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**MAYOR DE BLASIO, CHANCELLOR CARRANZA, BOROUGH PRESIDENT ODDO
ANNOUNCE MORE THAN 1,000 NEW PUBLIC SCHOOL SEATS ON STATEN
ISLAND**

Former private school building to be acquired by the City and will be converted into new state-of-the-art facility

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio, Schools Chancellor Richard A. Carranza and Borough President James Oddo today announced that the City will acquire the St. John Villa Academy Campus, which the School Construction Authority will convert into a new public school space. The new project is expected to provide families on Staten Island with over 1,000 new seats in the area. The SCA and DOE are working in close partnership to develop a proposal for an educational campus to open on the site in the coming years.

“Schools are sacred places that fundamentally help our kids achieve their full potential and bind our communities together,” said **Mayor de Blasio**. “This new state-of-the-art facility will allow more than 1,000 children the opportunity to access a high-quality education.”

“Today’s announcement is a big win for parents and students on Staten Island, and will bring hundreds of new high-quality seats to the area,” said **Schools Chancellor Carranza**. “I’m looking forward to working with the Staten Island community to develop new, state-of-the-art facilities that will create new and exciting learning opportunities for our students.”

“New school buildings are a vital investment in our communities, and I am thrilled that we are going to be able support Staten Island families with this new campus,” said **Lorraine Grillo, President and Chief Executive Officer of the New York City School Construction Authority**. “This campus provides seven acres of space for us to build new school buildings that will meet the needs of students and ensure they have access to cutting edge facilities.”

“This is a deeply bittersweet moment because the pain of the St. John Villa family is still palpable, and it will be that way for a long time. I recognize that,” said **Borough President Oddo**. “The closure of this school will never sit well with some, and I very much understand those deep emotions. As the person responsible to represent the 500,000 people of this borough, I knew what would be even worse than St. John Villa closing would be St. John Villa closing and

this bastion of education reduced into an unwanted residential development. We have seen that regrettable scenario play out nearby in recent years. I am pleased the City has stepped up in a big way to acquire this precious space. I will do all I can to ensure the learning that takes place here in the future lives up to the rich tradition of educational excellence of St. John Villa.”

The approximately seven-acre property is conveniently located near the Verrazano Bridge. The DOE will conduct community engagement over the next several months to solicit feedback on the types of schools and programs that would best meet the needs of the district. The DOE and SCA will unveil a proposed plan and timeline for the new facility once the community engagement and final assessment of the condition of the current campus are complete. The City’s signed contract to buy the property is pending final statutory approval.

The City has invested significant resources to increase seat capacity across all school districts. As part of the current Capital Plan, we are investing \$4.8 billion to create more than 44,600 seats in overcrowded areas, including 25 new DOE sites with 8,400 new seats since last year, and 14 new locations with 4,650 seats at the start of this school year. From September 2014 to September 2017, the City opened approximately 1,800 seats on Staten Island.

“While I know this is very difficult for the students at Villa, I hope that it gives you all peace of mind that it will continue to be an educational facility. Through this purchase, the legacy of Villa will live on through future generations of students,” said **State Senator Diane Savino**.

Council Member Steven Matteo said, “This is great news for Staten Island and the East Shore in particular. This purchase not only saves the site from residential development, but allows this facility to continue to be utilized to educate our children – a use for which the Borough President and I have been strongly advocating. I know this is a bittersweet outcome for those in the Villa community, but I hope they will take solace that the campus will remain a home away from home for Staten Island students.”

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