



## Testimony of NYC Schools Chancellor Kamar H. Samuels Before the New York City Council: Hearing on Mayoral Control of NYC Public Schools

Tuesday, February 10, 2026

Good morning, City Council Members. Thank you to Education Chair Dinowitz and the Education Committee members for the opportunity to testify today on the topic of mayoral accountability and governance of our school system.

My name is Kamar H. Samuels, and I am proud to be the Chancellor of New York City Public Schools, our nation's largest school system. As a former teacher, principal, and superintendent and as the parent of two NYCPS students, I've experienced our school system from a multitude of vantage points over the last 20-plus years. I've seen the incredible feats we have achieved under mayoral accountability, resulting in increased equity and educational excellence across our city—and for that reason, I support Governor Hochul's proposed four-year extension. And I've also seen examples of how our system can do better on behalf of our students, families, and communities. Too many families feel their voices are unheard and that there are too many barriers to effectively engage.

But I want to be clear: This is not a zero-sum game. I believe mayoral accountability and family empowerment can, and *must*, coexist. Our children deserve both—the centralized oversight and execution that allow for real, impactful change *and* the local input and decision-making that give our families a meaningful say. Let me repeat: Mayoral accountability and family empowerment are not mutually exclusive. We need them operating in tandem to lift our schools to new heights.

I entered the classroom as an elementary school teacher in the Bronx shortly before mayoral accountability was first implemented. Our schools have made significant strides since then. High school graduation rates have risen by approximately 30 percentage points. We have the Fair Student Funding formula, one of the most equitable school funding formulas in the nation, and it is funded at 100%. Families' satisfaction with their children's education has grown nearly 10 percentage points, to 96%, since the survey was first administered in 2007. Mayoral accountability has been, and will continue to be, essential to this growth. It allows us to pursue big, bold systemwide goals, to ensure equity across our system, and to respond effectively in moments of crisis.

First, mayoral accountability enables real change for our students. Think of the largest, most impactful initiatives of the past 20 years, from the expansion of early childhood education to the launch of NYC Reads to the current implementation of the class size law. This is work that fundamentally transforms the school experience for New Yorkers—students, families, staff, and entire communities. And none of it would be possible without mayoral accountability. As an example, NYC Reads resulted in a 7.2-percentage point increase in reading scores in a single year—and the key to its success has been its consistency across our system. Instead of 32 different reading curricula and uneven levels of coaching and support across our districts, we've been able to disseminate high-quality, evidence-based practices to every elementary classroom. In a system as large as ours, moving the needle requires strong, sustained central oversight and execution.

Second, mayoral accountability ensures our highest-need students and families receive robust and equitable support. Rather than navigating disjointed or conflicting policies and programs, our families have a single source of truth, regardless of where they live or which school they attend. Not only is there a clear point of accountability—a single entity the public can hold responsible for outcomes—but with centralized governance, we can apply an equity lens to everything we do, such as allocating resources, programs, and staff. This means that our most vulnerable students, including our students with disabilities, multilingual learners, students in temporary housing and foster care, and more are never pushed to the side—they are consistently front and center in our work. For instance, we added a weight to the Fair Student Funding Formula to support students in temporary housing, in direct response to changing community needs. We've also been able to prioritize Community Schools in areas where students and families could benefit most. And while the work is always ongoing, we've made major strides in providing excellent special education programs and services citywide, because we've been able to centrally plan, prioritize, and set policy across all districts.

And third, mayoral accountability allows us to respond effectively in the face of challenges and crises. From the recent pivot-to-remote day to the current anxieties around ICE activity, we've been able to act quickly, decisively, and comprehensively thanks to mayoral accountability—without contradictions, confusion, or delays that would impact student safety. In the case of the recent snowstorm, we made a single citywide decision—instead of dozens of localized ones—to go remote, notifying and preparing families and schools well in advance of that Monday morning. Plus, thanks to the work we did during the pandemic to ensure digital connectivity, we had enough devices for every student—a feat once considered near-impossible. And in 2022, NYCPS launched Project Open Arms to coordinate wraparound supports for our immigrant students and families across the five boroughs. The team streamlined enrollment, stood up trainings for staff and families, provided supports in areas ranging from transportation to health, partnered with the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Affairs and city agencies, and more. In each of these instances, mayoral accountability allowed us to leverage the full force of city government in support of our students and families.

As a superintendent, I felt the positive effects of this governance structure directly. I was able to implement NYC Reads uniformly and effectively because I received dedicated funding and comprehensive guidance from central offices. I was able to serve newcomer students, connecting them with city and community resources, because there was a shared priority across city government to mobilize support. If not for this central cohesion, superintendents and schools would be on their own—each operating as their own island, without the common resources, consistent supports, or collective wisdom that come from functioning as a unified system. In other words, a centralized governance structure is not about undermining schools at the local level—on the contrary, it supports and improves them.

We know, however, that mayoral accountability cannot exist in a vacuum. It only works when paired with strong family empowerment practices, practices that bring our families to the table. I know this to be true both as the Chancellor and as a parent myself. So I'm proud of the work our system has done—and will continue to do—to engage families and communities in innovative ways.

On top of the engagement structures outlined in state law, including Community and Citywide Education Councils, School Leadership Teams, Parent Associations and Parent-Teacher

Associations, and more, in the last several years NYCPS has launched community working groups and advisory councils on issues that are top-of-mind for families, including students with disabilities, multilingual learners, Fair Student Funding, and class size. Additionally, as the Panel for Educational Policy has grown, we have launched PEP-specific working groups on topics ranging from busing to data privacy—while the PEP has also formed its own community-driven committees and special commissions.

Moreover, we've created and strengthened family support structures, from forming a Parent Coordinator advisory council to launching new programs like the NYC Reads Ambassadors and Family Connectors, empowering thousands of family and community members. We've expanded our covered languages for our translation and interpretation as well, from 9 languages to 12, to improve communication between schools and families.

These are promising starts, yet I am keenly aware that there is still much more to do. I am committed to ramping up this work significantly in the coming months. After all, we can talk about improvements all day, but if families are not *feeling* those impacts, if they are not feeling involved in decision-making, then we need to do better. We need to pursue not just engagement, but true empowerment for our families.

To that end, I am already meeting with parent leaders, advocates, and community members from across the city to gather their feedback and input on family empowerment. Second, I'm excited to share that my community conversation series, open to families, students, staff, and community members, begins tonight in Staten Island. During this series we'll be making ten stops total, two in each borough, to hear directly from our community on this and other key issues. I have also been busy visiting schools—within my first 60 school days on the job, I will have visited all 45 of our superintendencies across the city, meeting with parent and community leaders, school staff, and students.

Additionally, my team and I are developing new ideas for how we can enhance our family engagement mechanisms, from increasing flexibility around SLT meeting structure, to further empowering our Parent Coordinators, to increasing CEC partnership and participation. I look forward to sharing these ideas with you in the coming weeks as we continue to refine them—and I hope to hear from you directly as well, to gather your input and ideas.

Ultimately, I believe that both mayoral accountability and family empowerment are necessary features of a strong school system. We know that our students achieve when families, communities, and schools collaborate, and we need to continue nurturing this collaboration and strengthening ties with families and communities. This approach, paired with a clear accountability structure that enables equity and excellence, will ensure our students have the high-quality schools they deserve.



## **Testimony of Michael Mulgrew, UFT President, submitted before the New York City Council Committee on Education**

Good morning. My name is Michael Mulgrew, and I am the president of the United Federation of Teachers (UFT). On behalf of our over 200,000 members, I would like to thank Chair Eric Dinowitz and the Committee on Education for holding this oversight hearing on mayoral control. This hearing is of great importance as Governor Kathy Hochul just proposed extending mayoral control over New York City public schools until 2030 in the fiscal year 2027 executive budget.

It has been over 20 years since New York City began its experiment with mayoral control, and the UFT has witnessed what comes with giving the mayor unfettered authority over the city's schools. Most recently, during the Adams administration, we saw the mayor use his unchecked power to slash education funding by as much as 15%. Despite prohibitions against supplanting Contracts for Excellence funding and a separate legal obligation to maintain FY23 city funding levels, the Adams administration went ahead and eliminated hundreds of millions of dollars of funding. These cuts limited critical programs such as pre-K, 3-K, special education services and computer science education. Over the course of his term, the former mayor also repeatedly used his control of the school system to obstruct the implementation of the state's class size law, which educators, parents and advocates fought for and supported for years. These examples demonstrate the harm that can be done to our schools and communities when a mayor has the power to make major decisions unilaterally.

Because of experiences with past mayors, the UFT's position has been and continues to be that we are opposed to the city's current version of mayoral control. However, we are not opposed to all versions of mayoral control, so long as those versions include checks and balances on the mayor's power. This city needs a school governance system that includes and represents our incredibly diverse student body. We need a system that centers the voices of educators, parents and communities. No one wants to return to the old ways of school boards, nor do we want increased red tape and bureaucracy. Instead, we are seeking a new model of school governance that decentralizes authority.

Mayor Mamdani has pledged to support this vision. On the campaign trail, he expressed his support for ending mayoral control with the intent of giving more voice to educators and communities. Although he has since retracted this support, he has expressed his disapproval for how Eric Adams managed the school system and has vowed



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to approach mayoral control differently. We are eager to work with him to bring this vow to fruition, and we believe that, if implemented, the following six reforms would improve the mayor's ability to oversee our school system effectively while increasing representation for our schools and communities.

**1. Balance the composition of the Panel for Educational Policy:** The Panel for Educational Policy (PEP) must be reconstructed to properly serve its role as a representative of parents and other residents of the city. The PEP votes on critically important decisions such as school co-locations, school closures and vendor contracts. The lopsided number of mayoral appointees has led the panel to become a rubber stamp for the mayor's decisions. The lack of PEP independence also means that there are virtually no checks on mayoral control other than through the courts. The school governance laws need to be changed so that the mayor's power over schools is balanced by other stakeholders.

We recommend that the voting membership of the panel be composed of:

- Ten appointees from the mayor. Mayoral appointees must still include at least four NYC public school parents, including:
  - At least one parent of a child with an Individualized Education Program
  - At least one parent of a child who is in a bilingual or English as a second language program
  - At least one parent of a child attending a District 75 school or program
- Five appointees (one each) from the city's five borough presidents
- Five members elected by Community Education Council (CEC) presidents (one member from each borough)
- Three appointees (one each) from the city comptroller, the City Council speaker and the public advocate

**2. Enhance PEP role in the selection of the chancellor:** The Panel for Educational Policy must be empowered to play a meaningful role in choosing candidates for chancellor. The PEP, as a representative of parents and other residents of this city, should have the responsibility of conducting the initial search for chancellors and the screening of candidates. The PEP would then forward the names of the top three candidates to the mayor, and the mayor would have to choose from among these three.



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Once this reform is implemented, chancellors selected by way of this new process should serve for a renewable, fixed two-year term and be removable only for cause during that term.

**3. Provide CECs control over co-location decisions:** Community Education Councils should be empowered to approve all co-locations of schools geographically located in their community school districts, including high schools. Co-locations are not necessarily bad for schools. But the determination of whether to co-locate two or more schools in the same building should depend on the circumstances of the schools in question and the wishes of the community. Local communities should have the final say on whether they want schools in their area co-located.

**4. Restore the power and independence of high school and community superintendents:** Currently, high school superintendents and community superintendents, who are responsible for elementary and middle schools in their districts, serve at the pleasure of the chancellor and can be removed at any time for any reason. This greatly inhibits their ability to act independently and in the best interests of their districts. To give superintendents real authority, CECs should play a role in their selection. State education law should be changed so that CECs conduct candidate screenings for superintendent positions and forward the names of the top three candidates to the chancellor, who would select from among those three. In addition, community superintendents should serve renewable three-year terms and not be removable except for just cause. We also recommend that superintendents be put in charge of all school-related issues, i.e., transportation, safety, placement, curriculum, medical, contracts, hiring and firing, and other educational issues, and that they be directed to work with the CECs to ensure that students' mandated support services are provided.

**5. Provide greater transparency to SLTs:** The role of school leadership teams (SLTs) is to make sure each school's resources are aligned with its educational goals. To do this, SLTs are supposed to have oversight of their schools' budgets. Many principals, however, skirt the requirement to turn over their school budget to their SLT by giving them only the budget summary available on the DOE website, which does not show expenditures. For SLTs to fulfill their role of serving as advocates for their school



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communities, superintendents should be required to ensure that all principals in their districts give their SLTs thorough information about fund allocations, including their school's Galaxy table of organization, which shows money budgeted for personnel, per-diem substitutes, after-school and before-school activities, books and other supplies, and other expenses. This information on money scheduled and spent should be given to the SLT once per month. SLTs' C-30 subcommittees should also be restored to their status prior to 2002, so that in any search for a new principal, they are empowered to put forth the list of candidates from which the new principal is selected.

**6. No NYC school governance longer than two years:** We believe a two-year extension is the appropriate length of time to allow for a review of the implementation of necessary reforms like those above.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this important matter. We are eager to engage in a meaningful conversation around possible reforms to the current system to reassure our union members and the parents of NYC schoolchildren that their concerns are properly addressed.



February 10, 2026

Testimony of Julia Konrad, Assistant Director for Education  
On behalf of New York City Independent Budget Office  
to the New York City Council Committee on Education

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Good morning, Chair Dinowitz and members of the Committee on Education. I am Julia Konrad, Assistant Director for the Education Team at the New York City Independent Budget Office (IBO). I am joined today by my colleagues, Alan Chen and Jason Wong, who are Urban Fellows with IBO this year. IBO is a nonpartisan, independent government agency mandated by the New York City Charter. IBO's mission is to enhance public understanding of New York City's budget, public policy, and economy through independent analysis.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify at this oversight hearing on mayoral control. In my testimony, I will begin by describing IBO's authority under state education law and its connection to mayoral control. I will then discuss how IBO serves the public with the data access and resources provided by that state law. This testimony builds upon our ongoing work, including research led by Alan and Jason to explain how mayoral control works.

### **IBO Access to Data and Resources**

In 2009, as part of the amendments that extended mayoral control, the State Legislature authorized IBO to secure the information and data necessary to provide public reports on financial and educational matters within New York City. The State granted this authority in response to New Yorkers' call for greater accountability and transparency under mayoral control. To fulfill those responsibilities, the State Legislature mandated the City allocate not less than an additional 2.5% of the budget for the Mayor's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to IBO for education research alone. This is on top of the 10% of OMB's budget guaranteed by City Charter Chapter 11 which established IBO. Because the additional funding allocation is written into state law and not subject to budget negotiations, IBO serves as an independent resource for New Yorkers year over year to gain information on the City's education budget and policies. With each renewal of mayoral control, the State has renewed IBO's role under New York State Education Law § 2590-U. For the past few years, IBO has sought to establish this authority as stand-alone legislation with Senate and Assembly members, distinct from the renewal of mayoral control.



## IBO's Impact

Because of this State-granted authority, IBO receives data from New York City Public Schools on students, teachers, and schools, as well as school and central administration budget data. In calendar year 2025, this access to data enabled IBO to publish 14 education reports and provide testimony on education topics at city and state hearings, including:

- [Education Indicators](#), an annual report on student demographics, student achievement, staffing and space at NYC schools;
- [Impact of Foundation Aid Proposals on New York City Revenue](#), an analysis of the funding impact of proposed changes to the State's Foundation Aid formula and [a follow-up analysis](#) of two additional proposals from the State legislature (IBO just [published estimates](#) for this year as well);
- [A Slow Start](#), a report to track the City's progress towards compliance with the State's class size law, in which IBO found that to achieve full compliance by September 2027, New York City will need to budget an additional \$702 million to hire approximately 6,900 teachers above what is currently budgeted in the City's financial plan;
- [What's In A Weight?](#), an assessment of changes to NYC's Fair Student Funding formula and its budgetary impact on schools, which included an explainer on the formula itself;
- [Utilization Up, Capacity Down](#), an examination of changes in enrollment and capacity for 3-K and pre-K programs in the NYC Department of Education early childhood program;

With the staffing and resources appropriated under State law, IBO engaged in extensive community outreach and engagement in 2025, including:

- Over a dozen interactive school budget workshops across all five boroughs, with events ranging from 30 to 200 participants, including presentations at four Community Education Councils and seven Community Boards;
- A public event co-hosted with Chalkbeat New York, to discuss NYC schools and funding, with roughly 100 attendees;
- A high school curriculum on the City's budget, taught this year for the second time at a NYCPS high school;



- Presentations at two academic conferences and two education seminar series, hosted by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and by Columbia Teachers College.

Finally, IBO is proud to serve as a resource to parents, students, advocates, journalists, and elected officials alike. IBO takes requests from the public to explore specific research questions, and to lead budget trainings at community meetings (see our [website](#) to request either). For example, in 2025, at the request of Council Member Brewer, we estimated the cost of expanding the City's Schoolyards to Playgrounds program citywide. We are available to answer every New Yorker's questions, none too big and none too small.

As the City and State consider the next extension of mayoral control, IBO will continue to provide the public with additional transparency and understanding of the City's education budget and policies—as intended by state education law.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I am happy to answer any questions



To see more of IBO's work and to follow us on socials scan here:





## OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

**ANTONIO REYNOSO**

Brooklyn Borough President

### **City Council Committee on Education Oversight: Mayoral Control of NYC Public Schools February 10, 2026**

Thank you, Chair Dinowitz, for holding this important hearing today. Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso commends the Council for prioritizing this discussion as we transition into a new mayoral administration and State legislative term. Today sends a broader message to the City and the State about how our New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) should operate, and about who should be at the table making decisions for a system that serves close to one million students.

While BP Reynoso acknowledges the significant changes implemented under Mayoral Control for NYCPS since 2002, and the City's move away from a disjointed and corrupt school board system, he also recognizes the overwhelming feedback from parents, teachers, students, and other stakeholders who continue to lack meaningful representation and voice under the current governance model.

This is not a matter of opinion, it is documented. Just two years ago, the New York State Education Department published a nearly 300-page report informed by borough-wide listening tours held across the city with overwhelming attendance. Through that process, and through direct engagement with our office, Brooklyn parents, educators, students, and trusted community partners consistently shared their frustration with being excluded from decisions that directly impact their schools. The report concluded that the majority of public hearing participants do not feel heard or included in these processes.<sup>1</sup>

At every level of school governance, participation is not meaningfully supported and, too often, actively discouraged.

- **School Leadership Teams (SLTs)** comprised of UFT chapter chairs, PTA presidents, representatives of community-based organizations, and other elected parents and teachers, have no formal role in administrative, fiscal, or policy decisions. Their role is limited to reaching "consensus" under Chancellor Regulations A-655.<sup>2</sup> Many SLTs remain out of compliance with these regulations due to challenges in recruiting and sustaining active parent participation. Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) and Parent Associations (PAs) are similarly limited, able to participate only at the discretion of their school principal.

- **Community Education Councils (CECs)** made up of parent-elected members and Borough President appointees, continue to experience historically low election turnout.<sup>3</sup> Representation across neighborhoods is often inequitable, even within the same district. The New York City Public Schools Family and Community Empowerment Office (FACE), which manages and supports CECs, presents an inherent conflict of interest. CEC powers are limited primarily to voting on school zoning, name changes, and some aspects of building and superintendent evaluations. For major proposals such as co-locations, school mergers, and closures, CECs have no mandated vote.
- **The Panel for Education Policy (PEP)** is dominated by mayoral appointees, outnumbering parent-elected and borough president-appointed members. Despite recent reforms, it continues to serve largely as a rubber stamp.<sup>4</sup> PEP members themselves have publicly stated that they cannot meaningfully influence outcomes.<sup>5</sup> NYCPS-led briefings lack transparency, communication is limited, and members are often asked to vote on preliminary budgets or major contracts without sufficient time or materials to make informed decisions. Citywide Councils such as the Citywide Council for High Schools, District 75, Special Education, and English Language Learners have no formal representation on the PEP, despite often representing the most vulnerable student populations.

Lastly, students are either excluded entirely or included only as “token” member to these governing bodies. They are the heart of this system and being young or inexperienced should never make their voices any less important. If we are truly a system built to support our youngest and brightest future citizens, we must foster true and authentic representation for them.

It is for these reasons that Borough President Reynoso calls on the Council to join the 44 organizations and partners calling for establishment of an independent commission, composed of stakeholders from across the system, to draft a new governance model and proposal to be submitted to the State. While we cannot go back to time a time of corruption and mismanagement of taxpayer dollars by school boards, we can aspire to a more democratic model of school governance – one where all parties, are heard, valued, and appreciated for their experience.



**BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT VANESSA L. GIBSON**

**New York City Council Committee on Education  
Oversight – Mayoral Control of New York City Public Schools  
Testimony of Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson  
February 10, 2026**

Thank you Chair Dinowitz and the members of the New York City Council Committee on Education for convening this important hearing today. Mayoral Control of schools is a complex issue that deserves the attention and scrutiny of our elected leaders across our city and state. Our children's education is one of the paramount missions of our city government, and our whole community must know that we are working to ensure the best outcomes for our scholars.

Over the past two decades, Mayoral Control has fundamentally changed the way that the school system is run in our city. This change has had both positive and negative outcomes, but overall, it has made our city's schools better for our students.

Mayoral Control has allowed for greater accountability – all stakeholders in the education system know that it is the mayor who is ultimately responsible for the schools, and not a diffuse group of community school board members and an unelected Board of Education. By putting the responsibility of managing the whole system in the mayor's hands, we know that the schools will be managed holistically rather than district by district. This has helped enable our school system to become more equitable over time.

However, I am fully cognizant of the ways in which Mayoral Control does not work as well as the previous system. Particularly, I am concerned by the ways in which parents' and educators' voices are not always heard and respected. With a sprawling and centralized system, parent and community pushback to proposed changes does not always reach the true decisionmakers. Parent advocates often feel that their recommendations are not truly being heard and considered.

Over the past few years, we have seen changes and improvements to the way the Mayoral Control system works, including the expansion of the Panel for Educational Policy and new safeguards for its independence. These changes must be carefully examined to ensure that they are working as intended going forward. We must not be afraid to make further changes to improve the system as a whole.

As Borough President and a former City Councilmember, I have had the privilege of hearing from numerous Bronxites and residents from all across our city who are committed to making our schools better for all our children. I know that leaders in and out of the education system at both the state and city levels take their feedback and advocacy seriously and will strongly consider what they have to say as the state considers an extension of mayoral control.

Governor Hochul has proposed a four-year extension of Mayoral Control in her budget proposal. I believe that the Legislature should adopt this proposal and continue Mayoral Control over the length of Mayor Mamdani's term. However, as the Legislature considers this proposal, it is an

important opportunity to also consider changes, improvements, and related actions that could improve outcomes for our young people.

I have long supported numerous programs in our schools that have proven to be successful interventions for our scholars. Our schools are anchors in our communities and provide the services and resources that our students need to thrive. I have supported the community schools model, helped bring health clinics into the schools, and supported more health education for our young people. We have seen anti-violence programs expanded, including Project Pivot to connect schools with violence interrupter organizations to give our scholars the tools they need to de-escalate conflict. We must continue to champion more staff in our schools, including guidance counselors, social workers, full-time nurses, and art teachers.

As the city confronts a multi-billion-dollar budget gap, we must also take action to put into effect the requirements of the class-size mandate to ensure that all our students have the same opportunities and that none are placed in classrooms where there are too many students and not enough teachers. The Panel for Educational Policy must continue to improve its oversight, contracting, and other responsibilities, including through expanding outreach to parents and other stakeholders. Community Education Councils must be made more robust, with more support from the central administration, greater guidelines, and additional training where appropriate.

In November of 2025, I hosted a town hall meeting with over a hundred students from all across The Bronx regarding how they perceived the safety and security of their learning environments. What I heard from these young leaders is that we still have a lot of work to do. There are numerous pressing issues that the Public Schools and related agencies must confront, including improving the deployment of school safety agents, increasing the number of crossing guards at our schools, ensuring that our school bus system is fully responsive for students with disabilities, and much more. When students do not feel safe in school or getting to school, this can increase absenteeism and result in worse outcomes. These challenges must be confronted head-on.

Mayoral Control enables the city to pursue a holistic approach to education reform. We are able to work to build alternative pathways to help our young build the skills they will need in the future. We are able to use citywide strategies to combat the school-to-prison pipeline and reduce chronic absenteeism and suspensions. And we are better able to ensure a more equitable distribution of resources that helps to bring equipment and technology to schools throughout our city.

There is no one more interested in the success of our scholars than their parents. We must strive to increase engagement with the parents who are less likely to participate. This includes working people, parents who do not speak English, immigrant parents, and the parents of students in temporary housing, among others. We must recognize that the experiences and needs of these parents are not always reflected by those who show up at every meeting and event. Getting a full picture of the community is essential to achieving the best outcomes for our students.

As we strive to amplify the voices of parents, we must also make a greater effort to incorporate the input of teachers on decision-making in our system. Their perspectives are invaluable to making the system the best it can be. Many teachers are also parents of New York City Public

Schools students giving them a unique perspective of looking at the student experience in a holistic way. They also see firsthand how the decisions made by the leaders of the school system have an impact on the classroom level, where the needs are, and what trends exist.

The voices of everyone in the schools should be heard to ensure that we achieve the best outcomes for our scholars. This includes teachers, educators, paraprofessionals, administrators, support staff, and advocates. We must continue to engage the unions representing these groups, including the United Federation of Teachers and Council of School Supervisors and Administrators, who have played important roles in getting class size standards enacted into law so that our scholars have better opportunities to learn and thrive.

Our schools are at a pivotal point. We are facing budget cuts that will imperil numerous programs, including community schools, universal preschool, Summer Rising, and Computer Science for All. These cuts will have serious negative repercussions for our students. Additionally, NYC Public Schools must work to implement the class size standards enacted in 2022, ensuring that our students can learn in appropriately sized classes. Furthermore, we must have a single, unified policy regarding how our schools will confront the potential for federal immigration enforcement in the school buildings. These are serious issues, and we are going to need to see strong feedback from our parents and communities about how to make these changes work without hurting our students. We must continue to raise the standards for our scholars because they deserve the best education we can give them. Our young people are full of promise and potential. Failure is not an option.

I want to thank all of the New Yorkers who have made their voices heard regarding Mayoral Control of our schools, and I will continue to encourage parents, teachers, students, and other advocates to be a part of the conversation, as we strive to collectively make things better for our scholars and families in The Bronx and throughout the city.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vanessa L. Gibson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Vanessa L. Gibson  
Bronx Borough President

**TESTIMONY**

**NYC COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
CHAIR, ERIC DINOWITZ**

*Oversight – Mayoral Control of NYC Public Schools*

**Presented on  
Tuesday, February 10, 2026**



**The Council of School Supervisors and Administrators  
Henry Rubio, President  
Dale Kelly, Executive Vice President  
Stamo Karalazarides Rosenberg, First Vice President**

**40 Rector Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10006  
(212) 823-2020  
[www.csa-nyc.org](http://www.csa-nyc.org)**

The Council of School Supervisors and Administrators (CSA) appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony on the future of school governance and mayoral control in New York City.

CSA represents the 18,000 in-service and retired school leaders and administrators who are responsible for translating governance structures into daily practice inside schools, districts, and central offices. Our members are the continuity of the system. Principals, assistant principals, and other supervisors and administrators remain, and must implement whatever governance framework is adopted, day after day, in service of students and families.

For that reason, CSA has been part of this debate at every stage: under the former Board of Education model, during the transition to mayoral control under Mayor Bloomberg, through successive renewals and reforms, and most recently through the New York State Education Department's comprehensive review of mayoral control. Our perspective is grounded in lived experience.

### **Why Mayoral Control Exists**

CSA's position on mayoral control has evolved since the state law was first introduced. However, our positions have always been grounded in a core principle: centralized authority must be matched with meaningful checks and clear accountability.

When mayoral control was first introduced under Mayor Bloomberg, CSA did not offer support. CSA joined State Senator Liz Krueger and Assemblymember Steve Sanders as plaintiffs in litigation, challenging aspects of mayoral control that weakened the statutory authority of community superintendents. That lawsuit preserved the superintendent role as a critical district-level check on centralized power and protected their ability to exercise real authority over instructional and operational functions. That preserved statutory framework enabled superintendents to be vested with the real responsibility they currently hold over their districts. CSA believes that this early intervention strengthened mayoral control by ensuring that centralization did not come at the expense of functional governance or system balance.

Over time, CSA's position evolved as the law was amended under different mayors. We saw firsthand how a single point of executive accountability improved coordination, reduced fragmentation, and enabled citywide priorities to be pursued at scale. Our support for mayoral control grew not because our concerns disappeared, but because our advocacy helped shape a system that better balanced authority with implementation capacity and internal checks.

It was precisely for that history that CSA was deeply alarmed during the recent mayoral campaign when then-candidate Mayor Mamdani publicly stated that he would not seek an extension of mayoral control and that the governance structure should be abolished. Since that time, and particularly during the mayoral transition on which CSA and many other education stakeholders actively participated, the mayor's position evolved. In fact, his trajectory mirrors CSA's own experience: initial skepticism rooted in real concerns, followed by a more measured assessment of what structures are necessary for a system of this scale to function effectively.

In consultation with our union, our members, and other education leaders, including his newly appointed Chancellor, Kamar Samuels, Mayor Mamdani has publicly acknowledged that the scope and ambition of his education agenda require the authority, coherence, and accountability that mayoral control provides.

We are eager to partner with Mayor Mamdani and his team on amended governance and clear lines of mayoral accountability.

The Governor appears aligned with this revised position and has included in her proposed budget a four-year extension of mayoral control for New York City. There are logical questions being put by state lawmakers regarding whether it is appropriate to address mayoral control within the state budget when it does not impact the State's finances. We agree that discussion is worth having.

Regardless, CSA welcomes this recognition of system reality and looks forward to reviewing any formal proposals the Administration may advance to modify the existing governance structure, particularly with respect to the increased parental involvement the mayor has referenced publicly, but which has not yet been articulated in formal detail.

### **NYSED's Review**

The report on mayoral control that the New York State Education Department released last year represents one of the most extensive examinations of New York City school governance since mayoral control was first enacted. CSA participated in that process, and we believe the report provides an important evidentiary foundation for the current discussion.

The Department's review was notable for both its scope and methodology. NYSED conducted a broad public engagement process, soliciting testimony from parents, educators, school leaders, advocates, and policymakers. It examined the operation of mayoral control over time, reviewed governance models in other large urban school districts across the country, and assessed how different structures balance authority, accountability, and public participation.

The report notes that mayoral control has been amended eight times between 2003, and it has been amended once more since the report was released. Each of these changes were meant to address transparency, representation, and participation. Out of those negotiation processes, the law created community education councils (CECs) and provided for school leadership teams (SLTs) at the school level. The Panel for Education Policy has expanded, and another amendment to mayoral control reconfigured advisory citywide councils for special education, English-language learners, high schools and District 75 students with special needs.

Several of the report's conclusions align closely with CSA's longstanding concerns:

- That mayoral control, while providing clarity of authority, has become increasingly closed to the perspectives of stakeholders in practice, particularly with respect to the PEP
- That many stakeholders experience existing engagement structures as minimally advisory rather than consequential, leading to frustration, disengagement, and diminished trust.
- That checks and balances within the system are often perceived as weak, especially when governance bodies are dominated by mayoral appointees
- That stability and coherence remain essential, particularly in a system as large and complex as New York City's, and that governance reforms must not recreate the fragmentation of the past.

The NYSED report also makes clear that no single governance model is sufficient on its own. In its review of other jurisdictions, the Department notes that systems with stronger participatory structures still

rely on clear executive authority, while systems with centralized authority increasingly incorporate formal mechanisms for shared decision-making and stakeholder accountability. This comparative analysis reinforces CSA's view that the path forward is not abolition or replacement, but structural refinement.

### **Proposed Mayoral Control Amendments**

CSA agrees with NYSED's core framing: the question before policymakers is not whether mayoral control should exist, but how it should evolve to better balance authority, legitimacy, and participation. There is now wide consensus across communities that all stakeholders should have a greater voice in education governance and that the Panel for Educational Policy must not function as a body that simply ratifies mayoral decisions. When nearly all PEP members are appointed by, and serve at the pleasure of, the mayor, the panel's ability to operate as an independent deliberative body is inherently constrained.

CSA has raised these concerns for years, including in prior testimony, where we've called for changes to PEP composition, greater stability of membership, and strengthened authority for Community Education Councils. Our positions were not meant to weaken mayoral control, but to ensure that it operated with legitimacy, transparency, and trust. The question now is how to move beyond general agreement on the problem and toward a governance model that works for New York City schools and the families we serve.

New York City does not need to invent a new theory of parental involvement or shared governance. We already require one at the school and district levels through School Leadership Teams (SLTs) and District Leadership Teams (DLTs), established into law with Chancellor's Regulation A-655 which mandates the SLTs in every New York City public school.

According to the Chancellor's Regulations, SLTs are formal governance bodies composed of elected parents, elected staff, and school leadership. Parents are not appointed by principals or the central administration; they are elected by their parent associations. Staff are elected by their peers. The team operates on principles of parity and shared responsibility.

SLTs are responsible for developing the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan and ensuring that the school's budget aligns with that plan. Decisions are made through consensus-based decision-making: the expectation is collaboration and shared problem-solving, not majority rule or top-down directives. SLTs were designed with conflict in mind. When consensus can't be reached, there is an escalation pathway:

- First, the team seeks assistance at the district level through the District Leadership Team.
- If needed, the issue is elevated to the superintendent.
- The superintendent makes a determination only as a last resort, after documented efforts at consensus have failed.

District Leadership Teams operate on the same principles, bringing together parent representatives, administrators, and labor representatives to develop districtwide plans and resolve disputes that cannot be resolved at the school level. This structure works because it balances three essential elements:

1. Meaningful participation, where parents are co-decision-makers, not observers.
2. Clear accountability, where authority ultimately exists, and decisions are made.
3. Process legitimacy, where disagreements are handled transparently and predictably.

CSA is not suggesting that mayoral control be replaced with SLTs or DLTs at the citywide level. We are suggesting that the governance logic embedded in these structures offers a practical, proven framework for strengthening parental involvement within mayoral control:

- Moving beyond symbolic input toward structured shared decision-making.
- Designing governance bodies that cannot be dismissed or overridden without process.
- Exercising executive authority within a framework that builds trust rather than erodes it.

This approach directly addresses the concerns raised in the NYSED report, reflects CSA's evolving positions over time, and aligns with the mayor's stated goal of democratizing mayoral control without sacrificing the system's ability to function.

### ***Composition: Functional Representation***

Chancellor's Regulation A-655 was written to ensure that decisions affecting students, families, and educators are informed by data, shaped by those closest to the work, and owned collectively without surrendering final authority or accountability.

School Leadership Teams operate under standardized bylaws embedded directly in regulation. Roles are defined. Parents and staff serving on SLTs are elected by their peers and act as representatives of constituencies, not as individuals expressing personal preferences. Mandatory members include the principal, the PA/PTA president, and the UFT chapter leader (or designee), with student representation at the high school level and optional community members.

The current composition of the Panel for Educational Policy includes 24 voting members: 13 appointed by the Mayor, five appointed by borough presidents, five elected by Community Education Council presidents, and one independent chair selected pursuant to state law. While this structure includes multiple appointing authorities, the Mayor retains control through majority appointments. More importantly, appointments alone do not constitute functional representation. There are no clearly defined roles tied to specific constituencies and no formal expectations regarding how those perspectives are to be carried into deliberation.

Functional representation means that members of a governance body serve in clearly defined roles tied to specific constituencies and responsibilities, not simply as individual appointees. Representatives would be accountable to identifiable stakeholder groups, carry articulated perspectives into deliberation, and would be expected to reflect the needs of those they represent. This model prioritizes role clarity over personal viewpoints, ensuring that decision-making is informed by lived system experience while preserving centralized authority. Functional representation moves governance beyond symbolic inclusion toward structured participation, where perspectives are organized, predictable, and embedded in the process itself.

Defining certain PEP seats as functional representative roles would not weaken mayoral control. The Mayor would continue to appoint members, but those appointments would carry role clarity. Parent representation could be strengthened by clarifying expectations for advocacy, including representation for families of students with disabilities or multilingual learners. There should be designated functional seats representing school leaders through a CSA designee, teachers through a UFT designee, and other education workers through a DC 37 designee.

### ***Planning: Shared Priorities Through the CEP***

At the center of A-655 is the Comprehensive Educational Plan. It is a forward-looking planning document through which a school or district identifies goals, names areas most in need of improvement, and agrees on strategies to address those needs within available resources. It is intended to guide decision-making across the year.

The lifecycle of the CEP reinforces this logic. Plans are submitted in early summer, aligned to budgets in July, reviewed by superintendents during the summer, revised in the fall, and posted publicly. Progress is monitored throughout the year, and plans are adjusted as conditions change. At the school level, this planning is operationalized through concrete transparency mechanisms. For instance, SLTs have the right to formally request key budget documents and principals are required to respond within defined timelines.

At the district level, the same architecture applies. District Leadership Teams develop District Comprehensive Educational Plans aligned to Chancellor and district goals. What is striking is that this carefully constructed governance model disappears at the citywide level.

The Panel for Educational Policy is asked to make decisions of enormous consequence—school closures, rezonings, utilization changes, capital plans, and major contracts—without a citywide comprehensive planning framework that articulates shared priorities, names systemwide challenges, evolves over time, and anchors decisions to an agreed-upon strategy.

As a result, the PEP is structurally positioned as a reactive body rather than a deliberative one. Members are asked to vote on discrete proposals without a framework that explains how those proposals fit into a coherent citywide strategy. Decisions appear episodic rather than cumulative, and reactive rather than intentional.

Applying CEP-style planning at the citywide level would not constrain authority. It would provide context for decisions, coherence across actions, and transparency for stakeholders.

We should also consider having the Mayor and Chancellor provide a 4-5 year strategic education plan in collaboration with all stakeholders.

### ***Deliberation: Consensus Before Votes***

Under A-655, consensus replaces majority rule, and it is not assumed; it is enforced through structure and documentation. Consensus is not an up-or-down vote. It is an outcome that all members can accept, even when it is not every member's first preference. The City chose this standard deliberately, recognizing that voting produces winners and losers, while consensus produces shared responsibility and shared accountability.

School Leadership Teams meet regularly and document their work. Those records do not simply reflect final outcomes. They capture discussions, data considered, concerns raised, and areas of disagreement. Dissent is not treated as obstruction. It is preserved as part of the governance record so that decisions are understood in context rather than flattened into outcomes alone.

There is no required cycle of structured deliberation at the PEP comparable to the cadence expected of SLTs or DLTs. Today, for major PEP actions - such as school closures, rezonings, utilization changes, capital plans, and large contracts - public hearings are held and comments are received, but internal disagreement among PEP members has no procedural consequence.

Up-and-down voting could remain the final decision mechanism for the PEP. But voting should not be the first or only one. Applying this principle at the citywide level does not require unanimity, veto power, or indefinite delay. It requires that defined categories of high-impact decisions include a formal deliberative phase in which areas of agreement and disagreement are articulated and documented publicly.

In the case of a school closure, for example, the public would see not only the final vote, but the reasoning process: where members agree on enrollment or facility conditions, where they disagree on community impact or interventions, and how those disagreements were addressed.

### ***Authority: Power With Explanation***

A-655 also anticipates what happens when consensus cannot be reached. Rather than allowing stalemate or silent override, it establishes a clear escalation pathway. Issues move from School Leadership Teams to the superintendent, who retains authority to make a final determination.

What matters is not only who decides, but how that decision is reached and that all stakeholders are heard. By the time authority intervenes, there is a documented record of deliberation, dissent, and data considered. When a superintendent acts, that action responds to the substance of the disagreement. Authority is exercised transparently, with evidence that shared planning occurred and that alternatives were meaningfully considered.

When consensus cannot be reached at the PEP, the absence of agreement currently has no procedural consequence. The vote occurs, the majority prevails, and the process ends. Applying SLT/DLIT logic to citywide governance would mean that when the Mayor or Chancellor proceeds despite unresolved disagreement, that action would be accompanied by a written justification. Minority views would be formally documented and responded to. In limited cases, additional structured steps such as extended deliberation could be required. This strengthens authority by making the exercise of power intelligible and accountable; even those who disagree with the outcome would have clarity about how the decision was made.

### **Conclusion**

CSA members are responsible for implementation, continuity, and results. We have lived through fragmented governance. We have lived through centralized governance. We understand why mayoral control emerged, why it must continue, and why it must evolve. The next version of mayoral control should be designed deliberately, drawing on structures that already work in our system, and guided by evidence, experience, and practicality.

CSA stands ready to continue working with the City Council, the Administration, and the State to help shape a governance structure that is durable, legitimate, and worthy of the students and families we serve.



45 Broadway, 22<sup>nd</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10006  
212-967-0322 | [www.unhny.org](http://www.unhny.org)

**Testimony of United Neighborhood Houses  
Before the New York City Council**

**Oversight Hearing - Mayoral Control  
Committee on Education  
Council Member Eric Dinowitz, Chair**

**Submitted by Kate Connolly, Senior Policy Analyst  
February 12, 2026**

UNH is a policy and social change organization with a mission to support New York's settlement house movement. Settlement houses provide multi-generational services designed to support individuals, families, and communities. Settlement house programs build bonds within and between communities and create opportunities for advocacy and social change. UNH was founded in 1919 by settlement house leaders who recognized the strength in their collective voices to drive important social reforms. With this goal, UNH was tasked to coordinate the efforts of settlement houses; document their shared learning and experiences; and increase the influence and impact of settlement houses for the greater good of New York communities. Today, our network serves over 800,000 New Yorkers.

Settlement houses have been community hubs for education for decades, and have close relationships with their local schools to ensure that all children and families in their neighborhoods have what they need to thrive. Settlement houses partner directly with NYCPS through a variety of contracted programs. Collectively, our 40 settlement house members in New York City serve over 8,000 children in early childhood education programs, and serve as the lead partner for 23 Community Schools and 27 Learning to Work programs, in addition to school-based mental health clinics, afterschool programs, and more.

The granting of mayoral control in 2002 has allowed New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) to operate with centralized oversight, making citywide initiatives like universal pre-k and standardization of curriculum possible. However, this system has also reduced transparency and eliminated many of the checks and balances governing other City agencies. As the State debates the extension of mayoral control, UNH encourages the Legislature to consider the following qualifications to improve transparency and governance of New York City Public schools.

**Ensure New York City Public Schools Adhere to Standard Contracting Practices**

Developed by the City and adopted in 2019, the NYC Health and Human Services (HHS) Cost Policies and Procedures Manual standardized the cost allocation, budget modifications, and reimbursement for City-contracted nonprofit providers on all HHS contracts. This cost manual,

alongside the City's Indirect Cost Rate Initiative, were major steps forward toward creating a uniform practice for human services organizations contracting with the City, and allowed for better and more transparent practices across the board. However, certain contracts with New York City Public Schools are exempt from following the Cost Manual, and it is sometimes unclear for others whether they follow these policies. This leaves contracted providers without clear guidelines for allowable costs and contracting procedures.

Additionally, NYCPS has not fully implemented PASSPort (the City's digital procurement management tool). In fact, some NYCPS procurements, including the active Learning to Work Request for Proposals, still request submission via email. This is both antiquated and cumbersome, and needlessly avoids a management system heavily invested in by the City.

The refusal to use these systems and standardize contracting processes across the City have led to delays in communication, payments, and programming. For settlement houses in particular, who contract with a wide array of City agencies to deliver programming in their neighborhoods, the contracting differences at NYCPS are glaring. NYCPS has consistently been one of the slowest agencies to register contracts and to pay for services rendered. Rectifying these issues would strengthen NYCPS-contracted programs, which is particularly crucial in light of recent childcare investments.

**Under a renewal of mayoral control, the legislature must include qualifiers that require NYCPS to adhere to contracting guidelines set forth by the Health and Human Services City agencies, including utilizing the HHS Cost Manual for all contracting and PASSPort for all Requests for Proposals.**

#### Build in Additional City Council Oversight

Because NYCPS does not function like a typical human services mayoral agency, the City Council has limited oversight over NYCPS, and limited capacity to legislate the agency's activities or even request data. In fact, City Council is largely limited to legislation concerned with data reporting requirements. This is a clear example of how mayoral control has weakened the same checks and balances that allow for greater transparency in other city agencies. For example, under the Adams Administration, NYCPS delayed registering contracts and paying for services delivered by the City's early childhood programs. This issue reached a crisis point, with some providers closing entirely because the delays were so severe. During this time, clear and transparent information on the progress NYCPS was making to fix this issue was hard to obtain. The City Council was limited in what oversight it could exercise, leading to a long and frustrating period of time where providers suffered but there was little understanding of the severity of the issue.

**Modifications allowing for increased City Council oversight of NYCPS must be a part of any extension of mayoral control.**

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue with you further. Please contact Kate Connolly at [kconnolly@unhny.org](mailto:kconnolly@unhny.org).



**MANHATTAN** | 1010 Avenue of the Americas, Suite 301, New York, NY 10018  
tel: 212.674.2300 fax: 212.254.5953 vp: 646.350.2681

**QUEENS** | 80-02 Kew Gardens Road, Suite 400, Kew Gardens, NY 11415  
tel: 646.442.1520 fax: 357.561.4883

[www.cidny.org](http://www.cidny.org)

## **In Opposition of Mayoral Control**

February 12, 2026

To the Committee on Education:

My name is Molly Senack, and I am testifying on behalf of the Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York (CIDNY) as their Education and Employment Community Organizer. This testimony is supported by Sharon McLennon Wier, Ph.D., MEd., CRC, LMHC, Executive Director of CIDNY.

The debate over who should have ultimate decision-making power when it comes to a student's education is one that tends to bring many voices to the table, all of them justified to a degree in believing it should be them: students understand their own needs, parents understand their children, teachers understand the classroom, school staff understand logistics, advocates understand policy, community members understand context, and policymakers understand law. This might be an oversimplification of an intricate system of knowledge, but it shows that having multiple perspectives is critical when it comes to representing and addressing the needs of students.

This is especially true for students with disabilities. To ensure they receive an equitable and effective education, students with disabilities not only need to trust that the entities listed above have a thorough understanding of the education system, but that they also have a thorough understanding of the disability itself, how the disability might impact their learning, and what practices should be implemented to address those impacts. This means that additional perspectives might need to be included in making those decisions: medical experts, legal experts, and of course, related service providers.

However, since 2002, decision-making power regarding the NYC education system has ultimately rested with a single entity: the NYC mayor. While mayoral control is designed so that the mayor can still receive input from the aforementioned voices, input does not always equate power. When any regulating body is reduced to a single entity, regardless of what or whom that entity is, the capacity for oversight and influence is reduced right along with it.

The way New York City's public school system is currently structured, the public can voice any opinion or concern to their Community Education Councils (CECs) or directly to the Panel for Educational Policy (PEP). Those councils can then pass resolutions, submit reports, and make recommendations to the PEP, which, as a replacement for the city's Board of Education with 24 voting members, is meant to act essentially as an oversight committee for the mayor and the mayor's appointed school's chancellor. The PEP receives input from the CECs and the public, and then votes whether to approve certain contracts and policies. However, though the PEP includes two high school students who can, in theory, advocate for themselves and their peers, they are not allowed to advocate in practice, because they are not allowed to vote. And because 13 of the PEP's 24 members are, like the chancellor, appointed by the mayor, the

power of the PEP as a whole ends up being more theoretical than practical: it functions more as an enforcer of the mayor's policies than as an influencer of them.

Enforcement has been a hallmark of each administration, which is not necessarily a critique of these mayors or their policies. Each mayor who has held office under mayoral control has had an education issue they had hoped would be their legacy: for Mayor Bloomberg it was raising test scores, for Mayor de Blasio it was universal pre-kindergarten, for Mayor Adams it was improving literacy rates, and Mayor Mamdani's education priorities are still emerging. Again, this is not a critique of what their personal priorities are or the fact that they have them; it is a mayor's prerogative to have causes. The issue is that there is limited tangible recourse if the students who are the subjects of these policies disagree with the way they are being handled, or if they discover they are not being handled at all.

There is a Citywide Council on Special Education. There is a Citywide Council for District 75. Each CEC has a seat reserved for the parent of a student who attends District 75 school. The mayor's appointees to the PEP must also include the parent of a student who attends a District 75 school, as well as the parent of a student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Parents, advocates, educators, members of the community, and of course, students themselves can all submit public comment to the PEP or propose a resolution to a CEC. There are plenty of ways to provide input, but very few ways that input can translate to something other than suggestion under the current system.

Despite spending years at the center of so many conversations, public comments, testimonies, resolutions, rallies, reports, emails, and phone calls, students with disabilities are still forced to sit on buses that are delayed an average of 45 minutes a day and don't run past 4pm; more than a quarter of [District 75 schools lack afterschool programming entirely](#); in March of 2025, there were 4,570 preschoolers not receiving a single one of their mandated services; a 2024 comprehensive report by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene found that 24% of NYC teenagers reported wanting or needing mental healthcare within the last 12 months and not getting it; less than [one third of public schools](#) in NYC are considered fully accessible; [critical programs face expiring funding](#) on a yearly basis; there are significant diagnostic equity gaps for students from low-income families and students of color; there is a backlog of thousands of IEP cases where related services went unprovided; and there are [families that have been waiting since a lawsuit was settled in 2007](#) for the DOE to provide some sort of compensatory measure for services they should not have missed in the first place. And they are waiting despite, at some point, having all four mayors who have thus far held mayoral control overseeing their fulfillment.

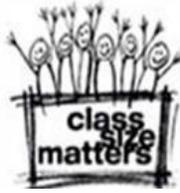
This is not necessarily a critique of Mayor Mamdani, or Mayor Adams, or Mayor de Blasio, or Mayor Bloomberg; it is a critique of a system that is designed to only regard a collective issue as a priority if a single entity deems it one. It is a system designed to collect input without obligating an answer to it, to guarantee a centralization of power without guaranteeing a centralization of resources, and to tie investment (fiscal and otherwise) directly to term length. Even if Mayor Mamdani decides to make addressing the barriers students with disabilities are facing in schools the focal point of his education agenda, there is no guarantee his successor will do the same, and that could create chaos, as it did when the Adams' administration backed off of Mayor de Blasio's universal pre-k initiatives. The impact of uncertainty should not be

underestimated: it is difficult to know how to invest in, expand, and even rely on programs when their continuation is as tenuous as an election cycle.

Over 22% of New York City public school students have at least one disability, and the structure of mayoral control is not conducive to ensuring their needs are effectively met. It is a system that has the power to render their voices, and the voices of those who advocate for them, largely ceremonial- and that is a concerning power. It is time for a more equitable distribution of power in the New York City Public School System, that ensures that students with disabilities are not only heard, but listened to. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Molly Senack (She/Her)  
Education and Employment Community Organizer  
Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York  
Email: [msenack@cidny.org](mailto:msenack@cidny.org) Phone: (917)-415-3154



Class Size Matters  
124 Waverly Pl., New York, NY 10011  
Phone: 917-435-9329  
[info@classsizematters.org](mailto:info@classsizematters.org)  
[www.classsizematters.org](http://www.classsizematters.org)

## Class Size Matters Testimony on Mayoral control

February 10, 2026

My name is Leonie Haimson, and I am the Executive Director of Class Size Matters. Thank you for holding this important hearing today, Chair Dinowitz and members of the Council Education Committee. I would like to highlight and challenge the myths surrounding Mayoral control of our schools, which are often repeated in defense of this governance system.

### Myth #1: Mayoral Control provides more Accountability

One of the pervasive myths surrounding Mayoral control is that it provides accountability by placing all authority and decision-making into the hands of a single elected official. Yet this has never worked in the more than twenty years of this flawed governance system.

The mayor is elected only once every four years, and voters make their choices on many issues in addition to education. And all too often, mayors have acted unilaterally, refusing to listen to the voices of parents, teachers, and affected communities or even adhering to their campaign promises.

When Michael Bloomberg first ran for mayor, he promised to lower class size in the early grades.<sup>1</sup> Yet class sizes increased sharply during the Bloomberg years, especially in the early grades, and by 2013, his last year in office, they had risen to the highest levels in 15 years.<sup>2</sup>

During his administration, the DOE also failed to use state funds meant for smaller classes appropriately, according to three different audits from the state and city comptrollers.<sup>3</sup> When asked what parents could do if they disagreed with his education policies, Bloomberg famously said, “they can boo me at parades.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> His 2002 campaign flyer put it this way: “Studies confirm one of the greatest detriments to learning is an overcrowded classroom ... For students, a loud packed classroom means a greater chance of falling behind. For teachers, [it] means a tougher time teaching and giving students attention they need.” <https://classsizematters.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/bloomberg-campaign-flyer-2001.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nydailynews.com/2013/11/18/new-york-city-class-sizes-average-25-children-after-growing-for-six-years/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://web.osc.state.ny.us/audits/allaudits/093003/093003-h/02s33.pdf> , <https://web.osc.state.ny.us/audits/allaudits/093006/05n3.pdf> , and <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/audit-report-on-the-department-of-educations-administration-of-the-early-grade-class-size-reduction-program/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.city-journal.org/article/grading-mayoral-control>

Similarly, Bill de Blasio also promised to lower class size if elected, yet never followed through.<sup>5</sup>

More recently, mayoral control was extended in 2022 for two years, at the same time as a new state law was passed requiring smaller classes in all grades. These two issues were seen as linked and that if Mayor Adams did not sufficiently comply with the class size law, he would risk him losing mayoral control. Yet following the passage of the class size law, Adams cut school construction by over two billion dollars, and slashed school budgets causing class sizes to increase rather than decrease.<sup>6</sup>

When the issue of Mayoral control arose once more in 2024, class size was again seen as one of the issues that would determine the future of this governance system.<sup>7</sup> For two months starting in December 2023 and January of 2024, the State Education Department held hearings that were attended by hundreds of parents and teachers, with about 95% speaking out in opposition to continuing the current system that had too often led to wasteful spending and damaging policies.<sup>8</sup> The State Education department also released a lengthy report, pointing out many of the flaws in the current system.<sup>9</sup> Yet Governor Hochul insisted that Mayoral control be included in the state budget and renewed for another four years.<sup>10</sup> The Legislature settled for another two.

So here we are again, with the same arguments being made that Mayoral control provides enhanced accountability, with little or no evidence to back that up.

## **Myth #2: Mayoral control is less corrupt**

Another widely repeated myth is that prior to the establishment of Mayoral control, Community School boards were chronically mired in corruption. In reality, the ability of Community School Boards to spend significant funds was eliminated in 1996 –six years before the establishment of Mayoral control. There were no Community School Board financial scandals after that date<sup>11</sup>

More importantly, the amount of money wasted via fraud, waste and corruption under Mayoral control has far exceeded any during the Community School Board days. Under Mayor Bloomberg, the DOE's spending on

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.classsizematters.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Bill-deBlasio.pdf> and <https://nyckidspac.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/NYC-Kids-PAC-Questionnaire-Bill-de-Blasio.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> See Class Size Matters & AQE letter to NYSED, December 2023, <https://classsizematters.org/class-size-matters-aqe-urges-state-education-department-to-require-doe-submit-a-class-size-corrective-action-plan/> and <https://www.nysenate.gov/sites/default/files/admin/structure/media/manage/filefile/a/2024-02/class-size-matters.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Sen. Robert Jackson said, “It’s about accountability and accountability to ensure that the (class size) law is followed. And if not, I would think there is going to be big trouble down the road.” <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/01/11/adams-public-school-class-size-00134894>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nysed.gov/new-york-city-mayoral-control-hearings>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.nysed.gov/news/2024/state-education-department-releases-report-mayoral-control-new-york-city-schools>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-announces-highlights-fy-2025-budget>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/1996/12/23/nyregion/rare-alliance-gave-crew-more-control-of-schools.html>; <https://www.nytimes.com/1996/12/18/nyregion/scandals-at-the-school-boards-led-to-loss-of-their-powers.html>

outside consultants increased 455%, from \$177 million in 2004 to \$982.3 million in 2012.<sup>12</sup> The ARIS school data system was created, costing more than \$80 million, was rarely used, and was eliminated in 2014.<sup>13</sup> The special education data system called SESIS cost more than \$130 million and was so dysfunctional that it was scrapped, and subsequently replaced by a \$43 million program.<sup>14</sup> An investigation by the City Controller revealed that the DOE had awarded over \$2.7 billion in non-competitive contracts in fiscal year 2016, representing 64% of contract spending, while violating its own rules.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, massive corruption scandals have occurred one after another under Mayoral control, showing how hundreds of millions of dollars have been stolen since this system was established. A sample of just some these scandals over the last twenty plus years is included in the Appendix to this testimony.

It is strange that when the mayor is in charge of our schools, these sorts of scandals seem to evaporate into the ether, while commentators continue to bewail the minor scandals that afflicted Community School Boards.

### **Myth #3: Universal PreK could not have happened without Mayoral control**

More recently, another claim has been made that the expansion of Universal PreK under Mayor de Blasio could never have happened without mayoral control.<sup>16</sup> In reality, starting in 1997, several years before mayoral control was instituted, Chancellor Rudy Crew greatly expanded PreK with state funding, but did it more care.<sup>17</sup> Intent on not further overcrowding public schools, he aimed at placing about 75% of these classes in Community Based Organizations.<sup>18</sup>

In contrast, the de Blasio administration spent nearly a billion dollars building their own Early Education Centers, some of them near CBOs with available seats. The cost per seat for these DOE pre-K projects ranged from \$25,000 to \$335,000. One project, the renovation of a leased former Dunkin Donuts on the ground floor of a parking garage, cost six million dollars to serve a class of only 18 students.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> <https://gothamist.com/news/the-doe-has-a-1-billion-dollar-consultant-problem>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.nydailynews.com/2014/11/16/city-schools-dumping-95-million-computer-system-for-tracking-student-data/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2021/10/8/22716822/sesis-special-education-nyc-schools-experis/>  
<https://www.nydailynews.com/2014/11/16/city-schools-dumping-95-million-computer-system-for-tracking-student-data/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2017/8/11/21100769/audit-nyc-issued-2-7-billion-in-noncompetitive-education-contracts-and-often-violates-its-own-rules/> and <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/follow-up-audit-report-on-the-department-of-educations-controls-over-non-competitive-and-limited-competition-contracts-and-contract-related-actions>

<sup>16</sup> This claim has been made by Richard Buery among others, who was Deputy Mayor under de Blasio.  
<https://www.vitalcitynyc.org/articles/why-mamdani-should-embrace-mayoral-control-of-schools>

<sup>17</sup> <https://nyassembly.gov/Reports/Ed/199703> and <https://fiscalspolicy.org/does-new-york-state-have-universal-pre-k>

<sup>18</sup> UPK was originally enacted in 1997 as part of the State Assembly's "LADDER" education reform initiative.

<sup>19</sup> <https://classsizematters.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/PreK-report-12.17.18-final-final.pdf>

The de Blasio administration also pushed thousands of PreK classes into already overcrowded schools, including some schools that had waiting lists for their zoned Kindergarten students. More than half of the 25,000 students who attended pre-K classes in DOE buildings in 2016-2017 were sited in 352 schools that were overutilized, contributing to worse overcrowding for about 236,000 students.<sup>20</sup>

Meanwhile existing CBOS and home-based centers were starved of students, putting them at extreme economic risk and forcing many to close. More than forty CBO directors in Brooklyn and Queens sent letters urging the mayor and school's chancellor to consider the financial impact of siphoning off thousands of their students, to no avail.<sup>21</sup>

Even now, three quarters of the elementary schools without enough space to meet the class sizes in the law offer PreK and 3K classes, and the DOE refuses to allow principals to shift any of these classes to nearby CBOs that continue to have thousands of empty seats – contrary to the recommendations of the Class Size Working Group.<sup>22</sup> We have estimated that siting some of these classes to nearby CBOs could free up as many as 450 classrooms, and save more than a billion dollars in school construction costs and many years of time.<sup>23</sup>

The refusal of DOE to do so is especially unfortunate, as PreK classes in CBOs rate higher in quality on average, according to one of the two rating systems used by DOE, and equal in the other.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, unlike classes sited in public schools, CBOs can provide extended day and extended year programs, extremely valuable to working parents. In a recent survey conducted by the Citizens' Committee for Children, one third of parents said they needed childcare from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.<sup>25</sup>

All this shows that one person rule without community input and checks and balances often leads to irrational and ineffective policies, as we have seen at the federal level as well. This was true in the case of de Blasio's implementation of UPK. Similarly serious faults were inherent in the way that his administration shut out thousands of students with disabilities from the UPreK program, even as they were rapidly expanding it for non-disabled students.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> <https://classsizematters.org/the-impact-of-prek-on-school-overcrowding-in-nyc-lack-of-planning-lack-of-space/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://brooklyneagle.com/80981/universal-pre-k-expansion-threatens-critical-partnership-school-directors-say/>; Some of these letters are here: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1PAhAv4GhCegV3h1tlfjQPGNdFyjQmtYv>. See also <https://www.centrernyc.org/prek-child-care-brief> and <https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2021/3/1/22308265/nyc-prek-contracts-uncertain/> and <https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2025/11/06/mamdani-universal-child-care-plans-balance-speed-and-stability/>

<sup>22</sup> [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gSiFUcuLOjJ49PLCMptkroFjXBHow2b\\_/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gSiFUcuLOjJ49PLCMptkroFjXBHow2b_/view)

<sup>23</sup> <https://classsizematters.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/CSM-letter-to-Commissioner-plus-comments-on-DOE-submitted-class-size-plan-7.28.25.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> <https://classsizematters.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/CSM-Testimony-on-proposed-CBO-closures-2.20.25.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2023/5/9/23717726/nyc-3k-prek-preschool-city-council-adams-pay-teachers/> and <https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cccnewyork.org/2023/04/CCC-2023-TYNY-Part-2.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2020/1/30/21121121/nearly-2-000-nyc-children-with-disabilities-could-be-stranded-without-pre-k-seats-this-spring/>

## Myth #4: Mayoral Control provides more transparency

There can be no real accountability without transparency, which has been sorely lacking under Mayoral control. Little data or information that should be publicly available is made available by the DOE, and requests are responded to with the command that one must file a Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) request. But even after submitting a FOIL request, one often must wait for a year or more, only for the DOE to respond that the information asked for cannot be found. Indeed, DOE has been reported to be the least responsive of all city agencies to FOILs.<sup>27</sup>

To make things worse, while PEP members are briefed privately by DOE officials on various issues including contracts, they are told not to share any of the information they received in those briefings with members of the public. The PEP members also lack the training in finances and contracting required by state law and are not allowed to see the actual proposed contracts they are voting on.<sup>28</sup> Meanwhile, the PEP Contract Committee, which represented one of the few opportunities for the public to hear from the DOE before the PEP vote, was eliminated in 2024.<sup>29</sup>

The lack of transparency also pervades other critical policy decisions, such as the selection of curriculum. When Mayor Bloomberg took control of our schools, new curriculums in reading and math were imposed on all but 200 elementary schools, without any public discussion, input, or justification. As Bas Braams, a professor of mathematics at New York University, observed at the time:

“The New York City schools system is the size of that of a small country. I find it remarkable that the NYC DOE would select a mandated core curriculum through a process in which there is apparently no proper documentation of the considerations that went into that choice . . . There appears to be no clear record of the Department's priorities, no record of any comparative evaluation of candidate curricula, and no record of the expert testimony and opinion upon which you relied.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2017/4/18/21099726/requesting-public-records-from-nyc-s-education-department-be-prepared-to-wait-103-days/>

<sup>28</sup> Section 2102-a of the NY Education Law, passed in 2005, requires certain school board members to obtain a minimum of six hours of training on their financial oversight, accountability, and fiduciary responsibilities. The DOE is exempted as long as the Chancellor annually certifies to the State Education Department that the training of PEP members is as rigorous or better. <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/EDN/2102-A> Yet some PEP members have said that they lacked sufficient training, and when in 2022 we FOILED NYSED for a copy of these annual certifications by DOE Chancellors, the State said they had never received any. <https://nypost.com/2016/05/08/school-spending-panel-doe-bullies-us-to-side-with-de-blasio/> See also: <https://nycpublicschoolparents.blogspot.com/2024/11/doe-refuses-to-allow-pep-member-to-see.html>

<sup>29</sup> The last public meeting of the Contract Committee was held on September 23, 2024. There was a single public meeting of the Procurement Committee on February 24, 2025, according to the list at <https://learndoe.org/pep/category/webinar-recordings> .

<sup>30</sup> As quoted in “Children First”: A Short History” in *NYC Schools Under Bloomberg and Klein*, published in 2009, available at <https://3zn338.a2cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/NYC-Schools-Under-Bloomberg-Klein-BOOK.pdf> The Bloomberg-era mandated curriculums, “Everyday Math” and the “Balanced Literacy” approach to reading, supplemented by a program called “Month by Month Phonics”, were widely criticized.

Sadly, this lack of consultation with experts and public discussion has continued to this day. In 2023, the DOE decided that all elementary schools must choose one of three literacy curriculums with all districts mandated to adopt one of them by September 2024.<sup>31</sup> Even the Chancellor's own Literacy Advisory Council was not consulted as to their selection.<sup>32</sup>

HMH Into Reading, the most widely adopted program, is also the one most often criticized. Teachers, parents, and advocates alike described it as being overly prescriptive, not allowing for differentiated instruction or independent reading, composed primarily of brief reading excerpts in place of short stories or novels, and requiring frequent and time-consuming assessments. It has also been found to feature culturally and racially biased stereotypes.<sup>33</sup>

The only justification or rationale listed for the selection of HMH Into Reading by DOE was a single implementation study, involving only 387 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in three suburban schools, 58% of them white, a very different population from the composition of most students in NYC public schools. They were tested after seven months, and while their scores improved over that period, there was no control group to which this change could be compared.<sup>34</sup>

The lack of research provided when the DOE asks the PEP to approve expensive curriculums, ed tech programs, consultants, and teacher training programs is a pervasive problem that too often also contributes to wasteful spending.

## What should replace Mayoral control?

More than 95% of districts across the country have elected school boards, a system that was adopted centuries ago to insulate schools from the sort of backroom dealmaking that are all too common in politics. Electing a board that is exclusively concerned with running our schools would provide a level of accountability far stronger than the dictatorial system that exists currently.

In recent years, several large urban districts formerly under Mayoral or state control have returned to elected school boards, including Detroit in 2017 and Newark in 2020.<sup>35</sup> In both cases, there is a general

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<sup>31</sup> <https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2024/02/05/nyc-education-department-releases-reading-curriculum-mandate-decisions/>

<sup>32</sup> Personal communication from a member; composition of this Council listed here: <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/learning/subjects/literacy/literacy-advisory-council>

<sup>33</sup> NYU Metro Center found HMH Into Reading to be “culturally destructive in reinforcing stereotypes, centering White or Eurocentric ideas or culture, and offering little guidance for teachers to connect curriculum to students’ lives. HMH’s *Into Reading* communicates harmful messages to students of all backgrounds, especially Black, Indigenous, students of color, LGBTQIA+ students, and students with disabilities <https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/news/impact-nyc-department-educations-new-reading-mandate-children-especially-those-vulnerable-and> ; see also <https://ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/education/2023/09/06/some-public-school-parents-skeptical-of-new-reading-curriculum> and <https://gothamist.com/news/nycs-new-literacy-curriculum-criticized-as-uninteresting-rigid>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.hmhco.com/research/into-reading-implementation-research-study-results-20192020> .

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.freep.com/story/news/education/2016/11/08/detroit-school-board-election/93486614/>; and <https://newark.chalkbeat.org/2020/7/1/21310475/newark-schools-return-local-control>

acknowledgement that school governance has improved. Chicago has also moved towards an elected school board, with the half of its members now elected by voters, and will move to a fully elected board by 2027.<sup>36</sup> As Pauline Lipman, a Professor at the University of Illinois wrote, “There is a new sort of wave of fresh air in the city that’s calling for much more public accountability and democracy.”<sup>37</sup>

There is no reason that New York City should also not have an elected school board. A proposal of how this would be phased in would take some time to develop. Class Size Matters, along with other groups such as the Education Council Consortium, supports the creation of a Commission or Task Force that could develop specific proposals on how an elected school board should be designed, what powers it would have, and how it would be funded.

In the meantime, the simplest change would be to improve the composition of the Panel for Education Policy so that Mayoral appointees no longer hold the majority of seats. An alternative design could feature a Panel composed of six parent representatives directly elected by parents, representing districts of equal size, as well as one member appointed by the Public Advocate, one by the City Council, one appointed by the City Comptroller, and six members appointed by the Mayor. If the Mayor cannot convince two independent members to vote his way, it is most likely because his was not a good idea.

The Chancellor should be required to be an experienced educator and appointed by the Mayor from three candidates nominated by the Panel. The position of a School Inspector General should be created as check on corruption, as well as an Ombudsperson to address and resolve parental complaints and provide recommendations on how DOE policies and practices should be improved.

More input and authority should also be driven to the local level, by empowering Community Education Councils to approve school co-locations and closures, and School Leadership Teams over the selection of principals and school-based budgets.

Finally, the Department of Education should be made subject to city law, as is every other city agency. Currently, the system has no effective checks and balances at the local level. The mayor does not have unlimited control over the New York Police Department or the City Health Department; but he does over our schools. But the Council cannot do this when it comes to our schools. If there is evidence of clear and overt corruption, extreme waste, or abusive policies, the City Council should have a say, a reform known as municipal control.

If any of these recommendations were adopted, they would likely bring more accountability and transparency, improved decision-making, and enhanced public participation to our schools, which would benefit NYC students.

If the Council desires any changes to the current system they will have to advocate for them. The last City Council to take a real position on Mayoral control, to my knowledge, was when Chris Quinn was Speaker, and

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<sup>36</sup> <https://kidsfirstchicago.org/about-the-chicago-board-of-education>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.chicagomaroon.com/article/2019/4/30/state-bill-elected-chicago-school-board-could-soon/>

she advocated for municipal control.<sup>38</sup> A report recommending this change, as well as several other reforms was released by a City Council Working Group in 2009.<sup>39</sup> A resolution along the same lines was introduced in 2012.<sup>40</sup>

We also need significant improvements in the composition of the board and governance of the School Construction Authority, a public agency which is even less accountable than the DOE, but our recommendations regarding this issue must wait for another day.

## Appendix: A sample of corruption scandals under Mayoral control

- 2002-2008: A DOE consultant Ross Lanham stole more than \$3 million for internet wiring. The vendors he hired, which included Verizon and Custom Computer Specialists, were also implicated in this fraud.<sup>41</sup> As a result, FCC excluded NYC from more than \$100 million of E-rate funds for many years.<sup>42</sup>
- 2008: George Raab was hired as the DOE chief financial officer but left after only 11 months. He hired several consultants who were later found to have colluded during the time they worked at DOE to set up an office at a private investment firm, which Raab and two of these consultants joined immediately after resigning from his position at Tweed. Another consultant he hired, William Howatt, was a hypnotherapist, paid \$374,000 while living at his home in Nova Scotia, to help DOE's mid-level managers "improve their ability to adapt to change"<sup>43</sup>
- 2007-2011: Judith Hederman, a high-level DOE official, colluded with the CEO of a company called Future Technology Associates, which was later found to have overcharged DOE for consulting services by \$74 million.<sup>44</sup> Their no-bid contracts were approved and then renewed by the Panel for Education Policy, despite a series of exposes in the Daily News that revealed that the company was

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<sup>38</sup> [https://council.nyc.gov/press/wp-content/uploads/sites/56/2016/12/speaker\\_quinn\\_mayoral\\_control\\_testimony\\_3\\_25\\_09.pdf](https://council.nyc.gov/press/wp-content/uploads/sites/56/2016/12/speaker_quinn_mayoral_control_testimony_3_25_09.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.scribd.com/document/11796897/2-6-09-Summary-of-Mayoral-Control-WG-Recs-Final>

<sup>40</sup> <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=1134060&GUID=8D5764F9-9099-4DB3-8D9A-16CFC10B40CC&Options=&Search=>

<sup>41</sup> <https://nycsci.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/Reports/04-11-Lanham-Rpt.pdf> ; see also <https://ny.chalkbeat.org/2011/4/29/21088133/report-on-thieving-doe-consultant-damning-for-ibm-and-verizon>

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/27/nyregion/new-york-schools-missing-out-on-millions-in-technology-funding-comptroller-says.html> and <https://nycsci.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/Reports/05-11-RaabGeorge-Ltr.pdf>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/25/nyregion/report-finds-new-york-city-schools-official-misused-time.html>

<sup>44</sup> <https://archive.nytimes.com/query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage-9805EED61F3EF93AA1575AC0A9679D8B63.html>

overcharging the DOE, billing them \$250,000 a year for each of 63 overseas employees, while the company's only known addresses were mail drops in Florida and Brooklyn.<sup>45</sup>

- 2015: Under Mayor de Blasio, the DOE proposed a \$1.1 billion contract to a firm called Custom Computer Specialists for internet wiring, renewable to \$2 billion over nine years, despite the fact that the firm had been involved in the Lanham kick-back scheme just a few years before.<sup>46</sup> After reporters were alerted, the contract was hurriedly renegotiated overnight, with the price cut in half to \$627 million, with no other change in terms, suggesting how inflated it had been in the first place.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, the Panel for Educational Policy rubberstamped the contract, 10-1, with only the Bronx borough president appointee voting no.<sup>48</sup> Because investigative journalist Juan Gonzalez continued to write about this scandal, City Hall eventually cancelled the contract and forced DOE to rebid it, at a savings of between \$163 million and \$727 million.<sup>49</sup>
- 2021: Eric Goldstein, the head of the DOE Office of School Support Services from 2008 to 2018, was arrested for bribery in return for renewing the contract of a company called Somma that manufactured chicken nuggets, despite the fact that their products had been found to contain pieces of bone and metal and were a serious safety hazard. He later was sentenced to up to 20 years in prison.<sup>50</sup>
- 2022: Chancellor David Banks promoted Mayor Adams' partner, Tracey Collins, as "senior adviser to the deputy chancellor of school leadership," while awarding her a 23% raise to \$221,597 a year.<sup>51</sup> She retired in 2024 amid allegations that she had rarely showed up for work.<sup>52</sup>
- 2022: Terence Banks arranged for his brother, Chancellor Banks, to meet with representatives of a company called 21st Century Education, who had hired Terence to lobby for their program focused

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<sup>45</sup> <https://www.nydailynews.com/2011/09/29/alleged-fraud-by-future-technology-associates-was-like-taking-millions-from-a-baby/>; <https://www.nydailynews.com/2009/07/28/computer-geeks-at-future-technology-associates-earn-more-than-joel-klein-does/> and <https://nycpublicschoolparents.blogspot.com/2020/12/patrick-sullivan-on-does-acquisition-of.html>

<sup>46</sup> <https://nycpublicschoolparents.blogspot.com/2015/02/was-company-due-to-receive-125-billion.html>  
<https://nypost.com/2015/02/24/doe-hiring-tech-firm-linked-to-kickback-scheme/>

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.nydailynews.com/2015/02/24/new-contract-from-citys-department-of-education-to-questionable-technology-firm-does-not-compute/>

<sup>48</sup> The sole PEP member who voted no, Robert Powell, was later "iced off the panel" by Chancellor Farina.  
<https://nypost.com/2016/05/08/school-spending-panel-doe-bullies-us-to-side-with-de-blasio/>

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.nydailynews.com/2015/12/23/gonzalez-big-school-contract-revealed-spurring-nyc-to-seek-new-deal-that-saves-millions/>

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.nydailynews.com/2021/09/29/former-nyc-education-bigwig-arrested-in-school-food-corruption-scandal/>; <https://apnews.com/article/nyc-school-lunch-bribery-trial-chicken-tenders-4bc46291a0ec6306a22edaa6a940312f>; <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edny/pr/former-new-york-city-department-education-ceo-school-support-services-and-three>

<sup>51</sup> <https://nypost.com/2022/10/08/chancellor-banks-and-mayor-adams-hire-each-others-beaus/>

<sup>52</sup> <https://nypost.com/2024/09/28/us-news/nyc-mayor-eric-adams-girlfriend-joined-on-45k-worth-of-trips/>; <https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2024/11/08/eric-adams-partner-tracey-collins-retires-amid-investigations/>

on artificial intelligence, robotics, and automation. The company subsequently received more than \$1.4 million in DOE funds.<sup>53</sup> Chancellor Banks, as well as two Superintendents from the Bronx and Staten Island, subsequently appeared in a video promoting the company, filmed at a 2023 science fair held at Yankee Stadium.<sup>54</sup>

- Terence Banks also lobbied for DOE to purchase the product of a company called Saferwatch, which had received funding to pilot the program in several public schools. It was subsequently reported that Terrence as well as David Banks were under investigation by the federal government for these activities.<sup>55</sup>
- 2023: The sister-in-law of Mayor Adams, Sharon Adams, was hired as “strategic initiative specialist” at the DOE at a salary of a \$150,000, less than a week after her husband, Bernard Adams, the Mayor’s brother, was forced to resign from his job with the city. Her salary was later increased to \$171,241.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/new-york-mayor-federal-investigation-banks-b2369819ff7ccd4e630899eb08538bae>

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.thecity.nyc/2025/08/18/banks-brothers-investigation-eric-adams/>

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.thecity.nyc/2024/09/13/philip-banks-saferwatch-schools-eric-adams/>

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.thecity.nyc/2023/06/08/eric-adams-sharon-bernard-city-job/> ; as of 2025, she was still listed in SeeThroughNY and was paid a salary of \$167,223.

## Testimony of Lacey Jordan

Community Education Council District 4, District 75 Representative  
City Council Education Hearing – February 2026

Good morning. My name is Lacey Jordan. I'm a parent and advocate from East Harlem, Vice President and District 75 representative on the Community Education Council for District 4. I work closely with families and district administration every day, and I'm here because school governance is not just an education issue, it's an accountability issue.

Right now, too many families feel that they are being heard, but not truly listened to. Through my work on the CEC, reviewing district budgets, planning materials, and speaking with parents and educators across our schools...I see a consistent pattern. community input is collected, meetings are held, reports are written, but the connection between what families say and what decisions are actually made is often unclear.

It's a result of mayoral control, a governance structure that concentrates authority while limiting meaningful, shared oversight.

As a parent of both a District 4 student and a District 75 student, I see up close what happens when systems are designed without strong family partnership: timelines break down, responsibilities become blurred, and families are left navigating complex systems on their own. Accountability shouldn't depend on how loud a parent can be or who has the time to keep calling and following up. Accountability should be built into the system itself.

This is not about any single mayor or chancellor; it's about structure. Any system that centralizes power without shared checks and balances will eventually lose public trust particularly in communities that already live with the consequences of distant decision making.

Recently, through work with the Alliance for Quality Education, I joined other parents and advocates in meeting with State Senator Robert Jackson, one of the architects of New York's education accountability framework. He's been echoing what families citywide are saying: mayoral control, as it exists today, has not delivered equitable outcomes for students, schools, or parents.

This means there is growing agreement among families, advocates, and policymakers that we need to move beyond a system that limits transparency and weakens responsibility.

Strong public systems rely on checks, balance, and informed participation. They work best when the people closest to the work our teachers, parents, our students, and our community partners help shape the decisions.

That is why I support ending mayoral control and convening a representative working group to reimagine school governance in New York City. We need a model that clearly defines roles,

strengthens transparency, and embeds community knowledge in decision-making at every level one that includes parents from all districts, educators, and support staff like nurses, counselors, and community-based organizations.

Families shouldn't have to fight the system to support their children. The system should be built to support them from the start.

It's also important to remember that mayoral control was never meant to be permanent. It was introduced as a temporary emergency measure, yet it's been renewed repeatedly even though the promised improvements have not been realized for many families. During the last mayoral campaign, New Yorkers were told this structure would be re-examined and most likely disposed of. When promises like that are not kept, it deepens public skepticism and makes us wary. Yet again.

This is our opportunity to do better. Parents, students, and educators are not asking to erase what exists. We're calling to strengthen it with true shared governance, clear checks and balances, and transparent, measurable systems that let us track progress and correct course together.

Accountability should never depend on who you know. It should depend on systems that are open, measurable, and responsive to the communities they serve.

Thank you.

## Statement from John Ricottone President, Community Education Council – District 20

As President of the Community Education Council in District 20, I am calling on New York City Public Schools to establish a citywide, dyslexia-focused school serving students from elementary through high school and accessible to families in all districts.

Dyslexia is a lifelong learning difference. While NYCPS has made efforts through programs and interventions, these supports are often inconsistent, limited in duration, and dependent on individual schools' capacity and staffing. For many students, part-time or pull-out services are simply not enough. These students need a full-day learning environment designed from the ground up to support how they learn.

A citywide dyslexia-focused school would provide:

- Evidence-based, structured literacy instruction throughout the entire school day
- Educators specifically trained in dyslexia and multisensory teaching methods
- Continuity of support from early grades through high school
- Reduced stigma, by creating a school culture where dyslexia is understood and supported
- Equitable access for students across all boroughs and districts

NYCPS already recognizes the value of specialized schools in areas such as the arts, STEM, and language immersion, as well as schools designed to support students with more intensive needs. A dyslexia-focused school fits squarely within this framework and reflects a commitment to equity—not as a replacement for inclusive education, but as a necessary option for students whose needs are not being fully met in traditional settings.

Our responsibility is not simply to provide services, but to ensure students can truly access their education. A citywide dyslexia-focused school would give students the opportunity to build strong literacy skills, academic confidence, and long-term success.

I urge NYCPS leadership to seriously consider this proposal and to engage families, educators, and advocates in developing a model that meets the needs of dyslexic learners across New York City.

**From:** [Avi Glickstein](#)  
**To:** [Testimony](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Testimony on 2/10 Education Committee Hearing  
**Date:** Thursday, February 12, 2026 10:35:58 AM  
**Attachments:** [image.png](#)  
[Council testimony\\_Glickstein.pdf](#)

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[REDACTED]

Hi,

I submitted via your website but wanted to also send here as this was the avenue mentioned by Chair Dinowitz. Testimony is attached.

Thank you,  
Avi Glickstein  
[REDACTED]

--  
Avi Glickstein  
Vice President, CEC22  
(he/him)  
[REDACTED]



I am a member of CEC22 but am writing in my individual capacity and don't represent the opinion of the council.

When Mayor Mamdani announced that he was reversing his previous stance and supporting an extension of mayoral control, I wasn't surprised. To be honest, I was puzzled when he said during the campaign that he outright opposed extending it. Of course he was going to extend it. Those of us who are intimately familiar with the system don't even know what governance would look like after mayoral control – how can someone so removed from it be so sure but have no plan for what to replace it with? What IS surprising is that he has requested extending it for 4 years (not 2 as many education advocacy organizations have asked for) and he and Chancellor Samuels don't seem to have any concrete plans for engaging with stakeholders in a **meaningful** way to determine what changes should be made to the current governance structure. Yes, they've paid lip service to “parent engagement” but we've heard that before. As so many said during your hearing, parents don't just want to be listened to – we want a seat at the table when actual decisions are made.

Chair Dinowitz mentioned needing to give the CECs more than their currently allotted \$25K. As a current parent representative, I can say that more than money, the bigger issue is having real training and support. While some councils are extremely active, many of those have longtime council members or council leadership. Our council, which is composed almost entirely of newly elected members, has struggled to get up to speed and we constantly feel like we're playing catch-up. Many of the things a council does require long-term planning, something we may only be able to do for the second year of our term. And this is for a body that has very little actual power or decision-making ability. And despite that as well as the fact that council members are all volunteers (with a max reimbursement stipend of \$125/month), we are constrained by all the state rules and regulations that govern bodies like yours – the Open Meetings Law, budget timelines, etc. And on top of that our CEC struggles to get community participation – except when there is a contentious issue. Whether it's because of the time constraints of work, family, money, language access, technology, or something else, it's clear that families in our district either don't know about CECs, aren't able to prioritize participation, or don't think our work is consequential (which to be honest it often feels like it's not).

As Council Member Joseph pointed out, the voter participation of 2% for the last CEC election is a miserable figure. The question must also be asked – why is an agency that is not set up to run elections...running an election? In particular, the management and training of FACE (Office of Family and Community Engagement), who actually runs the CEC election, needs to be examined. And technology is definitely a barrier. The election is run

through NYCSA (New York City Schools Account), which families are told is a vital tool for them yet signing up is their responsibility rather than being automatically given a NYCSA account when registering their child for school. In short, the process is a mess.

In terms of mayoral control, here's what I'd like to see:

- A robust process of engaging all stakeholders (families, teachers, nonpedagogical staff, admin) to listen to their concerns about the current system and how it can be repaired or replaced
- The Council advocate for only a 2-year extension of mayoral control by the state while this process happens and removing it from the state budget process so it stands alone as an issue
- Fewer mayoral appointees on the PEP and the PEP being allowed to elect its own chair

Regardless of whether mayoral control stays or goes, the system needs to be adjusted to allow for more community power (actual power) in decision-making. Whether or not parents feel welcomed and listened to in NYCPS and even in their own school should not depend on the personality and priorities of one person.

Thank you.

# TESTIMONY: Mayoral Control Oversight Hearing

**Laura Simpson, Secretary, Community Education Council District 30**  
**February 10, 2026 | 2 minutes sharp**

Good morning. My name is Laura Simpson. I'm Secretary of Community Education Council District 30, representing 40,000 students across Jackson Heights, Woodside, Astoria, Corona, and East Elmhurst, one of the most diverse school districts in America.

Tonight, CEC30 passed a resolution calling on Mayor Mamdani and the State Legislature to codify meaningful governance reforms in the June 2026 mayoral control renewal. I'm here to deliver that message directly: **democracy, dignity, and accountability cannot wait.**

The 2024 NYSED report found that "the majority of public hearing participants said they do not feel heard or included in decision-making." That's my lived experience. I was elected by parents who believed their voices should matter. But except for drawing zoning lines, I have no binding authority. I hold hearings where immigrant families share their needs. I hear educators describe what students actually need. And then I watch the DOE do whatever it wants anyway.

This isn't about Mayor Mamdani as a person, it's about a broken system where promises of parental voices never become structural change.

Mayor Mamdani promised community involvement that's "tangible and actionable, not ceremonial." Here's how to deliver that: **codify it into law.**

CEC30's resolution Calls three specific reforms:

**First:** Restructure the PEP: remove the mayoral supermajority and add citywide council representation elected by parents of Citywide Council on Special Education, Citywide Council on English Language Learners, Citywide Council on District 75, and Citywide Council on High Schools voting together.

**Second:** Give CECs binding authority over what affects our students most: charter applications, school closures, phase-outs, and co-locations within our districts.

**Third:** Codify Chancellor accountability: require annual evaluation with CEC input, consistent with how we already evaluate District Superintendents.

CEC30 also opposes any extension longer than two years. The Legislature needs time to evaluate these reforms before the next renewal.

Mayor Mamdani, you promised us this. State Legislators, codify it in June. **Make these commitments law, not just good intentions.**

Mayor Mamdani, you promised us this. State Legislators, codify it in June. Make these commitments law, not just good intentions.

Thank you.

**From:** [Whitney Toussaint](#)  
**To:** [Testimony](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Committee on Education - Mayoral Control  
**Date:** Thursday, February 12, 2026 12:11:29 PM  
**Attachments:** [Resolution 202 Opposing Harmful Shelter Transfers for Families of New York City Public School Students .doc copy.docx](#)

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Greetings,

Although I testified in person, I'd like to submit my longer comments as well.

I've also attached a copy of the resolution that CEC 30 passed on Monday, February 9th.

Greetings my name is Whitney Toussaint, and I am a parent member of AQE, Parents Supporting Parents NY, and I am the Co-President of Community Education Council 30. I'm also a parent of a 7<sup>th</sup> grader that has seen 6 Chancellors during their time as a student and 2<sup>nd</sup> grader that has seen 3 Chancellors. We've experienced more curriculum and program whiplash than I have time to describe. Been told to reimagine, revision, recreate, whew! But it's funny which communities are told to reimagine and which communities get resources!

It should be common sense to keep what works, but I'm here today to urge you to work with Mayor Mamdani to commission a group of parents, educators, students, advocates, experts, and researchers to engage communities in designing a truly democratic school governance system.

Even when mayors campaign on progressive education platforms, those promises can be reversed overnight without accountability when a new administration takes office. We saw that when the Adams administration announced preschool and early childhood special education budget cuts, then reversed them after realizing it was an election year. So many parents and providers were put through unnecessary stress when their programs were put in jeopardy!

Additionally, in my experience, my district has been hurt by the most pro-charter mayor AND former chancellor that I have seen during my time as a parent in NYCPS. For instance, the Charter School Hearings hosted by the Charter School Office of NYCPS are a de facto PR campaign for Charter Schools. For instance, at the Charter School Hearing that I participated in, myself, my Co-President, a rep for the local City Councilmember, and the UFT district rep were the ONLY people speaking up for Community School 111 and how their co-located charter school has taken up too much space in their building and 111 students are now forced to get services in the hallway. There have also not been any required Shared Space Committee Meetings held. Also, why do so many co-located charter schools have renovation budgets that make their co-located public schools look like real-life versions of the haves and have-nots? How come I am still looking for names of the SCA representatives that closed the door on one

of our public schools getting a space in a state-of-the-art building for the Boys & Girls Club in Astoria that is now projected to go to a Charter School? Will NYCPS probably be paying the rent for the charter school to occupy that space? There was no community engagement on why that decision was made. No one cared because our former Pro-Charter mayor wasn't going to hold them accountable for making that decision behind closed doors at the expense of our public schools. This is not acceptable or democratic.

Also, peeped the messaging pivot to Mayoral Accountability, but how can that be when there are NO true checks and balances?!? There should be transparent accountability mechanisms codified in City law—not informal practices or discretionary promises that can change at the whim of a new administration. Because I am tired of seeing these working groups and advisory committees come and go!

State Legislators at the January 29th Joint Legislative Public Hearing on the Executive Budget were critical of the continued practice of tying mayoral control to the state budget, and I am too. Governance structure is a significant policy matter that warrants its own standalone legislation and hearing process, with meaningful opportunities for community members, parents, and educators to testify.

Last night my CEC passed a resolution advocating for Codifying Meaningful School Governance Reforms in the 2026 Mayoral Control Renewal. This resolution also cites the 2024 NYSED report on Mayoral Control, which recommended that more avenues for meaningful deliberation and shared decision-making occur. We are asking to be heard and that structural and lasting democratic changes will happen.

Mayoral Control under the current system has disenfranchised parents, students, and school administration time and time again. Seeing communities go to the PEP and be overruled by a Panel, who rubber-stamp a mayor's agenda, is disheartening. These decisions should be made at the district level to ensure more equitable access for people to be able to attend, instead of them having to trek across a borough or the city to be heard.



## COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 30

28-11 Queens Plaza North, Room 512

Long Island City, NY 11101

Tel: 718-391-8380

Fax: 718-391-8500

Email: [cec30@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:cec30@schools.nyc.gov)

Website: [cec30.org](http://cec30.org)

### RESOLUTION # 202

#### In Support of the PS 199Q Community Opposing Harmful Shelter Transfers for Families of New York City Public School Students

**Author: Whitney Toussaint**

**Co-Sponsors: Linda Chung-Leung, Xochitl Cohen-Garcia, Alexis Kaloyanides, Danielle LoPresti Lee, Victoria Medelius, Estela Nguema, Marlene Rossi, Nadeea Saeed, Laura Simpson, Kayla Spence**

WHEREAS, on October 11, 2023, then Mayor Eric Adams announced that New York City would limit shelter stays for families with children to 60 calendar days (60-Day Rule), after which families would need to reapply for city shelters if they have nowhere else to live;<sup>1</sup>

WHEREAS, Subtitle VII-B of The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (the McKinney-Vento Act) authorizes the federal Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program and is the primary piece of federal legislation related to the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness;<sup>2</sup>

WHEREAS, the McKinney-Vento Act was reauthorized in December 2015 by Title IX, Part A, of the Every Student Succeeds Act;

WHEREAS, the New York State Education Department interprets the Federal Law<sup>3</sup> in the following way:

*The McKinney-Vento Act<sup>4</sup> states that children and youth who lack “a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence” will be considered homeless. McKinney-Vento eligible students have the right to:*

1. *receive a free, appropriate public education;*
2. *enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documents normally required for enrollment, or having missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness;*
3. *enroll in school and attend classes while the school gathers needed documents;*
4. *continue attending the school of origin, or enroll in the local attendance area school if attending the school of origin is not in the best interest of the student or is contrary to the request of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth;*
5. *receive transportation to and from the school of origin, if requested by the parent or guardian, or by the local liaison on behalf of an unaccompanied youth; and*
6. *receive educational services **comparable**<sup>5</sup> to those provided to other students, according to each student’s need.<sup>6</sup>*

WHEREAS, a diverse group of organizations and individuals, including the New York Legal Assistance Group,<sup>7</sup> the Legal Aid Society, the Coalition for the Homeless, the New York Immigration Coalition,<sup>8</sup> Advocates for Children,<sup>9</sup> and a coalition of more than 135 doctors, nurses, hospital administrators, and other healthcare workers,<sup>10</sup> among others, have condemned shelter time limits as detrimental to the safety and educational wellbeing of children residing in the shelters;

WHEREAS, a joint statement issued by the Legal Aid Society and the Coalition for the Homeless specifically condemned the 60-Day Rule, stating:

*This plan will disrupt the lives of homeless students and create chaos for their schools, as parents are forced to choose between re-enrolling or spending the day traveling across the city to their current school. That's a terrible outcome for both families and educators.<sup>11</sup>*

WHEREAS, during the 2021-22 school year 72% of students residing in temporary housing were chronically absent,<sup>12</sup> which is defined under Chancellor's Regulation A-210 III.D. as an attendance rate of less than 90%;<sup>13</sup>

WHEREAS, a review of relevant research underscores that there are significant negative effects on student outcomes as a result of involuntary and/or unplanned movement between schools, including but not limited to decreases in test scores and high school graduation rates,<sup>14</sup> with the Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness finding that as of the 2016-17 school year:

- Even when students did not experience a mid-year transfer or chronic absenteeism, those who experienced homelessness scored proficient on the ELA exam at lower rates than housed students (25% vs. 42%).
- ELA proficiency rates dropped significantly for homeless students who experienced a mid-year transfer (15%) or chronic absenteeism (14%).
- Among homeless students, those who experienced no instability factors were twice as likely to score proficient as those who were both chronically absent and transferred mid-year (25% vs. 12%).
- Among homeless students who were chronically absent and transferred schools mid-year, more than one in four, 29%, dropped out. This was over seven times the rate of homeless students with no instability factors (4%).
- Only 56% of students who were homeless at some point in high school graduated within four years, but when homeless students were able to attend school regularly and did not have to transfer mid-year during any of their years of high school, they graduated at rates similar to their housed peers (90% vs. 96%), and well above the citywide graduation rate of 74%.<sup>15</sup>

WHEREAS, on February 6, 2026, 25 families residing in the CityView Inn on Greenpoint Ave were notified that the family shelter would be converted to a shelter for single men, and they would have to vacate on or before February 13, 2026<sup>16</sup>; and

WHEREAS, displacing these 25 families would disrupt their 37 school-age children who attend nearby P.S. 199Q; and

WHEREAS, relationships with students and their families, which can require sustained effort over time from teachers, parent coordinators, school counselors, and other staff, are essential to student engagement, well-being, and success;

WHEREAS, many students residing in shelters have already experienced significant disruptions to their education, compounded by the trauma experienced as a result of displacement, migration, and ongoing instability;

WHEREAS, under the 60-Day Rule, children could be forced to change schools up to five times per school year;

WHEREAS, schools need additional resources and personnel, including bilingual staff, nurses, and social workers, to address the needs of students in temporary housing;

WHEREAS, under the 60-Day Rule, families who reapply for shelter may be forced to move to new shelters far from their children's school of origin, causing significant disruption to both students' educational progress and schools' budgeting, planning, and allocation of resources and personnel;

WHEREAS, the only way for schools to receive the necessary funding for new students enrolling after the October 31 cut-off date is through an arduous appeals process, which creates uncertainty and delays for school staff and the students they serve;<sup>17</sup>

WHEREAS, despite an unnamed Department of Social Services' spokesperson stating "every effort will be made to place families within the borough of their youngest school-aged child's school,"<sup>18</sup> transportation, including yellow school bus services, might not assist with keeping these children in their current school; and

WHEREAS, school bus delays have been endemic over the last several years,<sup>19</sup> causing additional hardship on students who seek to continue to attend their school of origin after being moved to a new shelter;

WHEREAS, on December 8, 2026, CEC 30 passed Resolution 197 - Resolution Urging the New York State Legislature to Pass S.8139/A.9048 to Help Address the Needs of Students Experiencing Homelessness, in Foster Care, or in Temporary Housing; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that CEC 30 urges Chancellor Kamar H. Samuels and the Panel for Educational Policy to request that Mayor Zohran K. Mamdani revise and improve the processes surrounding shelters for the migrant community, including the 60-Day Rule in respect of families with children enrolled in New York City Public Schools; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that CEC 30 urges Department of Social Services (DSS) Commissioner Molly Wasow-Park to discontinue existing policies that allow the inhumane displacement policies for the migrant community, including migrant families with children attending NYC Public Schools; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that CEC 30 urges the DSS Commissioner Molly Wasow Park to find suitable and alternative housing for the single adults and discontinue the transfer of the 25 families currently living in the CityView Inn to allow the 37 students to continue their education at PS 199Q; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that CEC 30 urges the DSS Commissioner Molly Wasow Park to establish procedures that ensure Community School District Superintendents and Community Education Councils are notified within 30 days of any recommended relocations for NYCPS residing in shelters; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that CEC 30 is in support of the PS 199Q community and asks all elected officials representing Community School District 24 in the City Council to advocate for the revision and improvement of processes surrounding shelters for the migrant community, including the policies that led to the disruptive transfer of the 25 families and the 37 children attending PS 199Q; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that CEC 30 is in support of the PS 199Q community and asks all elected officials representing Community School District 24 in the City Council, the New York Assembly, and the New York Senate to advocate for the location of alternative housing for the single adults and discontinue the transfer of the 25 families currently living in the CityView Inn to allow the 37 students to continue their education at PS 199Q.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/18/nyregion/migrants-shelter-nyc.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://nche.ed.gov/legislation/mckinney-vento/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/03/17/2016-06073/mckinney-vento-education-for-homeless-children-and-youths-program> and <https://nche.ed.gov/legislation/mckinney-vento/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nysed.gov/essa/mckinney-vento-homeless-education>

<sup>5</sup> Per the Federal Statute: Each homeless child or youth to be assisted under this part shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected under paragraph (3).

<sup>6</sup> <http://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title42/chapter119/subchapter6/partB&edition=prelim>

<sup>7</sup> <https://nylag.org/statement-nylag-condemns-new-60-day-shelter-policy-for-migrant-families/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nyc.gov/2023/10/adams-again-attacks-right-to-shelter-endangering-child-asylum-seekers/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.advocatesforchildren.org/node/2261>

<sup>10</sup> <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dizKBtO18FPMEQAwtKhLsLML8pvihKt/view>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/press/joint-statement-from-legal-aid-coalition-for-the-homeless-in-response-to-reporting-that-the-adams-administration-will-limit-shelter-stays-for-families-with-children-to-60-days/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.nydailynews.com/2023/10/28/education-of-migrant-children-threatened-by-nyc-60-day-shelter-limit/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/docs/default-source/default-document-library/a-210-english>

<sup>14</sup> <https://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/student-mobility>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.icphusa.org/reports/disparities-in-academic-achievement/#overview>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.yahoo.com/news/articles/dehumanizing-migrant-kids-forced-change-035356431.html>

<sup>17</sup> <https://citylimits.org/2023/10/30/comptroller-calls-for-school-funding-changes-to-accommodate-asylum-seeker-enrollments/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://ny.chalkbeat.org/2022/11/21/23472253/nyc-school-bus-del>

<sup>19</sup> <https://pix11.com/news/local-news/dehumanizing-migrant-kids-forced-to-change-school-due-to-shelter-transfer/#:~:text=Thirty%2Dseven%20children%20from%20a%20nearby,just%20becoming%20a%20part%20of.>

Council Member: Candace Belle  
IEP Representative: Tanisha Gaskin-Christie  
Parliamentarian: Kelli Cooper  
Recording Secretary: Ingrid Douglas  
D75 Representative: Kimberly Dowling

Treasurer: Terrance Johnson  
President/Borough President Appointee: NeQuan C. McLean  
Borough President Appointee: Christina Raymond  
Vice President: Stephanie Sandeus  
Council Member: Dominique Simon



## Testimonial Letter to the New York State Education Department Regarding NYC Mayoral Control

February 11, 2026

The Community Education Council for District 16 (CEC 16) is a state mandated public body, independent of New York City Public Schools, that advocates for our community school district's public school students and families.

District 16 predominantly serves families living in the Bedford-Stuyvesant community. The CEC 16 comprises a group of elected and appointed individuals, all current or former parents of at least one District 16 student. We are honored to have been chosen to fight, with honor and integrity, for educational equity for *all* our district's public school students.

The CEC 16 wishes to make clear its strong opposition to the city's current system of school governance, under which a single individual—the mayor of New York City is entrusted to make decisions that impact roughly one million public school children and their families. We echo long-standing concerns raised over the years by parent leaders, educators, advocates, and oversight agencies about a systemic lack of transparency, accountability, racial equity, and opportunities for meaningful community input.

Since 2003, when the New York State legislature granted Mayor Michael Bloomberg full authority over the city's public schools, more than 1,600 schools have operated under mayoral control. Today, the Panel for Educational Policy made up mostly of mayoral appointees holds substantial power over regulations, academic standards, contracts, and budgets. The CEC 16 remains deeply concerned about the lack of accountability in this structure.

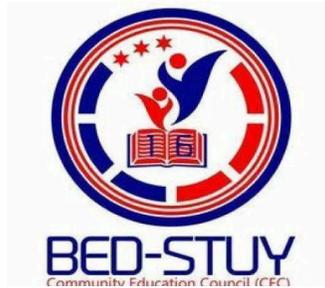
The CEC 16 also believes that mayoral control has helped perpetuate systemic segregation in our schools, resulting in the continued neglect of students of color, special populations, and other historically marginalized groups. This has produced an egregiously inequitable public school system, the largest public school system in America and as concerned citizens and parents, we strongly oppose these outcomes.

From the perspective of family engagement, which is a proven staple of student success, the current system also brings frustrating—and at times insurmountable—challenges. Many of our city's School Leadership Teams, District Leadership Teams, and Title 1 Parent Advisory Councils, which are meant to promote collaborative and effective decision-making, continue to experience profound dysfunction, hindering any real possibility of substantial and sustainable community involvement.

Further, Community and Citywide Education Councils (CCECs) have been largely sidelined under mayoral control. Members are often denied access to data and Department of Education staff, preventing CECs from fulfilling their oversight mandate. Although CECs must comply with the Public Officers Law, they are routinely excluded from key discussions affecting the schools in their jurisdiction including those involving safety, school utilization, and the hiring of school and district leadership.

Council Member: Candace Belle  
IEP Representative: Tanisha Gaskin-Christie  
Parliamentarian: Kelli Cooper  
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Borough President Appointee: Christina Raymond  
Vice President: Stephanie Sandeus  
Council Member: Dominique Simon



The CEC 16 is calling for a more localized and community-driven approach to school governance that will also empower Community Education Councils to make decisions related to, for example, the merging and closures of schools when enrollment data and other appropriate metrics warrant such actions.

We congratulate Mayor Zohran Mamdani on his election as New York City's mayor. However, having heard him campaign for a more democratic school governance system, we were surprised and disappointed that he chose to support mayoral control after taking office.

Whether mayoral control is extended or terminated, there are a number of specific steps that the Department of Education can, and should, take *right now* to improve school governance without changes to state laws or Chancellor's Regulations. The Education Council Consortium, which is a coalition of current and former CCEC members, has delivered its recommendations to Mayor Mamdani's transition team; they can be viewed [here](#).

Mayoral control of New York City's schools must be dismantled and should be replaced with a democratic, localized, and community-driven system that prioritizes the needs of our city's public school students and their families... *all of them*.

In partnership,  
Community Education Council for District 16



1275 First Ave Suite 225, New York NY 10065

[www.NYCKidsPac.org](http://www.NYCKidsPac.org) \* [info@NYCKidsPac.org](mailto:info@NYCKidsPac.org)

## NYC Kids PAC Testimony before the City Council Education Committee on Mayoral Control

*February 10, 2026*

My name is Naila Rosario, and I am the President of NYC Kids PAC, that was established more than a decade ago, and is the only parent-led Political Action Committee focused on supporting candidates based on their positions and records on supporting our city's public schools

We enthusiastically endorsed Zohran Mamdani for Mayor in the primary and the general election, based on his progressive positions on a variety of important education issues, including school funding, class size, the need to support our immigrant students, and more oversight to stem the abuses of charter schools.

But one of the major reasons we enthusiastically supported Mamdani was his stance on Mayoral control. He was one of the few candidates for Mayor over the last twenty years to recognize that this system of governance is inherently flawed, and needs to incorporate more checks and balances, parent and community voices, and more democracy in place of the current autocratic decision-making that has too often wreaked havoc on our public schools.

Here is what Mamdani wrote on our candidate questionnaire concerning this issue:

*"I am opposed to Mayoral control and envision a system instead in which parents, students, educators and administrators work together to create the school environments where students and families will best thrive. Whether governing with or without mayoral control (a decision determined by Albany), I would work to create a more participatory educational system – strengthening co-governance through the PEP, SLTs, DLTs, and CECs in particular."*<sup>1</sup>

He then checked off several boxes, saying he would support the following reforms to the current governance system:

- A directly elected Board of Education, as more than 95% of the school districts throughout the country have; and as Chicago is phasing in and Detroit and Newark have re-established.
- A reconstituted Board of Education (the legal name of the Panel for Educational Policy)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bjazxfSUKHrtuNnQpkxW3OGFNJdRwPVD/view>

with a majority of members not appointed by the Mayor

- Municipal control, so that the City Council would have the same legislative authority over the Department of Education as they currently have over other city agencies
- Expanding the powers of Community Education Councils and allowing School Leadership Teams (SLTs) to regain their authority to develop school based budgets and to provide them more input on the appointment of principals.

That's why we were so disappointed when he appeared to have switched his position on this critical issue, shortly before taking office.<sup>2</sup>

Mamdani also promised us he would make other changes to ensure that the Department of Education would be more transparent and accountable.

- He promised to audit DOE spending with the goal of rooting out inefficiencies, corruption and fraud.
- He wrote that he would “examine contracts and processes around curriculum—we spend a massive amount of money outsourcing curriculum and professional development services, creating material that often does not align with teachers’ needs or experiences.”
- He pledged to require that all proposed DOE contracts be placed on the PEP agenda at least 30 days before their vote, and to make these contracts publicly available upon request beforehand.
- He said he would prioritize transparency by improving the DOE’s Freedom of Information process, which is completely dysfunctional at present.
- He wrote that he understood how the School Construction Authority needs fundamental reform and more transparency and would bring it into compliance with basic governance requirements, as set forth in the New York Public Authorities Law.

We are waiting to see if he will fulfill these other promises, as well as prove more responsive than previous Mayors to the voices of NYC parents, and the needs of our children who deserve more equitable and accountable educational policies and spending priorities.

Thank you for your time.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/12/31/nyregion/mamdani-nyc-public-schools-mayoral-control.html>

**Testimony of the New York Civil Liberties Union<sup>1</sup>**  
**Before New York City Council Committee on Education**  
**On Mayoral Control of Schools**  
**February 10, 2026**

I. INTRODUCTION

The NYCLU, the New York State affiliate of the American Civil Liberties Union, is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization with eight offices and more than 90,000 members and supporters across the state. The NYCLU’s mission is to defend and promote the fundamental principles, rights and values embodied in the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution and the Constitution of the State of New York.

Protecting and expanding students’ rights is a core component of our mission, and through our Education Policy Center, the NYCLU advocates for healthy school climate and equitable access to quality education for all students.

In 2009, we issued [The Price of Power](#), a whitepaper on the democratic failings of Mayor Bloomberg’s takeover of public school governance. At the time, we cited a lack of transparency into education decisions, a lack of accountability for decisions that had a negative impact on kids, and too few opportunities for public oversight (Mayor Bloomberg having maintained that local laws did not apply to DOE<sup>2</sup>) as some of the biggest challenges in the system.

In that report, we recommended some changes to the system that have subsequently been made (such as increasing the stability of the PEP by protecting its members from removal without cause) and some that have not (such as clarifying that the DOE sits within the existing City government structure and is bound by laws such as the City Administrative Procedures Act).

Mayoral control has subsumed education in our political system, so that today there is virtually no democratic accountability for education decisions. Both Mayors Mamdani and Adams had minimal education platforms as part of their campaigns, and education was rarely a topic during the campaign season. Though the DOE is our most expensive city agency, New York City’s diverse electorate has generally not

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<sup>1</sup> Contact the Education Policy Center at [schools@nyclu.org](mailto:schools@nyclu.org).

<sup>2</sup> Legally, the entity that oversees New York City schools is called the Board of Education. In New York City, that entity is known as the Panel for Educational Policy or PEP, due to a unilateral change by former Mayor Michael Bloomberg that is often seen as an effort to further disempower the board by calling it a “panel” (see New York State Education Department, *Mayoral Control of New York City Schools*. Albany, NY: NYSED, 2024, available at <https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/mayoral-control-of-new-york-city-schools-final-report.pdf>).

The city agency that implements PEP decisions and runs the schools on a day-to-day basis (and which is overseen by the Chancellor) has historically been known as the Department of Education (DOE), both colloquially, in government documents, and via branding. Recently, Chancellor David Banks and Mayor Eric Adams changed the branding of the agency to New York City Public Schools (NYCPS). For purposes of this testimony, we will refer to the agency as the DOE and the deliberative body as the PEP.



125 Broad Street  
19<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York NY 10004  
(212) 607-3300  
[nyclu.org](http://nyclu.org)

Donna Lieberman  
*Executive Director*

Wendy Stryker  
*President*

demanded an education plan from our mayoral candidates. As a result, more than 700,000 parents and 900,000 students in New York City are left without a vital accountability mechanism.

Importantly, New York City students, particularly students of color, have not seen significant academic gains under the mayoral control system. Research does not support a link between student achievement and governance structures, except that student achievement is positively correlated with teachers being more empowered (a mechanism our system sorely lacks).<sup>3</sup> Our schools remain among the most racially segregated in the nation. We spend millions of dollars a year on police and police apparatus in schools with little inquiry into whether they are useful (metal detectors and surveillance technology in particular), and millions more on dubious contracts with testing companies, ed tech providers<sup>4</sup>, and other vendors. Meanwhile, so many schools still lack the basics, such as libraries<sup>5</sup>, air conditioning<sup>6</sup>, arts programs<sup>7</sup> and even enough classroom space to comply with new class size regulations.<sup>8</sup>

The NYCLU has not taken a position on whether mayoral control, a traditional school board, or some other governance structure is the “correct” one for New York City. For that decision, we turn to our allies working directly with parents and

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<sup>3</sup> See New York State Education Department, *Mayoral Control of New York City Schools*. Albany, NY: NYSED, 2024, available at <https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/mayoral-control-of-new-york-city-schools-final-report.pdf>, p. 7. See also, Luschei, T. F., & Jeong, D. W. (2020), “School Governance and Student Achievement: Cross-National Evidence From the 2015 PISA,” *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 57(3), 331-371. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X20936346> (Original work published 2021)

<sup>4</sup> Education technology vendors in particular scoop up millions in public money for technology, software, and devices that put students at risk of privacy violations, and our current PEP process does not provide adequate oversight of those contracts. The amount of money at stake combined with public fears about school violence, nontransparent decision making, and powerful executive control, makes this area ripe for corruption. As an example, in 2024, federal agents raided the NYPD’s school safety offices in Queens, confiscating files and the cell phone of then-head of school safety Kevin Taylor. The FBI is investigating a Florida-based tech company called Saferwatch, which had sold so-called panic buttons to DOE in a no-bid contract worth millions of dollars, and which was suspected of being part of a kickback scheme with some of the mayor’s advisors. DOE personnel have also been subpoenaed in the investigation. See, e.g. Craig McCarthy, “Feds raid NYPD’s school safety HQ as part of probe into city contracts: sources,” *New York Post*, Oct. 10, 2024, available at <https://nypost.com/2024/10/10/us-news/feds-raid-nypds-school-safety-hq-as-part-of-probe-into-city-contracts-sources/>; Chris Sommerfeldt, “Co. that won big-bucks ‘panic button’ deal for NYC schools hired firm of Adams ally Frank Carone,” *NY Daily News*, Dec. 1, 2025, available at <https://www.nydailynews.com/2025/12/01/co-that-won-big-bucks-panic-button-deal-for-nyc-schools-hired-firm-of-adams-ally-frank-carone/>; William K. Rashbaum, “Investigators Search N.Y.P.D. School Safety Offices in Bribery Inquiry,” *New York Times*, Oct. 10, 2024, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/10/10/nyregion/eric-adams-bribery-inquiry-school-safety.html>

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g. Jessica Shuran Yu, “Less than 15% of NYC schools have a full-time librarian. Does yours?” *Chalkbeat*, Jan. 9, 2026, available at <https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2026/01/09/school-library-data-shows-lack-of-school-librarians/>

<sup>6</sup> Alex Zimmerman, “Officials promised all NYC classrooms would get air conditioning. 1 in 5 still lack it,” *Chalkbeat*, April 15, 2025, available at <https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2025/04/17/nyc-schools-still-lack-ac-for-all-ibo-report/>

<sup>7</sup> See, BK Reader, “Many NYC Schools Lack Arts Education,” April 10, 2025, available at <https://www.bkreader.com/policy-government/many-nyc-schools-lack-arts-education-10498666>.

<sup>8</sup> Aneeta Bohle, “NYC schools could use gyms, other spaces to comply with class-size mandate as critics blast ‘disaster in the making’,” *NY Post*, May 29, 2024, available at <https://nypost.com/2024/05/29/us-news/nyc-schools-could-use-gyms-other-spaces-to-comply-with-class-size-mandate-as-critics-blast-disaster-in-the-making/>

communities, and we urge the City and State to listen to them as well. We support efforts by parent and student groups to dismantle parts of the system that have not worked for them, and to build new structures and pathways that will. We urge continual evaluations and improvements to any system—free from undue political influence and focused on meaningful public engagement.

Today, we offer two relatively straightforward recommendations that would go a long way toward improving the existing governance system. These do not represent the entire universe of things that should be improved under mayoral control; however, we believe these would be relatively simple changes that would have a big impact.

## II. RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. Ensure the DOE & PEP are subject to the City Administrative Procedures Act

The City Administrative Procedures Act<sup>9</sup> applies to all City agencies, ensuring that the public has notice and the opportunity to comment on new city regulations. It requires agencies to publish a forward-looking regulatory agenda each May. Additionally, new regulations must be posted 30 days before a public hearing is held on the topic, relevant stakeholders must be notified of rulemaking, and submitted comments become part of the public record.

Currently, none of this applies to the DOE or PEP. While it is true that boards of education under state law are not subject to local administrative regulations, the PEP is a creature completely unlike those boards of education (which are made up of popularly elected trustees who serve fixed terms). Indeed, a major selling point of mayoral control back in 2002 was the efficiency and leadership gained by running NYC public schools like a mayoral agency. Yet, state law did not correct for this gap in basic oversight, and as a result, our current PEP is untethered by either traditional democratic controls or administrative ones.

Regardless of their opinion on mayoral control, every stakeholder in this conversation can agree that PEP meetings are hopelessly broken. There is too little notice of even vital decision-making, and it is often unclear whether there's any mechanism at all for public comments on a proposal. Testifying verbally at PEP meetings is too little, too late, as it might happen at midnight for a contentious issue, can only be done in person, and does not give members time to consider the testimony before voting. As a result, influencing the PEP is often a matter of behind-the-scenes negotiations, relying on insider relationships and negative press to slow down approvals.<sup>10</sup> There is no meaningful way for parents or students to participate, and there is no record of the public's view on an issue.

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<sup>9</sup> N.Y.C. Charter ch. 45, §§ 1041–1047

<sup>10</sup> See, e.g., Alex Zimmerman, “NYC withdraws \$1.9 million proposal for AI reading tutor after criticism from finance watchdog,” Chalkbeat, Dec. 18, 2024, available at <https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2024/12/18/nyc-pulls-pep-contract-for-ai-reading-tutor-eps-learning/>.



ACLU of New York

125 Broad Street  
19<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York NY 10004  
(212) 607-3300  
nyclu.org

Donna Lieberman  
*Executive Director*

Wendy Stryker  
*President*

We believe that the predictable structure provided by CAPA would help ensure meaningful public engagement on important education decisions. We encourage the City Council to take up this issue, and work with the mayor’s office and the state legislature to close this loophole.

### B. Decouple Mayoral Control from state budget negotiations

Mayoral control is a political football, with governors and members of the legislature using their authority to extract compromises and demand fealty from NYC mayors in exchange for extending the legislation. This year, the governor has proposed extending the current system for four years as part of her budget package, leaving no room for public conversation at all.<sup>11</sup>

State oversight has sometimes provided important public insight into mayoral control and has been one of the only times we get to hear from NYC mayors about their plans for education in the city. In a system with so little intrinsic accountability and transparency, NYC education stakeholders cling to this one bit of public process to make their voices heard. Unfortunately, it is a process that excludes educator, parent, and student voices. Decision-making in Albany is notoriously a black box, often rushed, and it is fair to assume that the political agendas of various mayors and governors have more to do with the outcome than any deliberate weighing of the merits.

New Yorkers deserve a serious, merits-based discussion of our school governance structure, with opportunity for public discussion and without the ticking clock and enormous weight of the state budget hanging over us. Some advocates have suggested, for example, appointing a commission to study school governance and make recommendations to the State. This type of deliberative process could generate real public engagement and expert insights, and could result in important changes, but unfortunately the governor’s proposal forecloses it, leaving New Yorkers powerless in their own system.

While ultimately, New Yorkers and even our local elected officials have no authority over the governor’s approach to mayoral control, we hope the Council will use its voice to urge, at the very least, a decoupling of this important issue from the messy and secretive state budget process.

## III. CONCLUSION

New York City has more than twenty years of experience with the strengths and shortcomings of mayoral control of schools. Absent clear limits on executive authority and mandates for transparency, accountability, and oversight, mayoral control has facilitated secretive decision-making, irresponsible contracting, and an almost total exclusion of parent and student voice in school governance matters.

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<sup>11</sup> Alex Zimmerman, “Mayoral control, school funding boost, and 2-care: What to know about Hochul’s budget proposal,” Chalkbeat, Jan. 20, 2026, available at <https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2026/01/20/hochul-budget-education-mayoral-control-school-funding-2-care/>

In 2002, mayoral control was a trend in big cities across the country. Today, many cities that experimented with the model, including Detroit, Chicago, Oakland, and Los Angeles, have reverted back to democratically elected school boards.<sup>12</sup> It is worth noting that mayoral control has primarily been undertaken in urban districts with large populations of students of color; suburban districts, many of which face equal challenges in student performance, funding, and segregation, have always trusted parents to elect their school boards.

New York City must no longer avoid true engagement from public school students and parents. As we consider an extension of mayoral control, the NYCLU urges meaningful change to increase accountability and transparency, and the adoption of a slower and more deliberative process of evaluating mayoral control's successes and failures. We urge the Council to use its influence to make space for everyday parents, educators, and students to weigh in on school control, noting that this type of public process takes more time and effort than we have ever invested in this question. In a \$20 billion system educating a million young people, that investment is worth it.



125 Broad Street  
19<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York NY 10004  
(212) 607-3300  
nyclu.org

Donna Lieberman  
*Executive Director*

Wendy Stryker  
*President*

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<sup>12</sup> Libby Stanford, "A Fading School Reform? Mayoral Control Is Ending in Another City," Ed Week, June 27, 2023, available at <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/a-fading-school-reform-mayoral-control-is-ending-in-another-city/2023/06>

# Parents Supporting Parents NY

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NEW YORK

**Tanesha Grant- executive director**

[tanisha1@pspnyinc.org](mailto:tanisha1@pspnyinc.org)

**646-925-6373**

February 10, 2026

*Greetings to the City Council Education Committee,*

*My name is Tanesha Grant, and I serve as the executive director of PSPNY. I extend my gratitude to Chair Dinowitz and the City Council Education Committee for convening this crucial hearing on mayoral control. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of my organization and based on my personal experience as both a parent and a grandparent, particularly of grandchildren requiring special education services. With my oldest child being 31 and my youngest now 18 and attending college, I have observed significant deficiencies in the execution of mayoral control over the past 25 years.*

*The prevailing narrative often suggests that mayoral control is necessary to ensure accountability when public education policies fail. The reality, however, is that no mayor to date has been held adequately accountable, resulting in a persistent cycle of flawed policies, inadequate curriculum, increased suspensions, greater police presence in schools, larger class sizes, and the expenditure of millions, if not billions, of dollars on contracts and curricula that are culturally detrimental to all students. These decisions are frequently made without genuine input from the affected school population, leaving students and parents with minimal influence over public education policies impacting their families.*

*For over a decade, I have served as a community leader and education advocate. Alongside numerous parents and students, I have championed various positive changes over the years. Yet, consistently, when we anticipate our input will be implemented, it is often co-opted and substantially altered from its original intent. Parent bodies, such as the Community Education Councils (CECs), are structured in a manner that limits, rather than empowers, parental authority.*

*Parents are moving beyond mere 'parent engagement'; they require empowerment, as they are their children's primary educators. Similarly, students must be empowered, as the education is fundamentally theirs.*

*The current top-down model of Mayoral control has demonstrably failed our public schools for 25 years. Instead of reinforcing this system, we should focus on creating a new governance structure that equitably shares power between the community and the government. It is concerning that the Mayor's office appears to rely more heavily on the UFT teacher union than on the voices of students and parents.*

*In examining the difficulties our children face in reading and mathematics, it is undeniable that mayoral control has not mitigated this critical issue. Parents advocated for Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education (CRSE), which is a state policy, yet it is not being fully implemented, as the selected curricula remain culturally destructive. Despite the City Council allocating millions of dollars for a comprehensive Black Studies K-12 curriculum, its application is not universal across all public schools due to the previous Chancellor's focus on promoting the NYC Read and Math initiatives. This focus has incurred millions of dollars in costs and has been persistently pursued, despite failing to meet expectations. Conversely, the Black Studies curriculum has shown positive results. I have spoken with students who have been exposed to it, and they express enthusiasm and are demonstrating learning gains. Given that reading comprehension is a key component of literacy, we believe this principle applies here: the NYCPS Department of Education must comprehend that students, parents, and grandparents will continue to advocate for the full implementation of the CRSE framework across our public schools.*

*We propose synthesizing the effective elements of past school board models and mayoral control to establish a new governance system. This system should genuinely support our students and educators, rather than compelling them to operate within the negative hierarchy of Mayoral control, which has provided virtually no accountability to the generations of students it has disadvantaged.*

*Best Regards,*

*Tanesha Grant, Executive Director Parents Supporting Parents NY*



## **Testimony of the Partnership for New York City**

### **New York City Council Committee on Education**

### **Mayoral Control of NYC Public Schools**

**February 10, 2026**

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Thank you Chair Dinowitz and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify on mayoral control of New York City's public schools. The Partnership for New York City mobilizes private sector resources and expertise to advance New York City's standing as a global center of economic opportunity, upward mobility, and innovation. We are a nonprofit organization whose members are preeminent companies that support nearly one million jobs in New York City and deliver approximately \$236 billion in economic output.

The Partnership fully supports a multi-year reauthorization of mayoral control of the city's schools. As employers who depend on the city's schools to prepare students for college and careers, we have a stake in the system and believe that any dilution of mayoral control would jeopardize the progress made over the past two decades.

Before mayoral control became law in 2022, the city's school system was chaotic, inefficient, plagued by patronage, and highly politicized. We saw declines in educational quality and student performance for more than 40 years. The Partnership worked with the legislature to develop the plan for mayoral control and we continue to believe that it is the best system of governance.

Data shows that mayoral control works. Since 2002 when mayoral control was implemented, the public high school graduation rate has increased from 50.8 percent to 78.4 percent overall, and from 38.8 percent to 74.9 percent for Black and Hispanic students. The number of students enrolled in college, a vocational program, or public service after graduating hit 76% in 2023, a post-pandemic high and 4 percentage points above 2007 levels. Dropout rates remain low, with the Class of 2025 having the third-lowest rate since 2012 at 5.3%. More students than ever are taking and passing Advanced Placement exams. English test scores are up in every district, with a citywide average test score performance increase of 15% compared to 2024 Grades 3-8 test results. Math test scores are up in 99% of districts, with a citywide average test score performance increase of 7% compared to 2024 Grades 3-8 test results.

These improvements would not have been possible without the clarity of a system in which the mayor has defined authority over leadership, labor contracts, and budget. We urge the Council to support a full, multi-year extension of mayoral control and oppose any dilution of the authority or accountability of the mayor.

Thank you.

**Statement on Mayoral Control**  
**by Solidarity UFT**  
**February 10, 2026**

Mayoral control of the public schools has been a disaster for New York City. We urge the Education Committee of the New York City Council to take a hard look at its failings and listen to those who are proposing meaningful alternatives.

This arrangement of one-man governance is a failed experiment. It was foisted upon us with false promises, faulty premises, and misguided assumptions that are still with us. Some of the mythologies have become normalized through repetition by successive mayors. Mayor Michael Bloomberg was looked up to as a wizard of information technology and a corporate success story. The mainstream media believed he could make the system more accountable and provide stability. He promised to free school governance from “politics” and bring efficiency and higher standards.

Instead, he brought a tumult of changes with the massive closings of neighborhood schools, the promotion of charter schools, and unending reorganizations of the system’s administration. With his disparagement of open, public decision-making, he cleared the way for profiteering, influence peddling, and cronyism. The central school board which he christened the Panel for Educational Policy, has functioned as a rubber stamp, approving wasteful contracts worth hundreds of millions of dollars, often awarding contracts to vendors with records of previous corruption.

Solidarity caucus of the United Federation of Teachers has seen the ill effects of top-down management inside the schools. In 2024 we wrote, “We are here to say that Mayor Bloomberg’s approach was entirely wrong. He spent school resources on wasteful tactics. These tactics tear down and divide, not build and strengthen.” School staffers have seen the rise of administrators, empowered in the manner of company CEOs, running their schools as private fiefdoms. Their powers were enhanced by the reduction of teachers’ ability to grieve file material even when inaccurate or malicious. With district superintendents removed from the grievance process, school leaders gain an unchecked ability to instill fear and compliance from teachers. They have used false accusations and the threat of removal for investigation, and termination. Their lopsided powers were further exaggerated with the Danielson evaluation rubric which guarantees that there will always be something missing in any lesson, and relieves administrators from having to consider a teachers’ lesson on its own merits.

Mayoral Control has not held administrators responsible for modeling lessons that would serve to guide teachers in adapting programs. Solidarity believes that principals that are knowledgeable educators should be able to teach demonstration lessons for

their staff. In doing so, principals would clearly see the roadblocks that teachers have in implementing current programs.

Mayoral control has prevented discourse and debate on educational issues, including what educational approaches are already working for students. Scripted curriculums have been implemented, including the NYC Reads Campaign, in the wake of which many richer and more engaging programs were discarded. Instead of assuring stability, we are ever affected by media campaigns about the failure of instruction or some other crisis. We are constantly being asked to focus on new initiatives without the discussion they deserve. Every new mandate inflicted in this manner contains the seeds of another big shift to correct it.

Mayoral Control has also served to silence the voices of teachers. Feedback from educators on the programs used in our schools is essential to achieving success. Teacher's feedback is not welcomed by a number of principals that serve our city. These same principals are held to little account in making programs work in their schools. All the pressure is on the teacher in the classroom. Teachers are instructed to teach with "fidelity" and yet modify scripted programs to meet the needs of students. However, feedback from teachers is discouraged by many administrators. Oddly enough, this feedback from teachers is exactly what is needed as they are the boots on the ground that make the programs function smoothly.

The state's mayoral control law has disenfranchised the local citizenry. Mayor Bloomberg's policies of deregulation and the school-choice model further reduced the role of parents to passive consumers. By destroying neighborhood schools, the city has forced many students to commute long distances to sites not convenient for parents to participate in meetings or other events. Throughout NY State, from Montauk to Buffalo, parents can advocate for their child's learning. They can attend local board meetings and help direct where their tax dollars are spent. Parents can provide feedback on how programs work for their children. Feedback from parents does not diminish student achievement. It should serve to strengthen school performance.

It is time to empower educators, teachers, and students and to return public schools to the public. It is time to end Mayoral Control in NYC.

**Testimony to the New York City Council Committee on Education**  
**Oversight: Mayoral Control in NYC Public Schools**  
**Hon. Eric Dinowitz, Chair**  
**Crystal McQueen-Taylor, Executive Director, StudentsFirstNY**  
**February 10, 2026**

As the expiration of mayoral accountability for New York City's public schools approaches, the future of the nation's largest school system once again stands at an inflection point. On behalf of StudentsFirstNY, I am here to testify in strong support of a clean, four-year extension of mayoral accountability, as proposed in Governor Hochul's Executive Budget.

Public school students should never be treated as political bargaining chips. Students, families, and educators depend on a stable governance structure that enables long-term planning, clear responsibility, and decisive action during moments of crisis. Repeated short-term extensions do the opposite: they weaken accountability and inject uncertainty into a system already grappling with persistent achievement gaps, fiscal constraints, and serious external threats.

StudentsFirstNY urges state leaders to reject short extenders, and we call on the City Council to use its voice to champion a full four-year extension— one that preserves clear, centralized accountability while continuing to strengthen opportunities for parent, family, and community engagement at the school and district levels.

My support for mayoral accountability is informed not only by policy analysis, but by lived experience as a former New York City public school student. As a child, my teacher and school refused to recommend me for the Gifted & Talented exam, so my mother brought me to the Superintendent's office seeking redress. For three days, we kept showing up and were ignored, with no clear authority willing to take responsibility. Only after persistent pressure did they relent, administering the exam to me in a janitorial closet. That detail may sound small, but it revealed a much larger truth: access depended on persistence rather than fairness, inequity appeared in everyday ways, and accountability was so diffuse that no one felt responsible for fixing what was plainly wrong. That experience left a lasting impression on me about how governance structures shape student outcomes—and why clear accountability matters.

I later became a public school teacher in the Bronx, working directly with students and families who relied on the public education system to provide opportunity, stability, and safety. Today, I am also a parent, navigating that same system on behalf of my own child, with the same hopes as millions of other families: that their school is well run, well supported, and accountable for delivering results.

This full perspective—as a student, an educator, and a parent—reinforces my conviction that New York City cannot afford to abandon a governance model that has demonstrably improved outcomes and clarified responsibility.

### **The Failure of Decentralization**

In 2024, StudentsFirstNY released *Dysfunction Junction: A History of NYC Schools Before Mayoral Accountability*, documenting the consequences of New York City's decentralized governance

structure between 1969 and 2002. It is a history worth revisiting to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.

Under decentralization, authority was fragmented among 32 community school districts, locally elected school boards, and a Board of Education with limited enforcement power. While intended to give communities a stronger voice, the system instead rewarded dysfunction and left no one accountable when things went wrong.

By the 1980s, corruption and mismanagement were so pervasive that then-Mayor Ed Koch established the Joint Commission on the Integrity of Public Schools, commonly known as the Gill Commission. Its 1989 report famously compared the Board of Education to a “new Tammany Hall,” concluding that investigators found “serious corruption or impropriety almost wherever we looked.”

These failures were not abstract or administrative—they directly endangered students and undermined public trust. Lax hiring practices allowed individuals with histories of drug addiction, gang leadership, and sexual offenses to be employed in schools. In some cases, known risks were ignored or inadequately investigated, placing children’s safety at risk.

Contracting and procurement systems were similarly compromised. Without centralized oversight, districts routinely awarded contracts to unqualified vendors, accepted kickbacks, and wasted millions of taxpayer dollars through fraudulent or grossly mismanaged deals. Investigations uncovered construction and leasing agreements inflated by tens of millions of dollars, including facilities later deemed unsafe.

Community school board elections—intended to empower parents—suffered from extremely low turnout, voter fraud, and administrative chaos. Investigators documented cases of multiple voting, fictitious parent registrations, and minimal oversight. These conditions allowed patronage networks to flourish while families most dependent on public schools remained excluded from decision-making. This is how the promise of local democracy collapsed under the weight of dysfunction.

### **Educational Outcomes Under Decentralization**

Governance failures were accompanied by consistently poor educational outcomes, particularly in districts where corruption and mismanagement were most prevalent.

Analyses from the late 1990s found that students in districts associated with corruption scored significantly lower on standardized reading and math assessments, even after accounting for socioeconomic factors. Schools frequently lacked basic instructional resources, including textbooks, arts programming, and safe classroom environments.

Educators described school cultures driven by political considerations rather than instructional improvement. Parents expressed deep frustration and helplessness, unsure where responsibility lay or how to enact meaningful change. Any proposal to weaken mayoral accountability today must grapple honestly with this history.

## **The Impact of Mayoral Accountability**

Since the restoration of mayoral accountability in 2002, New York City's public schools have seen substantial improvements across key indicators. Graduation rates have increased by approximately 30 percentage points overall, with even larger gains among historically underserved students. Graduation rates for Black students increased by more than 32 points and for Hispanic students by more than 35 points. Over the same period, the graduation gap between Black and white students narrowed by more than 13 points, while the Hispanic-white gap was cut in half. The overall dropout rate fell from 18.5 percent to 4.8 percent.

Academic performance also improved. By 2019, New York City eighth graders moved from scoring ten points below the statewide average in English Language Arts to outperforming the state as a whole- reflecting sustained, systemwide progress.

These gains coincided with the City's ability to pursue large-scale initiatives impossible under fragmented governance, including universal Pre-K and 3-K, Fair Student Funding reforms, community schools expansion, and coordinated responses to major crises such as COVID-19, extreme weather, and the recent influx of newly arrived students.

Clear accountability allowed the City to act quickly, align resources, and maintain continuity during extraordinary disruption.

## **The Need for Stability Moving Forward**

Looking ahead, New York City's schools face compounding challenges. Achievement and opportunity gaps persist, and potential federal funding threats could affect not only education, but health care, food access, and housing- all of which shape students' ability to learn.

These pressures are intensified by declining enrollment. As schools confront consolidation and resource reductions, a decentralized governance structure would almost certainly produce uneven outcomes, with majority Black and Brown districts bearing a disproportionate share of closures, instability, and program loss. In periods of contraction, centralized accountability is essential to ensure decisions are made strategically and equitably across the city, rather than through fragmented, district-by-district approaches that deepen segregation and disinvestment.

Schools are also operating amid heightened uncertainty related to immigration enforcement and broader federal policy shifts. In this environment, fragmented governance would be an added liability. Mayoral accountability provides the authority needed to respond swiftly and cohesively. This is not the moment to dilute responsibility.

Repeated short-term extensions do exactly that. They discourage long-term planning, complicate leadership transitions, and inject political uncertainty into a system that depends on stability.

By contrast, a four-year extension provides the time horizon necessary to implement reforms, comply with the class size law, expand universal child care, and continue post-pandemic recovery- allowing schools to focus on students rather than structural uncertainty.

## **Accountability and Parent Voices**

StudentsFirstNY recognizes that accountability must coexist with meaningful opportunities for parent and community engagement. Centralized accountability does not preclude participation; it clarifies responsibility, so families know where to direct concerns and advocacy.

We are concerned that proposals to significantly expand decision-makers would slow the system and entrench dysfunction. When authority is too widely diffused, responsibility becomes unclear and accountability weakens—ultimately diminishing, not strengthening, parent voice.

We welcomed Mayor Mamdani’s clarification of his support for a governance structure that holds him ultimately accountable for school performance. We also support continued efforts to strengthen school-level engagement and transparency without diluting executive responsibility. Accountability and participation are partners, not opposites.

## **Conclusion**

New York City has already conducted a decades-long experiment with decentralized school governance. That experiment failed—not in theory, but in practice—producing corruption, inefficiency, unsafe conditions, and poor outcomes for the students who depended most on public schools. We should not ask another generation of children to relearn that lesson.

Mayoral accountability is not perfect, but it has delivered measurable improvements, clearer responsibility, and the capacity to act decisively in moments of crisis. Now is not the time to reverse course or introduce instability through short-term extensions.

StudentsFirstNY respectfully urges policymakers to support a clean, four-year extension of mayoral accountability to ensure stability, protect progress, and keep responsibility for New York City’s public schools clear and transparent. Our students deserve nothing less.



## Education Council Consortium

# ECC Testimony on Mayoral Control

February 10, 2026

My name is Jonathan Greenberg. I am the chair of the School Governance Committee of the Education Council Consortium (ECC). The ECC strives to develop and support New York City public school parent leadership through education, networking, and organizing. With close to a decade of dedication to building and empowering parent leaders, the ECC and its supporters have shaped educational discourse across the city by collectively advocating for a public school system that is equitable, inclusive, antiracist, and free of all forms of oppression and that provides an appropriate and humane education for all students in New York City. Thank you to Council Member Dinowitz for holding this important meeting.

Mayoral control was established in New York City in 2002 by the state as a statute that created a new governance system for the city's schools. That statute gave the mayor, then Michael Bloomberg, the power to unilaterally hire and fire the school chancellor; it assigned new responsibilities to the city's school board and put it under the mayor's control through the appointment of the majority of its seats; it empowered the chancellor to hire and fire district superintendents; and it established district-level education councils that serve a largely advisory role. By both concentrating power in the hands of the mayor and centralizing power in a central office and away from the city's 32 community school districts, this system was intended to allow the mayor to make significant changes in the school system without the checks and balances of most school systems in the US, which are headed by an elected school board.<sup>1</sup>

This version of school governance concentrates power in the mayor's office even more than other versions of mayoral control have in cities such as Chicago, Boston, and Philadelphia. While opportunities for public comment are built in to the system through the meetings of school leadership teams, citywide and community education councils, and the city board (referred to as the Panel for Educational Policy), these bodies either have very limited decision-making power or are controlled by the mayor.

Unlike all other US cities, New York has a multi-level system of governance and administration: the central administration and the chancellor delegate certain responsibilities to the leadership of the geographic community school districts, as well as high school districts and non-geographic "districts" that oversee specialized programs citywide. The design of the system elicits top-down decision making throughout. This is a crucial point: mayoral control in New York City is associated with the PEP and the chancellor, but that control has profound effects on the governance of districts and

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<sup>1</sup> For more on the history of school governance in New York City, see our report, *Who Governs Who Governs New York City's Schools? Tracing Power and Participation Across a Century of Reform* (2026), <https://www.ecc-nyc.org/whogoverns.html>



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schools. Decisions are made for the system, for districts, and for schools without the involvement of affected communities. And it's not just decision-making. Indeed, because the bureaucracy does not require or depend on community involvement, many communities receive insufficient information and access to schools and the school system. If you are a parent or have worked in a school, you may recognize these attributes. Or you may have had a different experience. Parents who exercise sufficient social, political, and economic capital often do have influence over decision-making at their children's schools, whether through SLTs, PTAs, or through less formal channels. But these parents are the exception in a system where 74% of students are facing economic hardship and 84% of students are children of color.

For many families, schools are the most frequent and most accessible connection to public institutions. They are often in their neighborhoods, and parents and guardians take their children to and from school five days a week for most of the year. Schools are a public service that parents, students, and other community members care about deeply. This makes them a powerful site for learning and practicing democratic engagement. As democratic institutions are threatened under the Trump administration, public schools and school systems are the best opportunity for everyday parents and students to practice democracy. But for most students and families, that is not happening in New York City.

In addition to cutting out communities from decision-making, our system of school governance has several negative effects:

1. Mayoral control introduces significant instability to New York City's schools. Because mayoral leadership can change every four years, long-term educational planning is routinely disrupted by shifts in political priorities, senior leadership, and policy direction. Educators and school communities are frequently required to pivot to new mandates before prior reforms have been fully implemented or evaluated, undermining continuous improvement and evidence-based decision-making, while disregarding previously invested costs.
2. New York City's version of mayoral control has allowed for wasteful contracts at the scale of the whole system, as the PEP could approve contracts without sufficient oversight or public comment. When these contracts do not contribute to teaching and learning in school, they are taking funding away from the mission of the system.

Mayoral control was the latest major shift in a long history of struggle for control of New York City's schools. And it was a radical shift, as it intentionally concentrated power in one office without significant checks and balances. We cannot fix the deficiencies in mayoral control by simply adjusting it. We have already seen many changes to the makeup of the PEP, for instance, and incremental improvements in transparency notwithstanding, the dynamics of mayoral control in New York City remain largely the same. Just as mayoral control was designed to address the goals of Mayor Bloomberg and his supporters, we must now design a new system that will encourage and support co-governance between



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the city and our school communities: school staff, parents, students, administrators, and other community members. The ECC cannot devise this system on its own; we strongly believe that doing so will require a collective effort of rights holders engaging with communities and co-creating a governance structure that will empower those communities, allow for sustained changes, and ensure the rights of all students. **An independent commission on school governance** would do the work to learn from experts and rights holders, and propose a better system.

While we work toward a process to design a new system, we believe that we must still do what we can to make mayoral control as responsive as possible to the needs of our students. The adjustments we are calling for, both in state law and in DOE policy will leave many unsatisfied, but we hope that they will help the current system to function better.

We are advocating that the state enact **a two-year extension of the current system with targeted reforms**, including:

- Reducing the number of mayoral appointees to the Panel for Education Policy without reducing the number of non-mayoral appointees, so that the mayoral appointees would constitute the minority; and
- Providing that the mayor does not appoint the majority of PEP members, repeal Education Law §2590-B.a.1.D to allow PEP members to select their own Chair.

These changes would strengthen independence, restore public trust, and promote more durable educational policy without sacrificing coordination or operational continuity. We are calling on the state legislature to remove mayoral control from the budget. School governance should be addressed through separate, transparent legislation with robust stakeholder engagement—rather than as part of budget negotiations driven by fiscal timelines and political pressure.

Meanwhile, we have sent the mayor and chancellor a detailed list of reforms they could make in the first 100 days of this administration that would improve the governance of our schools. These reforms would strengthen district leadership teams, community and citywide education councils, and school leadership teams without requiring action from the state. We have included that document with this testimony.

Rebuilding school governance is not a magic bullet. Our city must address persistent inequities and misguided practices regardless of the governance structure. The ECC believes that a responsive, balanced system that provides teachers, students, parents, and their communities a voice and a sense of ownership over their schools can create the conditions for changes in policy and culture in our schools.



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# 2026 Recommendations for the Mayor for the First 100 Days

## Family And Community Empowerment (FACE)

Family and Community Empowerment (FACE) is currently responsible for offering professional development for parent leaders serving on citywide and community education councils (CCEC), parent/teacher association and school leadership teams (SLT) as well as managing the CCEC elections. As a central division of the DOE under mayoral control, there is little motivation to empower and support parent leaders serving on CCECs, which are intended to provide some level of checks and balances. FACE providing support to parent leaders is akin to a fox guarding the hen house. Not surprisingly parent leaders across the city have expressed dissatisfaction by the quality of professional development and support.

Furthermore, this division (or any division within the DOE) is neither equipped nor appropriate to run elections. Beside the inherent conflict in the DOE's support for strong advocates to serve on CCECs, the division was not created to manage citywide elections involving hundreds of thousands of voters. Even when only the PTA officers casted votes, elections were not run well (in 2011, the DOE was pressured to conduct a straw vote because of irregularities). Now with every caregiver eligible to vote, elections have been run poorly, riddled with inconsistent applications of campaign rules, extremely poor voter turnout, confusion over voting process, and more. Parent leaders called for a full audit in 2023 that led to the NYC Comptroller urging the DOE to improve the process.

- Create an advisory committee of parent leaders and representatives of community organizations, who will survey rightsholders and develop recommendations on:
  - The functions and roles of FACE
  - The structure of FACE
  - Immediate implementable improvements to provide support to parent leaders
- Audit the 2025 CCEC Elections; begin preparing for 2027 cycle with dedicated staff and engagement with CCEC and CPAC members.
- Increase the number of students whose families have at least one NYCSA account by 20%, focusing on families of multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and students in temporary housing.
- Ensure FACE be in a collaborative and supportive relationship with the Division of School Leadership, the Division of Inclusive and Accessible Learning (DIAL), and other central offices, in order to inform and work in partnership with CCECs on directives to meet district goals and priorities.



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### Superintendents

The role of the superintendents has changed with the temperament of each mayor and chancellor, from a position without any authority, filled by business managers and non-educators under Bloomberg to career NYC educators serving as instructional leaders under de Blasio. For a system as large as New York City, community district superintendents and high school superintendents are critical positions that offer support, guidance and accountability to principals as well as liaising with Citywide and Community Education Councils. However, there is currently very little accountability for the performance of superintendents in the area of family empowerment, despite increased staff numbers and budgets in district offices. Many serve as gate keepers of information from central offices to the schools and education councils. There are no consequences for superintendents who disregard the education law that requires every school to have a functional school leadership team or who refuse to collaborate with community education councils.

- Require Community District and High School superintendent serving on the District Leadership Team (DLT) to monitor functioning and compliance of School Leadership Teams (SLTs) and DLTs and report to the Chancellor.
- Require a report to the Chancellor (which will be sent to the Deputy Mayor for Education) on the status of School Leadership Teams, including data on whether SLTs in their district have been fully constituted, met regularly, and complied with open meetings law. Make the report publicly available.
- Add DLT and SLT compliance to superintendent evaluation.
- Develop a system of superintendent performance evaluation that meaningfully incorporates the evaluation conducted by community education councils.
- Require superintendents to present DCEP goals to CCECs, Presidents Councils, and District Title I PACs.



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### District Leadership Teams

District Leadership Teams hold the promise of bringing together leadership from rightsholders across a district to set priorities and address concerns. Unfortunately, in many districts, administrators use DLT meetings as venues for reporting rather than collaboration. Giving DLTs more visibility and transparency would start to incentivize them to collaborate with their communities.

- Require that DLT meetings be announced publicly to schools and communities, and that meetings be available to view remotely. Send a message to rightsholders announcing the DLT meeting each month.
- Require that all DLTs include a member of the district CEC, the DPAC, and the Presidents' Council.
- Advocate for state law to subject DLTs to Open Meeting Law.

### Community and Citywide Education Councils

Community and Citywide Education Councils have been rendered powerless under mayoral control, which has stripped parents, educators and students of their voices in the decision making process. Education council members are often prevented from accessing data, or connecting with the Department of Education personnel so that they can assess the state of the schools under their jurisdiction. Even though they have to comply with the Public Officers Law, they are often left out of important conversations that affect the schools under their jurisdiction. Education council members must not only be granted access to information and DOE personnel but also be provided with information early, often and proactively by the DOE. Moreover, all 36 councils must be provided access and information equitably.

- In coordination with CCEC presidents, proactively offer presentations from key divisions at Central.
- Schedule presentations on school admissions from the Office of Student Enrollment for fall 2026 in each district.
- Allow CEC presidents access to SGOs, district data managers, and data from central, as well as appropriate staff.
- Commit to the presentation of estimated and aggregated budget to CCECs before the scheduled PEP vote. Encourage CCECs to convey their approval via statements or resolutions to that effect.
- Inform CCECs of all Chancellors Regulation changes and encourage CCECs to collect public input as a part of the process to ultimately present the proposal to PEP.



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### School Leadership Teams

School Leadership Teams were created in 1999 as a way to strengthen school-based management and shared decision-making in NYC schools. They create a body that is meant to empower parents to work with administrators, teachers, and other staff on policies, budgets, and decisions. But the promise of such shared governance has never been realized in most schools, as they have overlooked laws regarding training, transparency, and collaboration. Moreover, despite being subject to state Open Meetings Law, open meetings requirements, such as announcing the time and place of meetings to the school and local communities, are widely ignored.

Ensure the Chancellor implements the following:

- Together with CSA and UFT, provide high quality professional development sessions for all SLT members together (administrators, staff, and parents). Ensure all SLT members attend professional development. Ensure follow up from district offices.
- Amend the Chancellor's Regulation A-655 to prohibit the principal to chair the SLT.
- Communicate directly with SLT members to inform them of their roles and responsibilities, as well as the requirements of OML.
- Communicate widely with parents, students, and community members about the role of SLTs.
- Monitor compliance with state laws and Chancellor's regulation of all SLTs, including functioning in a collaborative manner, posting timely meeting information and meeting minutes on school web sites. Post the dates, times, locations, and if applicable, meeting links for all SLT meetings on the DOE website.
- Reform the Comprehensive Education Plan template document to facilitate more innovation and customization by each SLT.
- Ensure that all SLT members have timely and direct access to the iPlan portal so that they can participate in writing the CEP.
- By the end of the 25-26 SY ensure all Title I Schools have an established and productive Title I Parent Advisory Council (PAC) being supported by their principals and designated staff.

I am a grandparent. I'm here today to urge you to work with Mayor Mamdani to establish a commission of parents, educators, students, advocates, experts, and researchers – to engage communities in designing a truly democratic school governance system to replace mayoral control. How can the education of our children, the future of NY City be left to the whims of politicians each election cycle?

Mayoral control has repeatedly failed communities -even under “progressive” leadership. This is not about a person, it is about a system and about the future of our children. Mayors continue to get away with decisions that harm New York City youth, parents, and communities because parents, youth, and community members don't have control over our schools i.e. budget cuts, creating more charter schools, and closing schools.

We demand to be community partners in transparency, accountability and ownership of our schools.

We demand a truly democratic system that empowers students, parents, and educators. Community leadership must be respected, resourced, and sustained, not tokenized. This system must include:

- Real decision-making authority for parents, students, and educators
- Access to training, data, and support to participate meaningfully
- Structures that allow/require some centralized decision making, while also ensuring that there is an effective relationship established between local and centralized decision-making. Even citywide decisions should have a local mechanism for feedback and implementation planning

Additionally, we demand that the issue of Mayoral Control be removed once and for all from the budget, given that it is not a budgetary issue. The governance of our schools is not the Governor's bargaining chip.

Thank you,

Ana Rojas

I'm a district 5 parent and former CEC member.

I want a system of school governance that is democratic, representative, and designed to give the most power to those with the greatest stake in the system such as disabled students, Black and Latine families, children experiencing poverty, and LGBTQ kids.

Mayoral control has failed families. It creates an environment where everyone is working at the pleasure of someone above them and trying to please their higher ups, rather than a system that cultivates leadership where people can come together and form powerful alliances to govern schools collectively.

I would like to see a system where elected parents and teachers have power over school leadership personnel decisions and contracts. Deliberative bodies of elected parents and stakeholders could exist at different levels of geography and focus on different areas of school governance such as curriculum, district planning, and parent engagement. Critically, school buildings should be open long hours, with parent and community focused programming to serve as third spaces where communities can come together and build the trust that is necessary for democratic decision making.

Community leadership must be resourced. Elected parent leaders need to have power over the DOE offices that support them, not the other way around.

Additionally, we demand that the issue of Mayoral Control be removed once and for all from the budget, given that it is not a budgetary issue. The governance of our schools is not the Governor's bargaining chip.

Thank you,

Anna Minsky

I am an education advocate in New York City.

I believe school governance in New York City should be rooted in safety, dignity, fairness, and respect for the people who are most impacted—students, families, and educators. Under mayoral control, decision-making power is concentrated far away from school communities, leaving parents and caregivers with limited voice over policies that shape our children’s daily lives. This top-down system has too often made families feel excluded rather than respected as partners, and it has weakened trust between communities and the public school system.

I am calling on the City Council to advocate for the state to move New York City toward a more democratic and community-centered governance model—one that meaningfully includes parents, educators, students, and community leaders in decision-making. A more democratic system would prioritize transparency, shared responsibility, and accountability, and would recognize that safe, thriving schools are built when families are treated with dignity and have real power, not just symbolic input.

The core problem with mayoral control is the concentration of power in a system that excludes the very people schools are meant to serve. Decisions about budgets, staffing, school closures, curriculum, and even safety policies are made with little meaningful input from parents and caregivers, even though we are the ones navigating the consequences every day. This top-down approach consistently prioritizes political expediency over the real needs of students and school communities.

In my own experience as an advocate in NYC public schools, engagement has often felt performative rather than substantive. Parents are invited to meetings after major decisions have already been made, with little opportunity to shape outcomes. When families raise concerns about overcrowding, lack of support services, safety, or sudden changes to programs, they are listened to, but not heard. There is no clear path for parent leaders to influence decisions in a way that leads to real accountability.

After more than 20 years of mayoral control, NYC public schools remain governed by a top-down system that silences parents, students, and educators - especially in Black, Brown, immigrant, low-income, LGBTQIA+, and disabled communities - and allows progress to be reversed with no accountability. I am calling on the City Council to advocate for the state to move toward a democratic school governance system, beginning with a short two-year extension of mayoral control and the creation of a well-funded, representative commission to design a new model rooted in transparency,

shared decision-making, and community ownership. A democratic school governance system is not radical. It is necessary if we believe in equity, dignity, and safety for all students.

We demand...

1. That a new governance system must provide real decision-making authority for parents, students, and educators (not just advisory roles) along with access to training, data, and resources so community members can participate meaningfully and equitably.
2. The system must balance citywide coordination with strong local power, ensuring that major policies and budget decisions include transparent local feedback, implementation planning, and accountability, so community leadership is respected and sustained.
3. Historically marginalized communities, such as Black, Brown, LGBTQIA+, newcomer immigrant and ELL students, low-income students, students with disabilities, foster care students, students in temporary housing should have a designated representative

Additionally, we demand that the issue of Mayoral Control be removed once and for all from the budget, given that it is not a budgetary issue. The governance of our schools is not the Governor's bargaining chip.

Thank you,

Dana Mandler

I am a public school parent, educator, and former member of the Panel for Educational Policy. I'm here today to urge you to work with Mayor Mamdani to establish a commission of parents, educators, students, advocates, experts, and researchers – to engage communities in designing a truly democratic school governance system to replace mayoral control. As a former parent-appointed member of the PEP I can attest from my lived experience that parent and community voice is routinely drowned out and ignored by the intractable mayoral majority structure of the PEP. This type of tokenized representation is performative and ineffectual, having no real capacity to advance community-driven policy decisions when they are at odds with the will of the mayor. The current system of governance is unresponsive smoke and mirrors masquerading as voice but ultimately serving to prop up a facade of true engagement and community accountability.

Mayoral control has repeatedly failed communities - even under “progressive” leadership. This is not about a person, it is about a system and about the future of our children. Mayors continue to get away with decisions that harm New York City youth, parents, and communities because parents, youth, and community members don't have control over our schools i.e. budget cuts, creating more charter schools, closing and schools. Time and time again during my tenure on the PEP I saw deeply unpopular, widely opposed changes to building utilization be approved by a mayoral majority, treated as political favors advantageous to the mayor. In several instances these changes resulted in predicted, foreseeable, avoidable life-threatening harm to students. What is the purpose of community engagement if the will of the people is tolerated but ultimately ignored? Contracts totalling countless millions of dollars in public funds were approved despite community objections due to cronyism, connection, and pay-to-play politics that demonstrate the fallibility of mayoral control as a supposed counterbalance to corruption.

Education policy isn't just about what decisions are made. It is about who gets to make them. Without shared decision-making, budgets ignore community needs, policies are disconnected from school realities and implementation is less than optimal. Whereas, democratic governance ensures transparency, accountability and community ownership. The current structure of the PEP includes students in a tokenized, voiceless capacity, and eliminates the voices of educators and administrators. How can a governance system that eliminates the voices of the governed possibly be responsive? Further, the conjoined responsibility of PEP members to serve on both the panel and as

trustees of the Board of Education Retirement System (BERS) pension fund ensures the inclusion of panelists who seek to advance their careers as investment advisors and financial professions by serving as a trustee of a multibillion dollar public pension fund but have little to no interest in public education policy, seeking mayoral appointment to the PEP as a means to career advancement and personal enrichment. It is imperative that these roles be decoupled to ensure education policy is made by stakeholders rather than seat-fillers. In my time on the PEP some of the comments I heard from my mayorally-appointed colleagues, when they bothered to form an opinion, ranged from truly abhorrent remarks such as how hearing about disabled students being trapped on overly long and uncooled bus commutes was a waste of their time to lack of concern regarding data breaches, decaying facilities, lack of access to health services, and more.

We demand a truly democratic system that empowers students, parents, and educators. Community leadership must be respected, resourced, and sustained, not tokenized. This system must include:

- Real decision-making authority for parents, students, and educators
- Access to training, data, and support to participate meaningfully
- Structures that allow/require some centralized decision making, while also ensuring that there is an effective relationship established between local and centralized decision-making. Even citywide decisions should have a local mechanism for feedback and implementation planning.

Additionally, we demand that the issue of Mayoral Control be removed once and for all from the budget, given that it is not a budgetary issue. The governance of our schools is not the Governor's bargaining chip.

Thank you,

Jessamyn Lee

I'm a parent of children at PS 682 and Mark Twain. I'm here today to urge you to work with Mayor Mamdani to establish a commission of parents, educators, students, advocates, experts, and researchers – to engage communities in designing a truly democratic school governance system to replace mayoral control.

Mayoral control has repeatedly failed communities -even under “progressive” leadership. This is not about a person, it is about a system and about the future of our children. Mayors continue to get away with decisions that harm New York City youth, parents, and communities because parents, youth, and community members don't have control over our schools i.e. budget cuts, creating more charter schools, and school closing. Mayoral control also saw the removal of books from classrooms under HMH.

Education policy isn't just about what decisions are made. It is about who gets to make them. Without shared decision-making, budgets ignore community needs, policies are disconnected from school realities and implementation is less than optimal. Whereas, democratic governance ensures transparency, accountability and community ownership.

We demand a truly democratic system that empowers students, parents, and educators. Community leadership must be respected, resourced, and sustained, not tokenized. This system must include:

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Additionally, we demand that the issue of Mayoral Control be removed once and for all from the budget, given that it is not a budgetary issue. The governance of our schools is not the Governor's bargaining chip.

Thank you,

Kelly Clancy

I'm a parent at IS 318 in Brooklyn. I am here to urge you to move away from a model that concentrates power in one office and toward a governance structure that is collaborative, transparent, and truly democratic. Families, educators, and students deserve meaningful decision-making power — not symbolic engagement.

The problem is not one mayor. It is the structure.

Under mayoral control, parent engagement often feels symbolic. Major decisions about budgets, programming, and policy are made with limited community authority. As both a parent and a parent leader, I have seen how top-down decision-making leaves families reacting to changes rather than helping shape them. This structure disproportionately impacts historically marginalized communities and weakens trust.

We need a governance model rooted in shared decision-making. Policy is not only about what is decided, but who has authority to shape those decisions. Stronger local bodies, transparent budget processes, and structured community input before policies are finalized would improve accountability and implementation.

We demand that City Council apply pressure to...

1. Establish a diverse commission to design a democratic replacement for mayoral control.
2. Guarantee defined, enforceable decision-making authority for parent and educator leadership bodies.
3. Require structured local consultation and transparent feedback mechanisms for citywide decisions.

Community leadership must be respected, resourced, and sustained — not tokenized.

Additionally, we demand that the issue of Mayoral Control be removed once and for all from the budget, given that it is not a budgetary issue. The governance of our schools is not the Governor's bargaining chip.

Thank you,

Kimberly Washington

I'm a parent at PS/IS127q. I'm here today to urge you to work with Mayor Mamdani to establish a commission of parents, educators, students, advocates, experts, and researchers – to engage communities in designing a truly democratic school governance system to replace mayoral control.

With every mayor there seems to be a different agenda, a different way of learning, learning practices from the past suddenly reappear, in the meantime children that need to switch between learning practices that are imposed by different mayors have a learning loss that many times goes without notice, perhaps purposefully.

Education tied to the mayor is not equitable to all the children. It is a disservice to our children who are the future from today. There will always be a learning gap for children each time there is a new mayor, because the priorities do not always benefit the child, it benefits the city and its well being or betterment, not the children's advancement.

Education policy isn't just about what decisions are made. It is about who gets to make them. Without shared decision-making, budgets ignore community needs, policies are disconnected from school realities and implementation is less than optimal. Whereas, democratic governance ensures transparency, accountability and community ownership.

We demand a truly democratic system that empowers students, parents, and educators. Community leadership must be respected, resourced, and sustained, not tokenized.

This system must include:

Real decision-making authority for parents, students, and educators

Access to training, data, and support to participate meaningfully

Structures that allow/require some centralized decision making, while also ensuring that there is an effective relationship established between local and centralized decision-making. Even citywide decisions should have a local mechanism for feedback and implementation planning.

Additionally, we demand that the issue of Mayoral Control be removed once and for all from the budget, given that it is not a budgetary issue. The governance of our schools is not the Governor's bargaining chip.

Thank you,

Marlene Rossi

I'm a parent at Jordan L. Mott

I'm here today to urge you to work with Mayor Mamdani to establish a commission of parents, educators, students, advocates, experts, and researchers – to engage communities in designing a truly democratic school governance system to replace mayoral control.

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Education policy isn't just about what decisions are made. It is about who gets to make them. Without shared decision-making, budgets ignore community needs, policies are disconnected from school realities and implementation is less than optimal. Whereas, democratic governance ensures transparency, accountability and community ownership.

We demand a truly democratic system that empowers students, parents, and educators. Community leadership must be respected, resourced, and sustained, not tokenized. This system must include:

Real decision-making authority for parents, students, and educators

Access to training, data, and support to participate meaningfully

Structures that allow/require some centralized decision making, while also ensuring that there is an effective relationship established between local and centralized decision-making. Even citywide decisions should have a local mechanism for feedback and implementation planning.

Additionally, we demand that the issue of Mayoral Control be removed once and for all from the budget, given that it is not a budgetary issue. The governance of our schools is not the Governor's bargaining chip.

Thank you,

Natassja Rappa

I'm a parent at Central Park East II and a guidance counselor/restorative justice coordinator at Urban Assembly Gateway School for Technology

I'm here today to urge you to work with Mayor Mamdani to establish a commission of parents, educators, students, advocates, experts, and researchers – to engage communities in designing a truly democratic school governance system to replace mayoral control. The only way schools will improve is if the people, students/staff/parents, most impacted by them are the ones wielding the power. They are best situated to make the decisions.

Mayoral control has repeatedly failed communities -even under “progressive” leadership. This is not about a person, it is about a system and about the future of our children. Any system that has a top down approach won't work because those in power are too far removed from the population they are supposedly serving and those in power are constantly changing. The places I have seen the most progress happen are the environments in which we have shared power with students and they have used that to build what they and their classmates need. A great example of this at the school I counsel in is student government led events.

Education policy isn't just about what decisions are made. It is about who gets to make them and the knowledge they are given. We need schools and systems rooted in restorative justice which are deliberate about building community and sharing power. Everyone that is impacted by the system needs to have a voice and the ability to drive changes that benefit everyone.

We demand a truly democratic system that empowers students, parents, and educators. Community leadership must be respected, resourced, and sustained, not tokenized. We demand Restorative Justice be prioritized in schools so that students and staff can have caring environments in which learning is primed to happen.

Additionally, we demand that the issue of Mayoral Control be removed once and for all from the budget, given that it is not a budgetary issue. The governance of our schools is not the Governor's bargaining chip.

Thank you,

Philip Traversa

I'm a community member and former NYC teacher.

NYC school governance belongs in the hands of the people. I urge you to work with Mayor Mamdani to engage parents, educators, young people, advocates, experts, and community members in designing a truly democratic school governance system to replace mayoral control.

Public schools are supposed to be the great equalizer, the mechanism by which we pass the values of our diverse, inclusive democracy down to our children. Mayoral control is the antithesis of democracy, taking decision-making away from the people and undermining the public's investment in public schools. The repeated failures of mayoral control, even under so-called "progressive" leadership, underscores the need to design a system in which the people have a real voice.

We need a system that doesn't hinge on the whims of whoever is in the Mayor's office but is instead responsive and responsible to the everyday New Yorkers who count on the schools to do right by their children. Parents, educators, young people, advocates, experts, and community members must be the drivers of decision-making about policies, budgets, and school governance in order to ensure that community needs are met and the realities of on-the-ground implementation are accounted for.

We demand a truly democratic system that empowers young people, parents, educators, advocates, experts, and community members. Community leadership must be respected, resourced, and sustained, not tokenized and ignored when it becomes politically inconvenient. A truly democratic system must include:

- Real decision-making authority for parents, young people, and educators;
- Access to training, data, and support to participate meaningfully;
- Structures that ensure that centralized, citywide decision-making faces substantive checks and balances from local mechanisms to ensure that the people's voices and choices are honored and accountability is maintained.

Additionally, we demand that the issue of Mayoral Control be removed once and for all from the budget, given that it is not a budgetary issue. The governance of our schools is not the Governor's bargaining chip.

Thank you,

Rebecca Gadd

Wanda Jackson | Alliance for Quality Education  
Testimony for 2/10/2026 oversight hearing on Mayoral Control

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I am the PTA President/ Parent Ambassador @ 73X SLT member and Secretary on President Council D9

Without representation at the table from Parents our children we will not survive.  
Student Councils and Councils are very much necessary.

Parent Involvement is the key. Resources in schools and SLT without having these skills to train and develop plans District wide and City Wide and National Councils should be involved.

If we parents represent our School's Community Districts and we don't get paid for our time work and our mental health How can we support our students Children and Families.

We demand a truly democratic system that empowers students, parents, and educators. Community leadership must be respected, resourced, and sustained, not tokenized.

This system must include:

- Real decision-making authority for parents, students, and educators
- Access to training, data, and support to participate meaningfully
- Structures that allow/require some centralized decision making, while also ensuring that there is an effective relationship established between local and centralized decision-making. Even citywide decisions should have a local mechanism for feedback and implementation planning.

Additionally, we demand that the issue of Mayoral Control be removed once and for all from the budget, given that it is not a budgetary issue. The governance of our schools is not the Governor's bargaining chip.

Thank you,

Wanda Jackson

THE LAW OFFICE OF

**LAURA D. BARBIERI, PLLC**



## **WHITE PAPER**

### **School Governance and Mayoral Control in New York City Public Schools**

A Comprehensive Analysis for the Mamdani Administration

*Prepared for The New York City Council: Committee on Education  
Public Hearing: Oversight - Mayoral Control of NYC Public Schools  
February 10, 2026 (New York, NY)*

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**LAURA D. BARBIERI, PLLC**



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This white paper analyzes governance of New York City Public Schools (NYCPS), with emphasis on the State-law system commonly referred to as “mayoral control” (or “mayoral governance”). The current authorization, last extended in the FY2025 New York State budget, expires on June 30, 2026.<sup>1</sup>

**Decision question for the administration:** What governance model should New York City advocate for in Albany ahead of the June 2026 renewal, and what reforms can be implemented immediately (administratively) versus through state legislation?

**Recommendation (February 2026):** Seek renewal of mayoral governance in 2026, but pair it with a concrete, legislatively specified reform package that strengthens checks and balances (especially around the Panel for Educational Policy), expands structured community participation, and increases transparency. In parallel, launch near-term administrative “co-governance” pilots that do not require statutory change, and create a time-bound governance commission to design longer-term structural options (including elected or hybrid board pathways) for consideration in the next renewal window.

This recommendation reflects both the operational reality that the mayor is the public official most directly held responsible for the school system, and the widespread demand — documented in the 2024 NYSED review and public testimony — for additional representation, community voice, and guardrails.<sup>2</sup>

It is also consistent with the Mayor’s publicly reported shift: after campaigning to end mayoral control “in its current iteration,” Mayor Zohran Mamdani signaled just before taking office that he would ask the Legislature to continue mayoral control, while pursuing reforms.<sup>3</sup>

### Verified facts at a glance (as of February 2026)

NYCPS enrolled 906,248 students in 2024–25 and operated 1,597 NYCPS schools (charter schools are separately counted).<sup>4</sup>

The PEP is a 24-member voting body: 13 mayoral appointees, 5 borough president appointees, 5 selected by Community Education Council (CEC) presidents (one per borough), and 1 independent member serving as chair selected by the mayor; the Chancellor and City Comptroller are non-voting ex officio members.<sup>5</sup>

NYSED’s 2024 statewide review found that NYC’s model grants the most power to the mayor among the comparable systems reviewed, and that most public testimony called for reforms increasing representation, community input, and shared decision-making.<sup>6</sup>

### Renewal timeline and legislative reality



Because mayoral governance is established in New York State Education Law, any extension or structural change requires action by the State Legislature and the Governor. To avoid a governance lapse, Albany must act before June 30, 2026. Major structural transitions (e.g., elected-board systems) typically require multi-year phase-in (Chicago is a current example).<sup>7</sup>

**What Albany needs to pass (minimum viable package)**

An extension of the mayoral governance authorization past June 30, 2026 (duration to be negotiated).

If reforms are pursued: statutory amendments specifying PEP chair selection/terms/removal protections, transparency requirements, and any changes to appointment shares or voting rules.

If longer-term redesign is pursued: statutory authorization for a commission and a phased transition plan (including election administration if an elected component is adopted).

**1. PURPOSE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY**

**Purpose.** This paper is designed to support near-term decision-making by the Mamdani Administration on the 2026 Albany renewal of mayoral governance, and to inform a broader reform agenda aimed at improving democratic legitimacy, checks and balances, and stakeholder participation in NYCPS governance.

**Scope.** The analysis focuses on: (a) the statutory governance structure created in 2002 and amended through subsequent renewals; (b) the current roles of the Mayor, Chancellor, Panel for Educational Policy (PEP), and Community Education Councils (CECs); (c) the evidence base on governance structures and educational outcomes; and (d) comparative governance models in peer urban districts.

**Methodology and sources.** To verify factual claims, this paper prioritizes primary sources where available — particularly the NYSED 2024 Final Report on mayoral control and the NYCPS PEP bylaws. Additional verification relies on official NYC/peer-city government releases and reputable education reporting (e.g., Chalkbeat, City & State).<sup>8</sup>

**Limitations.** Governance structure is an enabling condition: it shapes incentives, accountability, and participation, but does not by itself determine student outcomes. Research also faces measurement challenges (assessment changes, cohort definitions, and

shifting graduation requirements), so this paper treats claims of causality cautiously and cites studies' own limitations.<sup>9</sup>

## 2. NYCPS AT A GLANCE: SCALE AND GOVERNANCE STAKES

NYCPS is the nation's largest school system. Its scale makes governance choices unusually consequential: even small changes in decision-making authority, procurement oversight, or community engagement can affect hundreds of thousands of students and thousands of staff.

Indicator (most recent available)	Value
Student enrollment (NYCPS, 2024–25)	906,248
NYCPS schools (2024–25)	1,597
Charter schools (NYC, 2024–25)	281 (separately governed)
Budget scale (recent years)	≈ \$40B DOE budget (definitions vary by fund sources)
Workforce scale	Over 150,000 employees (school-based and central)
Next statutory deadline	Mayoral governance authorization expires June 30, 2026

**Sources:** NYCPS Data at a Glance; NYCPS/IBO and education budget reporting; NYC DOE HR and oversight sources; NYS budget extension reporting.<sup>10</sup>

Leadership context. Mayor Zohran Mamdani took office on January 1, 2026, and appointed Kamar H. Samuels as Chancellor of NYCPS.<sup>11</sup>

## 3. CURRENT GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE (2026): WHO DECIDES WHAT

New York City's governance is a hybrid of city and state authority: the mayor leads the executive branch of city government and appoints the Chancellor, but the legal framework for school governance is set in State Education Law and must be renewed periodically.



### 3.1 Core actors and formal powers

Actor	Formal role (simplified)	Key decisions / levers
Mayor of New York City	Appoints the Chancellor; appoints a majority of the PEP; proposes the city budget; sets administration-wide priorities.	Systemwide agenda-setting; executive leadership; appointment power; fiscal and interagency coordination.
Chancellor (NYCPS)	Chief executive of NYCPS; implements policy; manages operations and personnel; proposes regulations and major initiatives to the PEP.	Day-to-day management; procurement and contracting; superintendent appointments; policy implementation.
Panel for Educational Policy (PEP)	The statutory citywide board that votes on key policies, contracts, and school actions.	Approves regulations and certain major decisions; provides oversight and a public voting forum.
Community Education Councils (CECs)	Borough/district-level advisory bodies with elected parent members; consult on zoning and other local issues.	Community feedback; limited formal authority; potential platform for structured co-governance reforms.

The PEP's voting membership and ex officio structure are defined in its bylaws. As of the current bylaws, the PEP has 24 voting members and two non-voting ex officio members (the Chancellor and the City Comptroller).<sup>12</sup>

#### **PEP composition (24 voting members):**

13 members appointed by the Mayor.

5 members appointed by borough presidents (one per borough).

5 members elected by CEC presidents (one per borough).

1 independent member who serves as chair, selected by the Mayor as set forth in state law and bylaws.

Non-voting ex officio members: the Chancellor and the NYC Comptroller.

Since the 2024 renewal, the selection of the PEP chair has incorporated an Albany-nomination step, with the Mayor selecting the chair from nominees put forward by state leaders. This change was intended to increase the chair's independence while preserving mayoral selection authority.<sup>13</sup>

### **3.2 What changed since the NYSED review**

NYSED's 2024 Final Report evaluated the governance structure largely as it existed prior to the FY2025 extension, when the PEP had 23 members. Because the Legislature later expanded the PEP to 24 and altered chair selection, the NYSED findings should be read as applying to the pre-extension baseline — though its core conclusions about concentrated mayoral authority and stakeholder demands for reform remain directly relevant.<sup>14</sup>

## **4. HISTORICAL CONTEXT: WHY MAYORAL CONTROL WAS ADOPTED (PRE-2002)**

The 2002 governance change did not emerge in a vacuum. It followed decades of debate over centralization versus decentralization, and recurring concerns about accountability, corruption, and community representation.

### **4.1 Pre-2002 governance in 10 high-level points**

1960s–early 1970s: community control movement responds to segregation and unequal schooling; Ocean Hill–Brownsville becomes a focal point for conflict over control and labor relations.<sup>15</sup>

1969: New York State enacts decentralization, creating 32 community school districts with elected community school boards (primarily for elementary and middle schools) and a central board for systemwide policy.

1970s–1990s: the decentralized system develops persistent concerns about low election turnout, political capture, and patronage.

1990s: repeated investigations and scandals intensify calls for reform and clearer accountability.

1996: state reforms reduce community boards' authority (including over superintendent selection), shifting additional power back to the Chancellor.

Late 1990s–2002: mayors seek stronger control, arguing that fragmented governance prevents coherent reform and accountability.

2002: the Legislature adopts mayoral governance; the Mayor appoints the Chancellor and a majority of the citywide board (later renamed the PEP).



2003–present: mayoral governance is renewed multiple times, typically with incremental amendments intended to increase transparency and representation.

Critiques persist: testimony and research raise concerns about democratic legitimacy, checks and balances, and meaningful community voice.

Renewal cycles create recurring uncertainty: governance authority depends on periodic state legislative action.

#### **4.2 Documented issues under decentralization**

NYSED’s historical review describes community school board elections as having “perennially low voter turnout and participation — never exceeding 10% of eligible voters,” alongside concerns about political capture and patronage. These issues were central to the political case for the 2002 shift.<sup>16</sup>

## **5. THE 2002 MAYORAL GOVERNANCE LAW AND ITS EVOLUTION**

### **5.1 2002 enactment: accountability through centralization**

In June 2002, New York State enacted a mayoral governance system for NYC schools. Core features included: (1) mayoral appointment of the Chancellor; (2) mayoral appointment of a majority of the citywide board (later called the PEP); and (3) a sunset mechanism requiring periodic legislative renewal.<sup>17</sup>

### **5.2 Early implementation and the “rubber stamp” critique**

A recurring critique of mayoral governance is that the PEP can function as a mechanism to ratify executive decisions rather than as an independent check. NYSED documents a prominent early example: in 2004, when several PEP members opposed a third-grade retention proposal tied to a single standardized test, Mayor Bloomberg removed and replaced members on the day of the vote, changing the expected outcome.<sup>18</sup>

This episode is often cited as evidence that appointment power can undermine the credibility of the PEP as an oversight body. At the same time, later renewals have attempted to introduce counterweights (e.g., expanding membership and adjusting chair selection).<sup>19</sup>

### **5.3 2024–2026 statutory window**

The FY2025 State budget extended mayoral governance through June 30, 2026 and made structural adjustments to the PEP. The 2026 renewal debate therefore must consider both:

(a) what the NYSED review found about the pre-2024 structure; and (b) whether the post-2024 changes have meaningfully addressed the most frequently raised concerns (representation, community voice, checks and balances).<sup>1</sup>

## **6. WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY ABOUT MAYORAL GOVERNANCE?**

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### **6.1 Student achievement: no consensus on causality**

Across the research literature reviewed by NYSED and other analysts, there is no consensus that any particular governance structure—by itself—causes sustained improvements in student performance. A major challenge is that reforms often coincide with other changes (funding, leadership, accountability systems), making it difficult to isolate governance as the driver.<sup>20</sup>

A Center for American Progress (CAP) study of 11 mayor-governed districts found positive associations in some cities with increased instructional spending and achievement gains, while results varied across districts; it did not establish a universal causal effect.<sup>21</sup>

Earlier Rutgers work similarly cautioned that improvements in some mayor-governed cities could not be conclusively attributed to governance changes.<sup>22</sup>

### **6.2 Resource management and implementation capacity**

Proponents argue that mayoral governance can improve implementation capacity by centralizing authority, aligning schools with other city services, and leveraging the mayor's political capital in budget negotiations. Critics counter that centralization can weaken local responsiveness and create risks of opaque decision-making if oversight mechanisms are weak.<sup>20</sup>

### **6.3 Equity and representation**

The NYSED review found that no governance structure is a panacea for longstanding inequities. Testimony repeatedly raised concerns about participation, representation, and the perception that community voices are not incorporated in consequential decisions.<sup>23</sup>

### **6.4 Accountability versus policy instability**

Mayoral governance clarifies top-line accountability (the mayor appoints the Chancellor and holds a majority on the citywide board), but it can also increase policy churn across administrations. NYSED testimony described fatigue with repeated shifts in priorities and curricula when leadership changes.<sup>23</sup>



**7. COMPARATIVE MODELS IN PEER CITIES (SELECTED)**

NYSED compared NYC’s governance to several large districts that have adopted—or considered—mayoral involvement. The most relevant lesson is not that one structure is inherently superior, but that other cities generally include additional checks (nominating panels, council confirmation, or elected seats) that NYC historically lacked.<sup>24</sup>

City	Board selection (simplified)	Chief executive selection	Recent direction / notes
New York City	24-member PEP: majority mayor-appointed; additional seats via borough presidents and CEC presidents; independent chair.	Mayor appoints Chancellor.	Renewal required by June 30, 2026; post-2024 reforms added chair independence mechanism.
Chicago	Hybrid board since Jan. 2025: 10 elected members plus mayor-appointed members including a board president (phased move toward fully elected by 2027).	CEO/leadership chosen under board governance; mayor retains appointment influence during hybrid phase.	Active transition away from full mayoral control; offers lessons on phasing and election administration.
Boston	Appointed school committee selected from nominees of a nominating panel (debate over elected committee continues).	Superintendent appointed under school committee governance.	Repeated efforts toward elected committee; mayor has resisted citing stability concerns.
Philadelphia	Mayor appoints board members with City Council advice/consent; nominating panel involved in vetting candidates.	Superintendent selected under board governance.	Illustrates mayoral influence plus legislative check through confirmation.



Washington, D.C.	Elected State Board of Education with limited scope; DCPS chancellor nominated by mayor and confirmed by DC Council.	Mayor appoints chancellor subject to council confirmation.	Example of formal confirmation as a check on executive appointment.
Los Angeles (LAUSD)	Elected school board (7 members) representing geographic districts.	Superintendent hired by elected board.	Frequently cited as model of elected governance in a very large district; mayor does not directly control schools.
Yonkers	Board of Education trustees appointed by the mayor.	Superintendent selected under board governance.	NYSED identifies Yonkers as among the most mayor-influenced systems after NYC.

**Sources:** NYCPS PEP bylaws; Chicago hybrid board reporting; Boston nominating panel materials and recent coverage; Philadelphia and D.C. confirmation documentation; LAUSD governance explainer; Yonkers city government page; NYSED comparative review.<sup>25</sup>

## **8. KEY ARGUMENTS: WHAT STAKEHOLDERS TYPICALLY CLAIM**

### **8.1 Arguments typically made in favor of mayoral governance**

Clear top-line accountability: voters can reward or punish the mayor for system performance.

Implementation capacity: centralized authority can execute systemwide initiatives across 1,500+ schools.

Interagency alignment: mayor can coordinate education policy with housing, health, youth services, and safety.

Political leverage: mayor can negotiate for funding and coordinate citywide budgeting decisions.

These claims are central to the original rationale for the 2002 shift and continue to be cited in renewal debates.<sup>17</sup>

## 8.2 Arguments typically made against mayoral governance

Democratic legitimacy concerns: community stakeholders may have limited direct representation in final decision-making.

Weak checks and balances: if the executive controls appointments and removals, the citywide board may lack independence.

One-size-fits-all policymaking: centralized rules may not fit neighborhood contexts across a diverse city.

Policy instability: mayoral transitions can lead to rapid, systemwide shifts in priorities (“whiplash”).

NYSED’s hearing record highlights widespread testimony seeking reforms that increase representation and shared decision-making rather than a wholesale return to the pre-2002 structure.<sup>23</sup>

## 9. POLICY OPTIONS FOR 2026: STRUCTURAL CHOICES AND TRADEOFFS

This section outlines realistic options for the June 2026 legislative session. Each option assumes compliance with State Education Law and recognizes that any redesign must be implemented without disrupting core operations (staffing, transportation, special education services, procurement, and budgeting).

### 9.1 Evaluation criteria

**Democratic legitimacy:** Does the model provide meaningful representation and voice for families, students, and educators?

**Accountability clarity:** Is it clear to the public who is responsible for outcomes and decisions?

**Implementation capacity:** Can the system make timely decisions and execute systemwide priorities?

**Checks and balances:** Are there credible constraints on unilateral decision-making?



**Feasibility by June 2026:** Can Albany enact the needed statutory changes in time?

**Transition risk:** What is the operational risk of disruption during implementation?

## 9.2 Options

### **Option A — Renew mayoral governance largely as-is, relying on administrative reforms**

Seek a straightforward extension while using executive/NYCPS actions to expand community engagement, improve transparency, and strengthen internal accountability without statutory change.

**Advantages:** Lowest statutory complexity; fastest in Albany.

**Risks/limitations:** Risks repeating legitimacy and oversight critiques; may not satisfy reform expectations.

### **Option B — Renew with a statutory ‘guardrails’ package (recommended baseline)**

Seek extension paired with specific legislative amendments: stronger PEP independence and removal protections, clearer transparency standards, and codified consultation requirements with CECs and parent/educator bodies.

**Advantages:** Balances stability with meaningful structural reform; directly responds to NYSED hearing themes.

**Risks/limitations:** Requires careful drafting and negotiation; partial reforms may be viewed as insufficient by some constituencies.

### **Option C — Short extension + time-bound commission (NYSED-aligned)**

Seek a one- or two-year extension and create a governance commission with a defined timeline, public process, and deliverables to propose longer-term models (including elections).

**Advantages:** Creates structured path for redesign; avoids rushed transition.

**Risks/limitations:** May be perceived as delaying; success depends on implementation and political follow-through.

### **Option D — Phased hybrid transition to an elected board (Chicago-style)**

Create a multi-year transition to a partially or fully elected board, with an interim hybrid phase that preserves some mayoral appointments while elections are built out.

**Advantages:** Directly increases democratic legitimacy; allows learning during hybrid phase.

**Risks/limitations:** High statutory and implementation complexity; requires election administration and clear fiscal/accountability rules.

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### **Option E — Statutory ‘co-governance’ model**

Codify shared decision-making by empowering existing bodies (CECs, SLTs, citywide councils) with defined authorities and resources, while retaining mayoral accountability for systemwide performance.

**Advantages:** Aligns with campaign language; could strengthen local voice without creating a fully separate elected board.

**Risks/limitations:** Concept requires precise definition to avoid accountability confusion; may still need multi-year phase-in.

### **9.3 Qualitative decision matrix**

The ratings below are qualitative (High/Medium/Low) and intended as a structured way to compare tradeoffs—not as empirical measurements.



Criteria	A: Renew as-is	B: Renew + guardrails	C: Short extension + commission	D: Hybrid elected transition	E: Co-governance statute
Democratic legitimacy	Low–Med	Med	Med	High	High (if well-designed)
Accountability clarity	High	High–Med	High (short-term)	Med	Med
Implementation capacity	High	High	High (short-term)	Med	Med
Checks and balances	Low–Med	Med–High	Med	High	Med–High
Feasibility by June 2026	High	Med	Med–High	Low–Med	Low–Med
Transition risk	Low	Low–Med	Low	High	Med–High

Chicago’s experience underscores that elected-board transitions are multi-year undertakings and can be complicated by fiscal stress; NYC should avoid a rushed approach in 2026 without a phased implementation plan.<sup>26</sup>

## **10. RECOMMENDED PATH FOR THE MAMDANI ADMINISTRATION (FEB–JUN 2026)**

### **10.1 Legislative strategy for Albany**

Given the June 30, 2026 sunset date, the administration should treat Albany action as a “must-pass” governance bill. A recommended legislative package would include (1) extension of mayoral governance and (2) targeted reforms that directly address the most widely cited deficiencies.<sup>1</sup>

### **Potential statutory reforms to include in a 2026 bill:**

PEP independence and legitimacy: codify removal protections and minimum notice standards; require written reasoning for removals and publicly posted ethics disclosures (within legal constraints).<sup>13</sup>

Transparency: statutory timelines for publishing PEP agendas, supporting materials, contracts, and voting records; clear standards for public comment and translation access.

Representation: evaluate whether the 13-seat mayoral bloc should remain constant or whether additional non-mayoral seats should be added in a way that preserves operational capacity.

Consultation requirements: codify a meaningful consultation process with CECs and other stakeholder bodies for zoning, school openings/closings, and major instructional reorganizations.

Independent oversight: strengthen the independence of the PEP chair role (building on the Albany nomination mechanism) and consider an inspector-general style reporting channel for governance-related complaints.

### **10.2 Administrative reforms that do not require Albany**

Even absent statutory change, the Mayor and Chancellor can implement reforms that strengthen legitimacy and participation. These are particularly important if Albany negotiations limit statutory reform scope.

Publish a standing annual governance calendar: key decision points, PEP votes, budget milestones, and community consultation windows.

Create a public “decision log” for major systemwide initiatives: what decision is being made, who is consulted, what data is used, and when it will be revisited.

Standardize community impact statements for major actions (openings/closings, zoning changes, and large procurement contracts).

Launch co-governance pilots in selected districts: structured shared decision-making forums linking superintendents, CECs, principals, educators, and student representatives.

Invest in translation and participation infrastructure for PEP and CEC meetings to reduce barriers to engagement.



### 10.3 Operational timeline (recommended)

Timeframe	Albany/legislation	NYCPS/administration actions
Feb–Mar 2026	Draft bill language; align with legislative sponsors; brief borough presidents and key stakeholder coalitions.	Announce governance reform agenda; begin data/agenda transparency upgrades; establish co-governance pilot design team.
Apr–May 2026	Negotiate reforms and extension duration; finalize chair/PEP provisions; prepare contingency plans.	Pilot consultations with CECs on major spring/summer decisions; publish first governance dashboard.
Jun 2026	Pass extension and reforms before June 30; secure Governor signature.	Prepare implementation guidance; update PEP/CEC training and public materials; launch pilots in summer planning window.
Fall 2026–Spring 2027	If commission authorized, staff it and set public schedule.	Evaluate pilot outcomes; propose additional statutory changes as needed for next renewal window.

## 11. RISK MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

### 11.1 If Albany does not act by June 30, 2026

A lapse in state authorization would create immediate governance uncertainty—including questions about the legal status of Chancellor authority, the PEP’s voting powers, and the continuity of contracts and regulations. The administration should maintain a contingency plan (legal review, continuity procedures, and stakeholder communications) even while prioritizing passage of an extension.<sup>1</sup>

## **11.2 Communications principles for a reform package**

Lead with student outcomes and service continuity: governance should be framed as a means to improve learning conditions and delivery capacity.<sup>23</sup>

Acknowledge legitimate critique: explicitly address the “rubber stamp” concern by describing concrete checks and transparency commitments.

Separate “what requires Albany” from “what we can do now”: publish a clear roadmap so stakeholders can track progress.

Avoid false binaries: many stakeholders want reforms rather than a wholesale return to pre-2002 governance; message accordingly.

Commit to measurable governance improvements (participation, transparency, decision timelines).

## **12. CONCLUSION**

The June 2026 renewal is a high-stakes governance decision with limited time for structural redesign. The strongest near-term strategy is therefore a dual-track approach: renew mayoral governance to preserve operational continuity and clear accountability, while enacting meaningful checks, transparency, and participation reforms that respond to the concerns documented in the NYSED review and public testimony.<sup>2</sup>

If the administration wishes to pursue a more transformative model — such as an elected or hybrid board — NYC should follow Chicago’s lesson: do not rush. Instead, legislate a phased transition, build election and governance infrastructure, and ensure fiscal and operational safeguards.<sup>26</sup>



## **APPENDIX A. DETAILED NOTES ON NYC GOVERNANCE HISTORY (SELECTED)**

This appendix provides additional detail for readers who want a deeper historical narrative beyond the “History in 10 points” summary in Section 4. The primary source is the NYSED 2024 Final Report.<sup>17</sup>

Decentralization (1969) created 32 community school districts; NYSED reports that community school board election turnout “never exceed[ed] 10%” of eligible voters in many years, contributing to legitimacy concerns.<sup>16</sup>

1996 reforms reduced community boards’ authority, including changes related to superintendent selection, signaling an earlier move back toward centralization even before 2002.<sup>15</sup>

The 2004 third-grade retention episode remains a key illustration of how appointment/removal power can influence PEP voting outcomes.<sup>18</sup>

## **APPENDIX B. DETROIT CASE STUDY (WHY TRANSITIONS NEED SAFEGUARDS)**

Detroit is frequently cited as a cautionary example of how governance change intersects with fiscal and political instability. After periods of state and mayoral involvement, the district returned to elected governance for the Detroit Public Schools Community District beginning in 2017, with the newly created district separated from legacy debt obligations.<sup>27</sup>

Key lesson for NYC: if governance is redesigned, statutory clarity on fiscal responsibility, oversight, and transition authority is essential to prevent gaps in decision-making and accountability.



**FOOTNOTES**

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Thank you Chair Dinowitz, and the Education Committee for holding this hearing. My name is Aimee Rosato. I am a parent of two students in District 30 in Queens.

I urge you to move towards a more democratic governance model of NYC public schools.

I will forever be bitter that my children's Early Childhood experience was designed and controlled by the private equity company that pioneered the extractive Leveraged Buyout corporate takeover strategy (KKR). When I signed my oldest child up for Pre-K, I thought I was getting the more culturally responsive DECE-designed Early Childhood curriculum; this shows a lack of respect for families as we aren't able to make informed decisions about our children's education. Now with NYC Reads, I am literally stuck with a reading curriculum I do not like or agree with, and that's my only option.

I am a huge believer in public schools, but I'm seeking private educational options because I think that keeping my children in a school system that forces all families to use a curriculum that centers test-prep style passages will be harmful to their personal and academic development in the long run. Where are the books? Why is history and science education sidelined for triple literacy periods?! A one-size fits all curriculum strategy does not meet the needs of all students, I say this as a former special education teacher with a Masters from Bank Street College of Education who taught students with language-based learning disabilities.

We need to end mayoral control of public schools and immediately start the planning process to help NYCPS move to a more democratic governance model.

We want a truly democratic system where there are structures that allow for both local and centralized decision making that meet the needs of multiple stakeholders across our school district.

Thank you.

Thank you Chair Dinowitz, and the Education Committee for holding this hearing. My name is Alisa Diallo. I am a Paraprofessional.

I am submitting testimony to urge you to work with the Mayor to establish a commission of parents, educators, students, advocates, experts, and researchers – to engage communities in designing a truly democratic school governance system to replace mayoral control.

Mayoral control has repeatedly failed communities -even under “progressive” leadership. Mayors continue to get away with decisions that harm New York City youth, parents, and communities because parents, youth, and community members don't have control over our schools i.e. budget cuts, creating more charter schools, closing and schools.

Without shared decision-making, budgets ignore community needs, policies are disconnected from school realities and implementation is less than optimal. Whereas, democratic governance ensures transparency, accountability and community ownership.

We demand a truly democratic system that empowers students, parents, and educators. Community leadership must be respected, resourced, and sustained, not tokenized. This system must include:

1. Real decision-making authority for parents, students, and educators
2. Access to training, data, and support to participate meaningfully
3. Structures that allow/require some centralized decision making, while also ensuring that there is an effective relationship established between local and centralized decision-making.
4. Even citywide decisions should have a local mechanism for feedback and implementation planning.

Thank you.

Thank you Chair Dinowitz, and the Education Committee for holding this hearing. My name is Cecilia Durbin. I'm a parent at PS69Q.

I'm writing today to urge you to work with Mayor Mamdani to establish a commission of parents, educators, students, advocates, experts, and researchers – to engage communities in designing a truly democratic school governance system to replace mayoral control.

Mayoral control encourages a focus on short term politically attractive solutions rather than allowing communities to address what's happening in each hyper-locality. Parents feel disengaged from the current system because they have been dis-empowered.

The top down system of Mayoral control does not have the same accountability as having local controls who must directly address the needs of the parents in front of them. Mayors continue to get away with decisions that harm New York City youth, parents, and communities because parents, youth, and community members don't have control over our schools i.e. Metal detectors, police in schools, bulletproof vests, budget cuts, reversal of integration policies, reversal of CRSE mosaic, creating more charter schools, closing schools, and instituting merit pay for teachers.

We demand a truly democratic system that empowers students, parents, and educators. Community leadership must be respected, resourced, and sustained, not tokenized. This system must include:

1. Real decision-making authority for parents, students, and educators
2. Access to training, data, and support to participate meaningfully
3. Structures that allow/require some centralized decision making, while also ensuring that there is an effective relationship established between local and centralized decision-making.
4. Even citywide decisions should have a local mechanism for feedback and implementation planning.

Thank you.

NYC, February 10, 2026

Chair and Members of the Education Committee,

My name is Dr. Darling J. Miramey, an NYC public school educator, multilingual learner parent, and former member of CEC 3, CEC 14, CCELL, and the Panel for Educational Policy.

For years, I have worked with City agencies documenting how a \$40 billion education system still delivers math proficiency to only about half of students overall—and to barely a third of English Language Learners. My testimony is not abstract; it comes from sitting with families.

These days, with universal child care, families across New York City gain another layer of support every day. At the same time, we must be honest that there is no such thing as a “universal” student. Our children come with different languages, disabilities, traumas, talents, immigration histories, and community realities—and any governance system that treats them as a single, abstract “average child” will continue to fail those who need the most from our schools.

Over the last two decades, mayoral control has brought clear lines of authority and faster decision-making at the top. When it works, the public knows exactly who is responsible for school outcomes, and the system can move quickly on major initiatives like pre-K, 3-K, and now universal child care. But from the ground level—from classrooms, CEC meetings, and multilingual family forums—we see the limits of this model when it comes to equity. Too often, communities affected by co-locations, program closures, and contract decisions are informed after the fact, rather than engaged before decisions are made. Too often, legal obligations to English Language Learners and students with disabilities are treated as technical compliance issues instead of non-negotiable commitments.

Right now, we are trapped in a kind of governance limbo. We have just enough mayoral control for one person to be “in charge” when it is time to cut ribbons or announce new initiatives—but not enough independent power and expertise to protect students and families when things go wrong. At the same time, we do not have a fully realized alternative: no strong independent board with guaranteed representation, no robust community-driven structure with real budget and policy powers. We are living with both “mayoral control” and “not mayoral control” at the same time—centralized authority without matching, enforceable checks and balances.

You are effectively weighing three paths.

First, renewing mayoral control “as is,” which preserves speed and clarity at the top but leaves us with the same weak protections for the children furthest from opportunity. Second, ending mayoral control and moving to a traditional, more independent board

model, which might increase representation but risks fragmentation, slower reforms, and unclear accountability.

Third, a conditional renewal with real structural reforms, which keeps a single point of responsibility while hard-wiring equity, transparency, and shared power into the system. I believe the third path is the most responsible and realistic option for New York City at this moment.

A reformed, conditional version of mayoral control should rest on major pillars:

**1. Hard accountability for outcomes**, including for multilingual learners and other high-need groups: public, disaggregated data at the school level; independent monitoring of legal compliance; and clear consequences for leadership when students are systematically denied required services.

**2. Real parent and community power:** reserved seats and voting rights for parents—including parents of ELL and special education students—on the central board; multilingual hearings before major decisions; and formal, enforceable roles for Community Education Councils beyond symbolic consultation.

**3. Fiscal transparency and professional oversight:** an independent, trained oversight body with the expertise and protection to question contracts, budgets, and policies, and a public system that links dollars to student results in plain language.

This is not about being “for” or “against” the Mayor. It is about matching our governance structure to the reality of our students. If you choose to renew mayoral control, do so only with conditions that center those students who have been consistently left behind: multilingual learners, students with disabilities, students in temporary housing, and others whose outcomes tell the real story of our system. If those protections cannot be secured, then it is your responsibility to begin building a new governance model that distributes power more fairly and makes room for the voices that have been missing.

Our children cannot wait for another temporary extension and another round of the same debate. They need you to move us out of this “in-between” and into a structure that acknowledges what you already know from your own districts: there is no universal child. There are only real, diverse, human students—and they deserve a system of governance that sees them, listens to them, and is accountable to them every single year—not just when a law comes up for renewal.

Sincerely,

**Dr. Darling James Miramey**

606 W 57th St, Apt 1709

New York, NY 10019

[dz@miramey.com](mailto:dz@miramey.com)

NYC, February 10, 2026

Chair and Members of the Education Committee,

My name is Dr. Darling J. Miramey, an NYC public school educator, multilingual learner parent, and former member of CEC 3, CEC 14, CCELL, and the Panel for Educational Policy.

For years, I have worked with City agencies documenting how a \$40 billion education system still delivers math proficiency to only about half of students overall—and to barely a third of English Language Learners. My testimony is not abstract; it comes from sitting with families.

These days, with universal child care, families across New York City gain another layer of support every day. At the same time, we must be honest that there is no such thing as a “universal” student. Our children come with different languages, disabilities, traumas, talents, immigration histories, and community realities—and any governance system that treats them as a single, abstract “average child” will continue to fail those who need the most from our schools.

Over the last two decades, mayoral control has brought clear lines of authority and faster decision-making at the top. When it works, the public knows exactly who is responsible for school outcomes, and the system can move quickly on major initiatives like pre-K, 3-K, and now universal child care. But from the ground level—from classrooms, CEC meetings, and multilingual family forums—we see the limits of this model when it comes to equity. Too often, communities affected by co-locations, program closures, and contract decisions are informed after the fact, rather than engaged before decisions are made. Too often, legal obligations to English Language Learners and students with disabilities are treated as technical compliance issues instead of non-negotiable commitments.

Right now, we are trapped in a kind of governance limbo. We have just enough mayoral control for one person to be “in charge” when it is time to cut ribbons or announce new initiatives—but not enough independent power and expertise to protect students and families when things go wrong. At the same time, we do not have a fully realized alternative: no strong independent board with guaranteed representation, no robust community-driven structure with real budget and policy powers. We are living with both “mayoral control” and “not mayoral control” at the same time—centralized authority without matching, enforceable checks and balances.

You are effectively weighing three paths.

First, renewing mayoral control “as is,” which preserves speed and clarity at the top but leaves us with the same weak protections for the children furthest from opportunity. Second, ending mayoral control and moving to a traditional, more independent board

model, which might increase representation but risks fragmentation, slower reforms, and unclear accountability.

Third, a conditional renewal with real structural reforms, which keeps a single point of responsibility while hard-wiring equity, transparency, and shared power into the system. I believe the third path is the most responsible and realistic option for New York City at this moment.

A reformed, conditional version of mayoral control should rest on major pillars:

**1. Hard accountability for outcomes**, including for multilingual learners and other high-need groups: public, disaggregated data at the school level; independent monitoring of legal compliance; and clear consequences for leadership when students are systematically denied required services.

**2. Real parent and community power:** reserved seats and voting rights for parents—including parents of ELL and special education students—on the central board; multilingual hearings before major decisions; and formal, enforceable roles for Community Education Councils beyond symbolic consultation.

**3. Fiscal transparency and professional oversight:** an independent, trained oversight body with the expertise and protection to question contracts, budgets, and policies, and a public system that links dollars to student results in plain language.

This is not about being “for” or “against” the Mayor. It is about matching our governance structure to the reality of our students. If you choose to renew mayoral control, do so only with conditions that center those students who have been consistently left behind: multilingual learners, students with disabilities, students in temporary housing, and others whose outcomes tell the real story of our system. If those protections cannot be secured, then it is your responsibility to begin building a new governance model that distributes power more fairly and makes room for the voices that have been missing.

Our children cannot wait for another temporary extension and another round of the same debate. They need you to move us out of this “in-between” and into a structure that acknowledges what you already know from your own districts: there is no universal child. There are only real, diverse, human students—and they deserve a system of governance that sees them, listens to them, and is accountable to them every single year—not just when a law comes up for renewal.

Sincerely,

**Dr. Darling James Miramey**

[REDACTED]

New York, NY 10019

[REDACTED]

Testimony to the NYC Council on Mayoral Control  
Diane Ravitch  
February 10, 2026

The time has come to rethink the governance of the New York City public schools.

Mayoral control in its present form was enacted by the Legislature in 2002, at the behest of newly elected mayor Michael Bloomberg.

The Legislature was no doubt dazzled by Mayor Bloomberg. He was and is an amazing businessman and who built an iconic technology-media corporation.

To think that this titan of American business was willing to take responsibility for the school system was an exciting prospect.

What is more, the Mayor boldly said that he could fix the schools. He projected confidence. He believed, and he was convincing.

The Legislature gave him an unprecedented level of control over the system. The Mayor would appoint the majority of a new board, which he called the Panel on Education Policy, its name a signal of its powerlessness. Members appointed by Bloomberg served at his pleasure, not with a fixed term. This arrangement eliminated any likelihood that his appointees would exercise independent judgment. On the rare occasion that they did, he fired them.

And of course, the legislation gave Bloomberg to pick anyone he wanted as Chancellor.

For Chancellor, Bloomberg appointed a lawyer, Joel Klein, who had no experience as an educator or an administrator.

Klein spent 8 1/2 years as Chancellor.

During the 12 years of the Bloomberg mayoralty, there were many changes--the dissolution of large high schools, the creation of scores of small schools, the opening of charter schools, the imposition of a standardized citywide curriculum in math and science, the launch of a Leadership Academy to train new principals, a heavy emphasis on standardized testing to judge students, teachers, principals and schools.

Schools received A-F grades, based on whether their test scores went up or down. Schools were closed if their scores were persistently low. Test scores were everything.

When Klein left on the first day of 2011, the Mayor appointed a retired magazine publisher who had no relevant experience. That didn't work. After 3 months, she was gone.

While there was much breathless reporting about a "New York City Miracle," there was no miracle. New York City's public schools are not a paragon for other cities to follow.

The problems of educating New York City's public school children have not been solved.

Mayoral control in the administrations of DiBlasio and Adams continues to reflect the inherent flaws of the concentration of power in the hands of the Mayor.

If we step back for a minute, the nation is now experiencing a Presidency in which almost all power resides in one person: the President. Surrounded by a servile Cabinet, a Congress whose majority supinely obeys almost every Presidential order, and a Supreme Court with a sympathetic majority, Americans can see daily the dangers of a government that has no checks and balances.

The New York City public school system is no different. Checks and balances are necessary. Presently, there are none.

Top-down management with no checks and balances is especially inappropriate for the school system. Parents and communities feel that they have no voice, and they are right.

The truth is that there is no organizational structure that is perfect. Mayoral control has been tried for nearly a quarter-century. We now know that it has multiple flaws.

Some adjustment is needed now.

I propose reviving the Board of Education. Every borough should be represented on that Board. The Board should select the Chancellor who reports to the Board on a regular basis. The Board should be composed of people devoted to improving the public schools--either as educators or community advocates. They should know the schools and school leaders in their borough. They should regularly attend meetings of local school boards. They should serve for a set term and should be free to exercise their independent judgment. They should receive a salary for their time, so that their service on the Board is properly compensated. It would be a full-time position.

Clearly, the Mayor has a large stake in the schools. He or she should have representatives (but not a majority) on a reconstructed Board of Education.

The Mayor's ultimate power is that he or she controls the budget.

Will such an arrangement solve all problems? No. But it will create a structure where parents and communities have a voice and are heard. The Board, when choosing a Chancellor, should select an experienced educator, whether chosen from the city or from another school system.

There will still be controversies. It's inevitable. Over funding. Over building new classrooms to meet the requirement to reduce class sizes. Over charter schools. Over admissions to gifted programs and selective schools. Over racial segregation in a system whose students are overwhelmingly Hispanic, Black, and Asian.

The Mayor--every Mayor--has a full plate of issues to deal with: economic development, public safety, transportation, natural disasters, building codes, public health, housing, and much, much more. He doesn't have time to run the school system.

Create a stable and democratic structure.

Diane Ravitch, Historian

**From:** [Effi Zakry](#)  
**To:** [Testimony](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Effi Zakry's testimony re Mayoral Control - Feb 2026  
**Date:** Monday, February 16, 2026 12:04:26 AM

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Good morning, Chair Dinowitz and esteemed members of the Education Committee.

I am Effi Zakry, and I am here to share insights gained from serving two full terms on the PEP. I was elected by **parents** to this position, rather than appointed by the Mayor or borough president—a distinction that provided me with a unique vantage point on our school system.

When we discuss "Mayoral Control," we are fundamentally discussing the **composition and functionality** of the PEP. As a recent member, I have witnessed the inner dynamics of the Panel firsthand and believe there is a clear path toward meaningful improvement.

While Albany revisits this issue every few years, the conversation often becomes political and the necessary reforms are deferred. However, establishing a robust mechanism for **checks and balances** is imperative, regardless of who resides in City Hall. Nevertheless, the Mayor should remain accountable as the head of the executive branch. Returning to the old local school board system that was rife with corruption and inefficiency is certainly not the answer.

To make the Panel more effective, I propose the following:

- **Streamline Membership:** The PEP has become unwieldy. The recent increase in the number of members has made it difficult to achieve a quorum, particularly at BERS meetings. Here, bigger is not better. I recommend a leaner body consisting of **5 parent representatives** and **6 mayoral appointees**— 11 in total.
- **Ensure Direct Representation:** Parent representatives—one from each borough to reflect their unique needs—should be elected **directly** by parents using a process similar to CCHS elections.
- **Prioritize Experience:** At least four of the six mayoral appointees should be parents who have had a child in the public school system within the last five years and have served on an education council. These should be individuals with "boots on the ground" experience, not political appointments.
- **Protect Independence:** All members should serve fixed two-year terms and be

protected from removal without due process.

The PEP must serve as a functional check and balance for our students. I would be happy to share more suggestions and details with the Committee at a later time.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

## Virtual Testimony for the New York City Council

### Re: Strengthening Accountability and Family Engagement in NYC Public Schools

Good morning, Chair and Members of the Council. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

My name is Evan Stone. I am a former NYC public school teacher, the founder and CEO of Educators for Excellence—representing over 18,000 NYC teachers—and a parent of a pre-K student at PS 9 in Brooklyn. I come to this issue as a former teacher, union member, advocate, organizer, and parent, shaped by nearly 20 years working in and alongside NYC public schools.

Based on that experience, I believe **mayoral control is essential to creating an effective, well-funded and equitable school system**—and that weakening it would not be a neutral change. It would jeopardize funding progress, instructional improvement in reading and math, and implementation of the class law. It would also make an effective rollout of 2-care much more challenging as it was essential to Universal Pre-K and 3K.

**First, on funding - since the start of mayoral control, New York City's share of public school funding has increased by roughly 15 percentage points, reversing decades of flat local investment.** Before mayoral control, the city's contribution to the total NYCPS budget hovered in the mid-40 percent range; today, city dollars make up close to **60 percent of total education funding**, with the brief exception of the COVID years when one-time federal aid temporarily inflated the federal share. This shift did not happen because NYC Public Schools gained taxing authority—they still cannot raise revenue—but because governance and accountability were aligned and now the mayor, who can raise revenue was responsible for the schools.

This pattern is **unique among New York State's Big Five districts**. In Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, and Yonkers—where schools are governed by independent boards—the local share of funding has remained flat or declined, and districts have become increasingly dependent on the state. There, mayors can deflect responsibility and school boards lack fiscal power. In NYC, parents and the City Council know exactly who to hold accountable - and we have!

**Mayor Adams' tenure demonstrates how this accountability works.** When education cuts were proposed, families, educators, and Council members directed pressure squarely at the mayor—and it worked. The administration reversed course, increased city funding in subsequent budgets, added money mid-year to address emerging needs, and chose to hold schools harmless even as enrollment declined. A mayor who was not accountable for the school system would not have made those choices, in fact he would have left the cuts up to a board who wouldn't have an option to raise additional revenue.

But accountability alone is not enough. Today, too many families feel excluded from decision-making. Only two percent of eligible families vote in Community Education Council elections—not because parents don't care, but because our engagement structures are inaccessible and outdated.

We can fix this without dismantling mayoral control. Parents need **real power, inclusive engagement, and transparency**, delivered through mobile-first, multilingual systems that meet families where they are. This includes adequately resourcing Community Education Councils, modernizing elections and information access, strengthening Parent University, and using universal childcare as an entry point for continuous family engagement.

Through collaborative discussion with the advocacy community, eight high-impact reforms have emerged that address these challenges simultaneously. I will highlight them each briefly:

1. Indexed budgets totaling approximately \$90 million annually for Community Education Councils to run participatory processes;
2. School-based, mobile, and online voting for CEC and PEP elections;
3. A unified, mobile-first hub with governance information and opt-in text alerts;
4. A major overhaul of the P311 system with a transparent public dashboard for tracking complaints and response times;
5. Revitalizing Parent University to align directly with NYC Reads, NYC Solves, and Student Pathways
6. Leveraging universal childcare to launch continuous, culturally responsive family engagement strategies;
7. Establishing baseline operating budgets for PTAs so engagement does not depend on parent wealth;
8. And creating hyperlocal engagement structures, such as mobile engagement vans, that bring listening, information, and participation directly into communities.

**Strong leadership and strong community voice are not in tension.** Preserving mayoral control while modernizing engagement is how New York City can deliver both accountability and democracy—for every family.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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Written Testimony for the New York City Council

Re: Strengthening Accountability and Family Engagement in NYC Public Schools

Good morning, Chair and Members of the Council. Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony on the governance and family engagement structures of the New York City Public School system.

My name is Evan Stone and I am a former 6th grade teacher and the founder and CEO of Educators for Excellence or E4E. E4E is a network of over 18,000 classroom teachers in NYC. Our work launched out of my 6th grade classroom at PS 86 in the Bronx to give teachers a more active voice in education policy. This testimony is based on my own lived experience over

the last nearly 20 years working in and studying NYC public schools and representative of thousands of conversations I have had with teachers across NYC about Mayoral Control of Schools over this same time period. I am also a parent of a pre-K student at PS9 in Brooklyn and so bring the perspective of a former teacher, a union member, an advocate, an organizer, and a parent to this conversation.

From all of my experiences I believe that Mayoral Control of schools is critical to improving services for students across the city. That doesn't mean it can't be improved. It can and I will share some key ways to make it better. But first, I want to make clear that moving away from a coherent and aligned accountability system towards a fragmented governance structure would be not be a neutral decision, it would be devastating for the progress we have made towards a better funded, more equitable education system and to the positive shifts we are making to improve reading and math instruction across the city. Additionally, it would make the implementation of the class size law, which is already improbable, almost impossible.

The first thing I want to discuss is funding:

Since the start of mayoral control, New York City's share of public school funding has increased by roughly 10–15 percentage points, reversing decades of flat local investment and making City Hall the true locus of responsibility for education funding. Before mayoral control, the city's contribution hovered in the mid-40 percent range; today, city dollars account for close to 60 percent of total public education spending, with the temporary exception of the COVID years when one-time federal aid briefly inflated the federal share. This growth did not occur because NYC Public Schools gained new revenue authority—they still cannot raise a single dollar on their own—but because governance and accountability were aligned. Importantly, this pattern is unique among New York State's Big Five districts. In Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, and Yonkers—where schools are governed by independent boards—the local share of funding has remained flat or declined over the same period, with districts becoming increasingly dependent on state aid. In those cities, mayors can deflect responsibility, school boards lack taxing power, and local investment stagnates.

Mayor Adams' tenure shows how this accountability functions in practice—and why it matters for parents and the City Council. When his administration proposed education cuts, families, educators, and Council members directed their advocacy squarely at the mayor, because they knew he was responsible for both outcomes and funding. That pressure worked. The mayor reversed course, increased city funding in subsequent budgets, repeatedly added money during the fiscal year to address emerging needs, and chose to hold schools harmless even as enrollment declined—absorbing costs at the city level rather than forcing cuts into classrooms. Those decisions were not inevitable; they were the product of a governance structure that made the mayor politically accountable. If mayoral control were weakened or undone, that leverage would disappear. A mayor could point to an independent school board, the board could point to its lack of revenue-raising authority, and parents and the City Council would lose their most effective pathway for securing city investment in public education.

The increases in city funding and having aligned governance have been critical to the rollout of UPK, universal 3K, NYC reads, NYC Solves, paying for the lowering of class sizes, and adding significant equity to the funding formula, which is now the most progressive funding formula in the country accounting for student needs, concentrations of needs, and students in temporary housing. None of this would have been able to be funded or rolled out at the pace and scale of NYC without an aligned funding and governance system.

However, accountability alone is not sufficient. A system can be centralized and still fail families if community voice is weak, inaccessible, or symbolic. Today, too many parents feel unheard, confused, and unable to influence the decisions that impact their children. For example, only two percent of eligible families participate in Community Education Council elections. That statistic is not evidence that families are disengaged; instead, it is a compelling signal that our current structures are failing to meet families where they are, and in turn, erasing their voice.

Parents today are navigating urgent, real-world challenges: securing services for students with disabilities, addressing safety concerns, advocating for academic support, and managing transitions across schools and grade levels. These challenges are especially acute for families experiencing housing insecurity, those working multiple jobs, families with limited digital access, and families who speak languages beyond English. Governance systems that rely on desktop websites, opaque processes, inconvenient meeting times, and unpaid volunteer labor systemically exclude the very families who most need to be heard.

Unified accountability does not need to come at the expense of authentic community voice. New York City families have repeatedly demonstrated their capacity to organize, advocate, and lead, whether demanding culturally responsive curriculum, fighting for equitable resources, or holding the system accountable for failures. The question before us is not whether to preserve or dismantle existing governance structures; instead, the question is whether we will finally modernize them so that they work for every family.

We already have a powerful example of what modern engagement can look like. The Mamdani campaign showed what is possible when institutions meet people where they are. It mobilized over 100,000 volunteers, knocked on more than 1.6 million doors, and built authentic connections across every community in this city. Engagement did not happen only in formal settings - it happened in taxi lines, bodegas, community centers, and public spaces. Notably, it relied on mobile-first, multilingual platforms and treated participation as something to be designed for real life, not ideal conditions.

That same approach must now be applied to family engagement in our school system.

The moment to act is now. The administration's signature initiative - bringing free, high-quality childcare for every New Yorker from six weeks to five years old - will bring hundreds of thousands of families into the education system earlier than ever before. This presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build coherent, continuous family engagement from the very start of a child's educational journey.

When families enter the New York City Public School system, whether at six weeks, 3K, Pre-K, or later, they should immediately be connected to other families, educators, and peer networks. It is the responsibility of the City to ensure that all families understand the decision-making processes, lines of accountability, and avenues for meaningful participation in their students' education. Families must see that the system works, and how; who is accountable, and structurally, how they are empowered to influence decisions. Most importantly, engagement must be continuous, not episodic, with intentional annual touchpoints for every family.

To make this vision real, reforms must address three interconnected priorities.

Parents need real power, not symbolic participation. Community Education Councils must have clear jurisdictions, adequate resources, and accessible pathways for families to escalate concerns when the system fails to respond. Without vesting this authority in the Community Education Councils, democratic decision-making is incomplete. This council should fight to give community education councils substantial resources through a 90 million allocation, that is allocated based on the same calculations in the fair student funding formula and then be used for a participatory process in each district.

In addition, community engagement within school governance must be inclusive and work for all families; barriers such as lack of childcare, limited translation, inaccessible websites, and inconvenient meeting times must be actively removed.

Finally, transparency. Families deserve clear information about how the system works, where decisions are made, who is responsible for responding, and what recourse exists when responses do not come. Transparency is what turns accountability from a promise into a practice, and over time, creates the necessary foundation of trust, and true accountability.

Underlying all three of these priorities is a non-negotiable reality: New York City parents are mobile-first. One in four households lacks home internet, and many rely exclusively on cellular data. In the Bronx, those figures are even higher. Desktop-oriented systems and in-person-only processes exclude families by design. Any reform serious about making an impact must be mobile-first.

Through collaborative discussion with the advocacy community, eight high-impact reforms have emerged that address these challenges simultaneously. I will highlight them each briefly:

1. Indexed budgets totaling approximately \$90 million annually for Community Education Councils to run participatory processes;
2. School-based, mobile, and online voting for CEC and PEP elections;
3. A unified, mobile-first hub with governance information and opt-in text alerts;
4. A major overhaul of the P311 system with a transparent public dashboard for tracking complaints and response times;

5. Revitalizing Parent University to align directly with NYC Reads, NYC Solves, and Student Pathways
6. Leveraging universal childcare to launch continuous, culturally responsive family engagement strategies;
7. Establishing baseline operating budgets for PTAs so engagement does not depend on parent wealth;
8. And creating hyperlocal engagement structures, such as mobile engagement vans, that bring listening, information, and participation directly into communities.

Taken together, these reforms transform engagement into the core infrastructure of our system, ensuring families can participate regardless of income, language, work schedule, or housing status in a way that leads to real influence. These suggested reforms, taken together with the preservation of Mayoral Control, provide the unified accountability that allows system-wide change while finally delivering the democratic participation that families deserve. New York City now has the opportunity, and the responsibility, to bring that approach into the nation's largest school system, and demonstrate that strong leadership and strong community voice are not in tension, but mutually reinforcing.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

My name is Gavin Healy. I'm a university educator, current CEC member, former SLT member, and parent of a NYC public school student.

I'm not asking for much. But as a parent and community member in New York City and New York State, I would like to have what the people of Buffalo, Albany, Rochester, and Syracuse have. That is, I'd like to have a chance to contribute in a meaningful way to the democratic governance of our local public schools.

We do not have such a democratic governance structure in our city. The Panel for Educational Policy is certainly not it. The PEP is more or less an extension of mayoral control. We frequently see the members appointed by the Borough Presidents and those elected by CECs vote one way, and the mayoral appointees vote to approve whatever contract has been placed before them with virtually no transparency about their rationale for those decisions, while members of the public spin their wheels and wait for hours to have a chance to be heard but not heard.

Our CECs are not it either. While our mayorally-controlled DOE is supposed to support the work of our CECs, we who have served on those bodies know that's not the case. We volunteer our time to support our schools for the sake of all the children of this city. Meanwhile, many of us on these councils have faced tremendous backlash, including harassment and doxing directed toward our children. The DOE's Office of Family and Community Engagement has long failed to do its basic duty to protect and support us, as has been well documented by our elected officials (<https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/complaints-received-concerning-the-2023-elections-of-community-and-citywide-education-councils/>).

At a minimum, mayoral control should not be renewed for more than two years, while the State and the City reexamine this system, establishing a commission of students, parents, and educators to forge a new path for democratic governance of our school system. Renewal of mayoral control should also be de-linked from approval of the budget. Mayoral control is a democratic governance issues, not a budgetary issue.

02/10/2026

Hello City Council Education Committee members, my name is Imani Wilson and I am a community educator and organizer with the Abolition and Education Justice Collective as well as a member of the Dignity in Schools Campaign - NY. More formally, I am a Doctoral candidate in Sociology of Education at New York University researching histories of school governance and movements for education justice. I work with young people across NYC to think about how they envision the building of safe, supportive, & liberatory educational spaces.

I am here today, to urge you all to consider the importance of utilizing your positions of power to call on your colleagues, Mayor Mamdani, and State representatives in not only ending mayoral control but creating pathways towards a community-led commission made up of youth, parents, educators, organizers, advocates and researchers and ensure they're central to the development of a new, more equitable and just school governance system in NYC.

Mayoral control since its inception in 2002 under Bloomberg has systematically failed to honor the needs, ideas, and decision-making abilities of students, families, and educators. The centralization of power in the hands of New York City Mayors reinforces the violent exclusion and disfranchisement that Black, Brown, disabled, immigrant, and low income communities have dealt with throughout histories of schooling in the U.S. and even here in NYC. Therefore, in a system that continually places these needs to the margins of our education system and forecloses direct participation even via established avenues (MC/CECs/PEP/DOE), this is a critical moment to do something radically different. As we think about what a just education system can look like, this includes empowering and creating tangible avenues for parents, educators, and especially our young people to have power in deciding and creating an education governance system that they can justly and rightfully participate in.

If the Education Committee is truly concerned with the wellbeing, safety, and care of young people in New York City Public Schools, you would fight with us for the ability decide what community driven solutions are in their neighborhoods and schools — whether it be critical culturally relevant curriculum and instruction, equitable school budgeting, after school programs, movement away from discipline & punishment, proper implementation of restorative justice, mental and social-emotional health supports, and ensuring teachers/educators are fully supported. I have seen the dedication, commitment, and power that young people hold for themselves and their peers, so I urge you to demonstrate your belief and trust in their ability too. Our young people deserve a just present and future, so it starts now, with us! End mayoral control and establish community powered solutions!

Thank you for your time.

Imani Wilson

“My name is Isa Abraham and I’m the youth program coordinator at Malikah, an anti-violence nonprofit in Queens and a member of the Dignity in Schools NY Coalition. I work with Muslim girls of color across NYC public schools to empower them with skills to make their schools more safe and just spaces for all.

I’m urging you to allow students, parents, educators, and youth-led CBOs from under-resourced and immigrant communities to take the lead in creating a more democratic school governance system and replace mayoral control.”

Under mayoral control, the students in Malikah’s Safety Ambassador Fellowship and their peers, who are primarily Muslim students of color from working class backgrounds have had to endure punitive and discriminatory school practices – regardless of city leadership. Budget cuts, metal detectors and police in schools – all of which have been constant across recent administrations, if not growing – have contributed to negative emotional and academic outcomes and a pipeline of incarceration. My students have been harassed, made late to class and subject to degradation and invasive surveillance in the name of “safety” – only for these same schools to fail to protect them from racist harassment on campus, Islamophobic administration and even physical attacks. Meanwhile parents, educators and youth workers like myself who have real, trusted relationships with students and have raised our concerns time and time again, have no real decision-making power to support them systemically.

If we believe in teaching our youth to be leaders, why not create systems that invest in their meaningful involvement. My students know themselves and their peers best. When given the opportunity to have a real impact in creating safer environments, I’ve seen my students come alive, dreaming up supportive after-school programs, restorative justice alternatives to suspensions, and peer networks that address safety concerns. I’m here as a witness to the fact that our students are ready and capable of community-driven school governance.

Change the state law to authorize high school juniors and seniors to vote on City-Wide Education Councils and PEP. Ensure they have independent support and mentorship, through programs like Malikah’s. Increase the pool of eligible students and create a democratic process for youth to vote on who should represent them in governance bodies. NYCPS should provide mentorship support connecting youth to an adult mentor and a contracted and qualified CBO. Citywide decisions should have a local mechanism for feedback and implementation planning.

We are tired of providing data and being consulted, only to have our suggestions ignored. We are tired of being “brought to the table”. Trust the youth in this city enough to build a better table together.”

Thank you Chair Dinowitz, and the Education Committee for holding this hearing. My name is Martina Meijer. I'm an educator and community member.

I am submitting my testimony to urge democratic input and community accountability in the governance of our schools.

Mayoral control has repeatedly failed. It concentrates the power and spending of the nation's largest and most segregated school system in a single person. The Adams administration showed the extent of the corruption possible under mayoral control. It cannot be argued that mayoral control limits corruption or ensures accountability; quite the opposite.

Having participated in years at the PEP, I can assure you there is no accountability to the public. Much like our experience of testifying against mayoral control, the public testifies at the PEP to no avail. Many times I have experienced hours of testimony against a contract or policy, only to have that contract or policy passed through the mayoral appointees.

It is important to note that across the US and historically, white and wealthy school districts are not subjected to mayoral control. Why should predominantly Black, Brown, or poor school districts deserve any less than their whiter or wealthier counterparts?

We have already submitted hours of testimony to the state during the last round of hearings on mayoral control. Over 90% of the testimony was against mayoral control. Once again, the will of the people was ignored. It is shameful that we are once again solicited for our opinion. We have already testified about our concerns about mayoral control. They remain the same. Our students deserve better.

Our students deserve a voice on the panel that determines education policy. Our communities deserve accountability. We want to see a system of community control. There are many different models of elected school boards. We can see the model of Chicago as it transitioned away from mayoral control. It's time for a change.

The over 2 decades of mayoral control that we have experienced show how corrupt and stagnant this undemocratic system is. Democracy cannot depend on the goodwill of one mayor. It must be structural and lasting. Even when communities win transformative changes — Mayoral Control makes those wins fragile. Students, families, and educators have fought for: Restorative justice, Community schools, Mental health supports, Safer school climates, Reduced policing in schools, Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Education, Anti-bias trainings, and yet, the Adams administration was able to obliterate that in one term. Mayoral control upends the will and power of the community.

We demand an end to mayoral control, with a phase in of elected school board.

Thank you.

## **Written Testimony for 2026-02-10 City Council Education Committee Hearing: Need for Change to Mayoral Control of NYC Public Schools**

**To:** Eric Dinowitz, New York City Council member (District 11), Education Committee Chair

**From:** Naveed Hasan, New York City Panel for Educational Policy elected parent member (Manhattan), Government Affairs Committee Chair

**Subject:** Urgent Call to End Mayoral Control and Establish a Democratic, Community-Centered School Governance System

My name is Naveed Hasan. I am a four-times elected parent representative on the New York City Panel for Educational Policy, the city's board of education. I am also the parent of two children who attended a Title I public school in upper Manhattan, where over three-quarters of students are economically disadvantaged, one-third live in temporary housing, and a similar proportion are multilingual learners. As a product of NYC public schools (PS 99 Isaac Asimov, Mark Twain Junior High School, Edward R. Murrow High School) and a graduate of Columbia University, I have both a personal and policymaker stake in the future of our educational system. My testimony synthesizes years of advocacy, including hearings across all five boroughs, and demands an end to the failed experiment of mayoral control.

### **I. The Core Failure: A System Designed for Political Expediency, Not Children**

Mayoral control has concentrated all power over 1,600 schools in a single, unaccountable office. The PEP, where I serve, is a farce — a rubber-stamp body where the mayoral appointee majority ensures that City Hall's political whims, not children's long-term interests, dictate policy. This model is fundamentally undemocratic and structurally incapable of addressing our system's deepest flaw: the staggering economic segregation of New York City's student body.

While about **25% of all New York City children live below the poverty line, 75% of NYC public school students are economically disadvantaged.** In many schools, this figure nears 100%, with students facing housing and food insecurity. Mayoral control perpetuates this divide. It creates a system where so-called "good" schools succeed *in spite* of the Department of Education, often due to shifting neighborhood wealth or magnet programs, not by systemic design. This governance model abandons the majority of our children to a permanent state of crisis management.

### **II. Systemic Harms Under the Current Autocratic Model**

All my volunteer work as a parent and an elected representative over the past 7 years in NYC reveals a consistent pattern of failure:

- **Irresponsiveness & Bureaucratic Capture:** A system this large, answering to one person, is inherently unresponsive. Chronic need for school seats goes unmet due to a glacially slow, non-competitive School Construction Authority — a captured agency that

would be shuttered in the private sector for its lack of results. Capital planning is woefully insufficient, and costs are out of control.

- **Policy Chaos and Instability:** As former Mayor Adams himself highlighted, each mayor seeks to “turn around the school system” to claim credit. This results in capricious, whiplash-inducing policy changes every administration, creating permanent flux and chaos. There is no continuity for students, teachers, or families. The current Mayor Mamdani is laser focused on childcare, which was a campaign promise and risks unhelpfully commingling concerns around caring for infants and toddlers with K-12 education.
- **The Colocation Failure:** Every school colocation is a policy failure. Instead of nurturing neighborhood schools, mayoral control promotes a “free market” delusion, unfairly favoring privately operated school networks and destabilizing traditional public schools.
- **Direct Harm to Our Most Vulnerable Students:** The former mayor’s unilateral 60-day eviction policy for families in temporary housing is retraumatizing nearly 60,000 newly arrived immigrant students and destabilizing their school communities. Students are forcibly transferred, relationships shattered, and classrooms turned into revolving doors — all to satisfy a political deterrence strategy. To this day, schools are being penalized for the attendance and academic fallout.
- **Erosion of Professionalism and Community Trust:** With top-level staffing dominated by political appointments, incentives are misaligned. The system loses experienced pedagogues and discourages community buy-in. Families who can leave do so, further concentrating poverty.

### III. The Path Forward: Democratic Local Control, Not a Return to Albany

I am not advocating a return to the pre-2002 model, rather demanding progress toward a **democratic, community-controlled system**. The goal is clear: a system responsive to specific neighborhood needs in a timely fashion.

My core recommendations for a better governance structure are:

1. **Decentralize Power into Smaller, Manageable Districts:** NYC is too large for one district. Redraw community school district lines based on current demographics and devolve real authority to them.
2. **Establish Empowered, Democratically Elected Local School Boards:** These boards must have genuine budgetary, staffing, and curricular powers. Board members should be compensated and professionally supported to be truly accountable for their community’s educational outcomes.
3. **Reform Fair Student Funding:** Funding must be improved and directed to these smaller districts, ensuring resources follow student needs transparently and equitably.
4. **Prioritize Socioeconomic Integration:** A deliberate citywide strategy is needed to break the cycle of poverty concentration in schools. This includes bolstering non-selective, attractive programs from early childhood upward to draw a broad cross-section of families. This will mean meaningfully competing with non-public schools

for student market share, something which is completely out of reach under Mayoral Control.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

The overwhelming consensus from students, parents, teachers, and community members across New York City is that mayoral control has failed. It is a system that prioritizes political machinations over pedagogical excellence, vendor contracts over student needs, and mayoral ego over community voice.

I envision a public education system where professional educators build proud careers in stable, respected schools. Where every neighborhood has a welcoming, nurturing, and well-funded school that reflects and serves its community. Where all children, regardless of background, can learn together and build a shared future.

Education is a public good. Its governance must be public, democratic, and accountable. We are squandering our children's potential and our tax dollars on a broken model. For the sake of our city's future, the New York State legislature must **end mayoral control in 2026** and begin the transition to a community-controlled school system that works for the people.

Respectfully,

Naveed Hasan

Elected parent member, NYC Panel for Educational Policy



<https://www.schools.nyc.gov/about-us/leadership/panel-for-education-policy/members/naveed-hasan>

[https://www.linkedin.com/posts/naveedhasan\\_naveed-hasan-elected-as-a-community-education-activity-7028587160022712320-irq9](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/naveedhasan_naveed-hasan-elected-as-a-community-education-activity-7028587160022712320-irq9)

**Mayoral Control Hearing by the Committee on Education of the NYC Council, 02/10/26**

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Thank you Chair for having me and holding this important hearing.

My name is Robert Murtfeld.

\*\*

I sit here before you as a parent of two young children at The Neighborhood School, which is part of a progressive consortium of elementary schools in the East Village that were founded in the early 1990s.

I also represent today the position of my PTA's advocacy committee.

The committee meets monthly to discuss policy in NYC public schools.

Councilmember Dinowitz kindly joined us only last week for our February meeting.

We are grateful for his time and participation.

\*\*

Mamdani's reversal on mayoral control was surprising,

and delivered at such short notice, only six hours before midnight on New Years Eve.

YET we support the newly elected Mayor and we will help him to pursue - and I quote -

"an aggressive democratization agenda to make sure the entire system has a voice".

We especially urge the Mayor to start such an agenda

by fostering capacity building and community organizing at the school level

and NOT at the district OR citywide level.

\*\*

All the discussion about Community Education Councils,  
the CECs and the numerous other acronyms are a distraction.  
Parent-teacher associations as well as school leadership teams,  
if organized properly with resource allocation and professional governance,  
UNDER THE REGULATIONS AS THEY EXIST,  
have far greater power and participatory potential than is presently known by most.

\*\*

The PTA advocacy committee at The Neighborhood School is a great example.  
Built up over the last two years for a community that was destroyed by COVID,  
the committee reaches today more than 50% of the parent body  
and works collaboratively - and daily - with the entire school,  
including teachers, paras, school aides, parent coordinator,  
custodial staff, food service, school safety, principal and superintendent.  
I am proud to say that we are close to a TRUE democracy.

\*\*

PTAs and SLTs are your silver bullet, Mayor Mamdani.  
Please focus on these two bodies. That way you will be successful.

Thank you Chair Dinowitz, and the Education Committee for holding this hearing. My name is Rosette Diaz. I'm a parent of a fully public elementary school in D15.

School governance shouldn't be at the mercy of whomever is in power at any given point. It should be defined by those who live or teach or go to school in these communities.

Every year I watch my school struggle with budget and compete with more and more charter schools. Who are we trying to serve? if we really care about quality and access, then decisions should be about where the need is greatest, not about anyone's political will.

Communities should have the majority voice over their own education policy!

We demand a truly democratic system that empowers students, parents, and educators. Community leadership must be respected, resourced, and sustained, not tokenized. This system must include:

- Real decision-making authority for parents, students, and educators
- Access to training, data, and support to participate meaningfully
- Structures that allow/require some centralized decision making, while also ensuring that there is an effective relationship established between local and centralized decision-making.
- Even citywide decisions should have a local mechanism for feedback and implementation planning.

Thank you.

Thank you Chair Dinowitz, and the Education Committee for holding this hearing. My name is Sarah Girner. I am a parent of a fifth and second grader at PS 151.

I'm here today to ask the mayor to not fall back on his promise to end mayoral control and for you to work with the mayor to create a commission of all the people with a vested interest in creating a truly democratic school governance system to replace mayoral control. This means parents, teachers, students, advocates, experts and researchers with an in-depth knowledge and lived experience of the public school system in NYC.

Mayoral control simply distills too much power into the hands of very few people, and on top of that into hands that change every four years making it close to impossible to actually create lasting, meaningful and impactful change. The centralization of power in the hands of a few leads to the disenfranchisement of engaged parents, and to mayors making decisions based on politics rather than the explicit wishes and needs of the community.

Especially in this present moment when public goods and public education are under continuous attack and threat, it is of the utmost importance to invest in parents, teachers, students, and advocates who all want to be meaningfully involved in educational policy decisions. Public education is one of the pillars of democracy and a place where the seeds of civic engagement and meaningful political dialogue are planted and nurtured. A truly democratic governance over our public schools would ensure transparency, a sense of community ownership, agency, and accountability.

We demand that mayoral control be abandoned in lieu of a truly democratic system that empowers parents, students, educators, and communities. Ideally, this system would lend real power to these populations to shape the system and all decisions made by it. This new system would facilitate the sharing of information across communities so that decisions can be made in a deeply informed way. The system would disperse decision making authority from the highly centralized to the local level. As many testimonies reflected, the communication between PTAs, SLTs, CECs and PEPs (and all the other acronyms) would have to be completely overhauled so that there is transparency, clarity, and consensus on major decisions, always taking into account the very specific needs of each school population and its community members.

Thank you.

My name is Sohini Das. I'm a community educator and organizer with the Abolition and Education Justice Collective and Dignity in Schools Coalition and a former teacher at PS 146 in East Harlem. And formally a doctoral candidate at New York University in Psychology and Social Intervention studying the impacts of school carcerality on Black, brown and low income students and families and developing community centered spaces of care.

I am here testifying today on behalf of parents, youth, and educators part of the Abolition Ed Justice Collective and Dignity in Schools coalition, including students who were not able to join us at this time. In the future I hope we can consider their availability in scheduling hearings.

I am here today to urge Mayor Madani and City Council members for the creation of a well-resourced commission of parents, educators, students, advocates, experts, and researchers be created to engage communities in designing a truly democratic school governance system that centers the leadership, needs, and lived experiences of our diverse students, families, and educators, particularly Black, Brown, immigrant, LGBTQIA+, low-income students, students in temporary housing and foster care, and students with disabilities to replace mayoral control. My opposition to mayoral control as a governance structure is not in response to a single mayor or administration, but in response to a system that, for over two decades, has concentrated decision-making authority in one office and administration and shut out meaningful participation of students, families, and educators.

Under mayoral control, critical educational decisions, including those related to curriculum, school safety, discipline, english language services, special education services and budgeting, have been made with limited community involvement and insufficient accountability to the communities most directly impacted. This structure has contributed to the implementation of culturally destructive K-12 curriculum, increased reliance on policing, ICE presence in schools, high suspension rates, and growing class sizes. While these decisions have been made by mayoral administration after mayoral administration, parents and students have been denied meaningful authority in shaping the educational environments that affect their daily lives.

For more than twenty years, parents, community advocates, educators, and students have consistently articulated what they want for their schools. They have called for culturally responsive and sustaining education across K–12, including comprehensive K-12 Black Studies curricula. They have demanded restorative justice practices in place of exclusionary discipline. They have advocated for wellness centers, mental health supports, increased services and support for students in temporary housing, students with disability, and studies receiving English language services. Communities have continuously demanded investments in care rather than criminalization but have not had the power to enact these important educational decisions.

These priorities have been clearly identified through sustained organizing and public engagement. Yet under mayoral control, progress remains fragile. Each new administration has the power to reverse policies and dismantle community-driven initiatives without meaningful structural accountability. There have been 5 new chancellors in 5 years. This instability undermines long-term educational equity.

Public engagement alone is insufficient. Students, families, and educators deserve shared governance authority, not merely advisory roles. They deserve a democratic structure that provides real decision-making power over system wide and local decisions- including curriculum, school safety policies, budgeting priorities, and even decision stich as implementing snow or remote dates.

If we claim to value civic education and youth leadership, then our school system must model democratic practice. Democracy should not depend on the goodwill of any individual officeholder; it must be embedded structurally and protected over time.

It is time to move beyond mayoral control and toward a democratic governance system rooted in shared power, racial justice, transparency, and accountability.

Our students and families deserve nothing less.

**NYC Council Education Committee Hearing on Mayoral Control**

**Tuesday, February 10, 2026, 10 am**

**Testimony by: Teresa Arboleda, Public Advocate Appointee**

**President, Citywide Council on English Language Learners (CCELL)**

██████████ (for ID purposes only)

As someone who was on the last Community School Board (CSB) and the first Community Education Council (CEC), I have a unique perspective on the issue of Mayoral Control (MC). While no system is perfect, there was more meaningful community engagement under the CSB system. I am not advocating a return to CSBs however, having one person in control of NYC Public Schools (NYCPS) is not the answer. During the twenty three years that the school governance system that gave the mayor control of NYC public schools has been in effect, it has not proven to be the panacea that would fix the problems of the system that gave limited control to the local school districts throughout the city.

Before its scheduled sunset on June 30, 2026 the school governance issue must be examined as to its overall effectiveness. **Mayoral control of NYC public schools must never be included in budget approval discussions but must be debated separately and in depth.**

Schools can be assured that with each newly elected mayor the system will be turned upside down. Michael Bloomberg, first mayor to be granted control of NYC public schools, completely reorganized the system by organizing the 32 local districts into 10 regions. The main regional office was often miles away from the parents' local schools making it difficult to become informed. Parents were used to knowing where to go locally if they had a question. There was a generally known local hierarchy, including the principal, the district office, the school board liaison to the local school, as well as the coordinators of subject areas such as math, ELA, special education, bilingual education, social studies, and gifted and talented.

After some years, the system was again flipped to assign schools to participate in an education network. This meant that the district superintendent was no longer the educational leader of the district and the network leader for some schools was possibly located in another borough and not easily available to local parents and the community. Many schools were closed and protests by parents and the community were largely ignored. Charter schools were often co-located in the buildings where schools had been closed or redesigned, which sometimes meant loss of the use of the gym, library and other facilities.

While the greatest upheaval of the system occurred under Mayor Bloomberg, Mayors de Blasio and Adams also revamped the system. All created different policies, staff positions, and rules and regulations. PreK for all under Mayor de Blasio was a positive and there was some stability as compared to Mayor Bloomberg. Under Mayor Adams there was corruption and instability, where much of his staff had to resign. Under all three mayors there has been a lack of consultation or, if consultation took place, parents and the community were usually ignored.

The Panel for Educational Policy (PEP) replaced the old central board of education and was a rubber stamp for whatever the mayors wanted. Members are often immediately removed if they do not follow the wishes of the mayor. I will never forget the "Monday Night Massacre" when at one of the early PEP meetings three mayoral appointee members were going to vote no on the third grade promotion policy. To everyone's shock the three appointees had been removed by Mayor Bloomberg and replaced by three new members who went on to vote in favor of the mayor's proposal. There were no checks and balances. The 23-member PEP, with a mayoral appointee majority, grants the mayor too much power. Too many proposals that are almost unanimously opposed by the community have been approved because the mayor's appointees always vote in his favor. Following is a possible composition for a more cohesive PEP:

Chancellors appointed by Mayor Bloomberg too often had little or no background in education and needed a waiver before approval. Mayor Adams appointed two educators and Mayor de Blasio did appoint three educators as chancellors and had a more cautious approach when it came to closing schools.

This is a very brief overall picture of some negative effects of mayoral control on the public schools and the families and community around them. During local school board control, NYC Mayors were often frustrated and sought more power over NYC public schools from the legislature. One mayor even threatened to blow up the Board of Education. Not to be completely negative, the establishing of the Parent Coordinator position paid parents for what they were doing for free. Another positive was the establishment of an Office for Interpretation and Translation, which through the years has been expanded and improved.

The old system of school boards was not perfect and had many flaws. The NY State Legislature gradually diminished the powers of the boards. Corruption existed but was not as rampant as reported and, in my opinion, was a red herring to do away with local control of public schools. More school boards functioned well than did not. As the saying goes, they threw away the baby with the bathwater.

The 2024 NY State Education Department Report on Mayoral Control did not deliver a verdict on whether mayoral control should continue. They called for a commission to make a formal recommendation.

There are solutions that can be made to tweak MC, since realistically and politically it will be difficult to establish another governance system in today's climate. **In no way should there be a four-year extension and serious changes must be made so that the community can have meaningful input into local decisions that affect our schools.** Following is a possible tweak to the PEP composition and powers: The PEP members shall be: 5 appointed by each Borough President, who shall be parents in NYCPS, grades 3K-12; 5 parents from each borough, selected by the CEC Presidents from the borough; 4 parents selected by the presidents, with consultation from their members, of the 4 Citywide Councils (CCHS, CCELL, CCSE and District 75) **who represent families of students who too often don't have a voice**; the mayor shall appoint five members, who do not need to be parents but should be supporters of public education. The Chair and officers shall be chosen by the members. Parents appointed/elected must have a child in a NYC Public Schools (non-charter); 19 voting members plus 2 students (non-voting); and a Consulting Advisor from the Office of the Comptroller. The mayor shall not appoint the majority of members of the PEP; however, he will have the power to appoint the Chancellor, with a majority vote from members of the PEP.

Let's not miss this opportunity to explore, discuss and establish a system of school governance that will really work to benefit our NYC public schools.

I am a teacher, I am a parent and I am the Brooklyn Borough President's representative to CEC14. I would like to see teacher's recognized as the experts they are. Democratic governance says it all. Bottom up not top down. Checks and balances . Advocating for the same curriculum across the city when not all students and dare I say teachers are the same. Parents are partners in education not controllers of education. Look at Finland's socialist governance system in their schools. I worked under school based management in Florida's Monroe county. It was a dream to work under that governance structure. I have pages and pages of ideas for a democratic governance structure. There's this document we could use to model a structure after. IT'S CALLED THE CONSTITUTION you may have heard of it. School based management includes all pedagogy and parents to participate in meeting the students needs. Admin does the checks. A teacher can not change curriculums every 4 yrs. It takes a full year to learn a curriculum . Professional development is sorely lacking in my experience. The second year of a new curriculum the teachers will recognize its strength and weaknesses. They will research and search to fill those gaps. The 3rd year will be a time to streamline planning and preparation to enhance every aspect of the curriculum implementation . The 4th year is to finalize your evaluation of the changes you made. I think in NYC parents have too much power and teachers have none. Our union does nothing for us.. the CONSTITUTIONhas checks and balances in it. If a bunch of 20 yr olds figured it out for a whole country clearly NYC DOE should be able to, too!Can we put teachers first for once. I heard a parent say the condition of teachers' bathrooms doesn't matter.

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Raul Soto

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: YA - 11 Network

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Date: 02/10/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Yolonda Marshall

Address: 322 8th Avenue, 9th Fl SLN

I represent: Student Leadership Network

Address: 322 8th Ave

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(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ROBERT MURTFELD

Address: 54 STANHOPE STREET

I represent: PTA ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

Address: THE NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL

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Name: DR. DARLING J. MIRAMET

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: self.

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: Jason Wong

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Independent budget office

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: Alon Chen

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Independent budget office

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: Julia Konrad

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Independent budget office

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JONATHAN GREENBERG

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ 11372

I represent: EDUCATION COUNCIL CONSORTIUM

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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in favor  in opposition

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Name: Kulsom TAPAL

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: CACF

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 2/10/2020

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Name: DyKaeris Salas

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: RTPS / CF4

Address: 1405 5th Ave NY NY 10029

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Name: Ellen McHugh

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ MARINE AVE

I represent: MYSELF

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Date: 2/10/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ISABELLA ABRAHAM

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ ASTORIA NY 11103

I represent: MALIKAH

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Date: 2/10/2026

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Name: Whitney Toussant

Address: 4720 Center Blvd #621, LIC, Queens

I represent: AQE + Dignity in Schools

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 2/10/26

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Name: Michael Mulgrew

Address: Zoom President OFT.

I represent: 52 Bway

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: EPHRAIM ZAKRY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: parents

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: Naila Rosario

Address: 72 B-Line Ave

I represent: NYC Kids PAC

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: Danika Ruy

Address: 52 Chambers St, NY, NY

I represent: NYCPS

Address: 52 Chambers St, NY, NY

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: CHRISTINA FOTI

Address: 52 Chambers Street NYC 10001

I represent: NYCPS

Address: same

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 2/10/26

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Name: Elishaba Lewi

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYCPS

Address: 52 Chambers Street

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 2/10/26

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Name: Karie Sedline

Address: 52 Chambers St

I represent: NYC Public Schools

Address: 34 Chambers St

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Leonie Hanson

Address: 124 Waverly

I represent: Class Size Matters

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: Maribel Hulla

Address: 52 Chambers Street

I represent: New York City Public Schools

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. Mayoral Cont. Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 2/10/2026

**(PLEASE PRINT)**

Name: Sharon Rencher

Address: 52 Chambers St., Rm. 208

I represent: NYC Public Schools

Address: 52 Chambers St., NY NY 10007

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[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 2/10/26

**(PLEASE PRINT)**

Name: Elishaba Lewis

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYCPS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 8/10/

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Katherine Sedelnic

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYCPS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 8/10/06

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sharon Rencher

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYCPS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Imani Wilson

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Abolition + Education Justice Collective

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor     in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sheree Gibson

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: AQE-NY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor     in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chauncy Young

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: New Settlement PAC

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor     in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Isa Abraham

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: MALIKAH

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jonathan Greenberg

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: ECC

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Andres Ortiz

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Dignity in Schools Campaign

Address: New York

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: YIATIN CHU

Address: [REDACTED] Whitestone, NY

I represent: PLACE NYC

Address: NA

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 2/10/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LAURA D BARBIERI

Address: 115 W 73 RD ST [REDACTED] NY NY

I represent: THE LAW OFFICE OF LAURA BARBIERI

Address: SAME

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tash Sutton

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: [REDACTED] Parent

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Leonie Hamson, Class Size Matters

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Class Size Matters

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

**Appearance Card**

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**(PLEASE PRINT)**

Name: Raluis Salas-Ramirez

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: New Yorkers for Racially

Address: Just Public Schools

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

**Appearance Card**

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**(PLEASE PRINT)**

Name: Sohini Das

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Abolition and Education

Address: Justice Collective

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

**Appearance Card**

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**(PLEASE PRINT)**

Name: Whitney Toussant

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Alliance for Quality Education

Address: Parent

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gavin Healy

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Alliance for Quality Education

Address: Parent

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. Mayoral Control Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: 2/10/2020

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mari Moss

Address: 2080 Frederick Douglass Blvd

I represent: Mothers, Education activist

Address: Harlem

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lacey Jordan

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: District 4

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: CRYSTAL MCFEEN-TAYLOR

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: STUDENTS FIRST

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition *to Mayorat Control*

Date: 2/10/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alaina Daniels

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ *New York, NY 10003*

I represent: Trans formative Schools

Address: 154 Christopher St. Suite 2A *New York NY 10014*

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: 2/10/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christopher Leon Johnson

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: ST 11

Address: \_\_\_\_\_