

Willowbrook Woes Attributed in Part To 'Radical' Group

"Militants and radicals" among staff personnel and parents of patients were blamed yesterday, along with overcrowding and lack of money, for some of the problems of the Willowbrook State School on Staten Island.

Representatives of the medical and administrative staff took part in a news conference at the school, called by State Senator Donald M. Halperin, Brooklyn Democrat, to announce that he would begin "a full-scale investigation" of the State Department of Mental Health.

Senator Halperin said that an emergency allocation of \$5-million for Willowbrook was "mere window-dressing." He called for "examining the priorities" of the department, particularly with regard to the severely retarded.

Dr. William Frew of the Willowbrook medical staff charged that there was a move by "radicals to take over" the parents' organization of the school, the Benevolent Society for Retarded Children.

He also accused dissident doctors and other personnel of "contributing" to what he called "sensational" reports in news media recently about conditions at the 5,300-patient facility on Staten Island.

Dr. Milton Jacobs, assistant director, confirmed that "a militant group of parents" were pressing for more participation in the administration and programming at Willowbrook.

"Up to a point, this is good and this is possible," Dr. Jacobs said. "But you would have to change the state laws on mental hygiene to provide that parents also share the responsibility, which is now ours."

Senator Halperin is a minority first-year member of the committee.

In a similar move, Representative Mario Biaggi, Bronx Democrat, called yesterday for a Federal investigation into conditions at New York State mental-health institutions.