scaffolding that's outraging parents, it's the kinds of repairs that aren't getting done. At Brooklyn's PS 222, for example, the scaffolding went up after tiles began falling from the roof, causing a potentially deadly hazard for passersby below. That was over 3 and a half years ago.

And the scaffolding itself can cause hazards. At some schools, officials report that teen vandals climb the scaffold to do more damage to their school.

The fact that underlies all of these figures is that too many of our schools are in need of, but aren't getting, important repairs. Spending more and more on scaffolds, but not on the repairs that school's need, is a kind of math that just doesn't add up.

Methodology

For the past several weeks, staff in Congressman Weiner's office have canvassed parents to find out whether scaffolds are up around their schools and, if yes, for how long and whether repairs are being done. Weiner staff then approached the School Construction Authority (SCA) to elaborate on the information obtained from parents. In reply, the SCA provided Weiner's office with a list of schools in need of repairs, with scaffolds up around them, but where repairs have not been done. Included with the SCA materials were monthly maintenance costs of the scaffolds, needed repairs, and schedule for repairs.

Weiner staff then cross checked the information obtained from the SCA with that provided by parents, as well as school officials. During the course of cross checking, Weiner staff found that according to parents and administrators, some schools that appear on the list provided by the SCA had, but no longer have, scaffold around them. In the interest of fairness and accuracy, for the purposes of this report, Weiner staff considered only those schools that appear on the SCA list and are confirmed to still have scaffolds around them by either parents or administrators.

After identifying schools that met the above criteria, Weiner used SCA figures to extrapolate annual, lifetime, borough, and citywide scaffold costs [Example, according to

the SCA, scaffolding has been up around Brooklyn's PS 332 since September of 2000, at a cost of \$2,650 a month. $12 \times \$2,650 = \$31,800$ per year. $\$31,800 \times 32 \text{ months} = \$84,800.$]

Table I: Projected 2003 Cost of Scaffolds Per Borough Per Month & Year:

<u>Borough:</u>	<u># of School Scaffolds:</u>	<u>Cost This Month:</u>	<u>Est. Projection:</u>
Brooklyn	17	\$62,438	\$749,267
Queens	8	\$25,603	\$301,236
Bronx	8	\$22,534	\$270,408
Manhattan	7	\$24,089	\$289,068
Staten Island	2	\$6,890	\$82,680
Total:	42	\$141,056	\$1,692,679

Source: School Construction Authority, and interviews with school administrators, & parents.

Table II: Scaffold Costs Per Borough From 9/99 - 4/03:

<u>Borough:</u>	<u>Cost Per Borough Since 1999:</u>
Brooklyn	\$1,248,428
Queens	\$696,050
Bronx	\$513,039
Manhattan	\$370,832
Staten Island	\$86,730
Citywide	\$2,915,079

Source: School Construction Authority, and interviews with school administrators, & parents.

Table III: Cost Range for Scaffolds, by Month:

<u>Cost:</u>	<u>Number of Scaffolds:</u>
Up to \$500:	6
\$501 to \$1,000:	4
\$1,000-\$1500:	4
\$1,501-\$2,000:	3

\$2,001-\$2,500:	2
\$2,501-\$3,000:	6
\$3,001-\$3,500:	3
\$3,501-\$4,000:	2
\$4,001-\$4,500:	3
\$4,501-\$5,000:	1
\$5,001-\$5,500:	1
\$5,501-\$6,000:	0
\$6,001-\$6,500:	3
\$6,501-\$8,500:	0
\$8,501-\$9,000:	1
\$9,001-\$10,500:	0
\$10,501-\$11,000:	1
\$11,001-\$12,000:	0
\$12,001-\$12,500:	1
\$12,501-\$13,000:	1

Source: School Construction Authority, and interviews with school administrators, & parents.

Table IV: Time Passed Since Scaffold Installed, in Months:

	<u>0-12:</u>	<u>13-18:</u>	
Schools:	14	6	
	<u>19-24:</u>	<u>25-30:</u>	<u>31+:</u>
Schools:	8	3	11

Source: School Construction Authority, and interviews with school administrators, & parents.

Table V: Schedule of Repairs, Types of Repairs Needed

of schools at which repairs have been scheduled: 22.
 # of schools at which no repair schedule has been generated: 20.

Types of repairs include: cracked and hazardous masonry, exterior brickwork, roof terra cotta tiles, cracked and falling cornice, and modernization.

Source: School Construction Authority.

APPENDIX I:

Schools, Installation Date, Monthly Rental Fee, Cost Per Year, Cost to Date

APPENDIX II:

Schools, Types of Repairs, Estimated Repair Dates

Congressman Anthony D. Weiner

Reports List