



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** Res 0790-2003, **Version:** \*

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Res. No. 790

Resolution calling upon the State Legislature and the Governor to take all necessary steps to preserve the structure and integrity of the existing 32 School Districts within the City of New York, including the offices of the 32 District Superintendents and their necessary support staff, and to ensure that parental rights are enhanced and protected.

By Council Members Avella, Weprin, Addabbo, Barron, Clarke, Comrie, Gentile, Jackson, Koppell, Liu, Nelson, Recchia, Sanders, Vann and Serrano

Whereas, Mayor Bloomberg and New York City Schools Chancellor Joel Klein have set forth plans to restructure and reorganize the City school system following the passage of the New York City School Governance Act of 2002; and

Whereas, These plans call for the creation of 10 Regional Districts headed by 10 Regional Superintendents, who will lead 10 to 12 Local Instructional Supervisors, each of whom will oversee, support and evaluate 10 to 12 principals in 10 to 12 schools; and

Whereas, The Regional Districts will be responsible for overseeing areas that now encompass 3 to 4 local school districts and, in at least one instance, will cross over county lines; and

Whereas, Furthermore, these Regional Districts are expected to encompass the previous 32 local school districts, which will effectively cease to exist; and

Whereas, According to members of the New York City Senate Majority Delegation, the New York City School Governance Act of 2002 did not require the "dismantling" of the school system in its entirety, and such "dismantling" would "require specific approval by the State Legislature," which neither the Mayor nor the Chancellor has sought; and

Whereas, The proposed Regional District restructuring plan also violates New York Education Law §§ 2590-b(2)(b), (c) and 2590-b(3)(c)(1), which state that there "shall be no less than thirty nor more than thirty-seven community districts," that the "city board may readjust or alter the districts in such plan only once in every ten years, commencing with the year two thousand and four," and that "each community district shall: . . . (iii) be . . . contained within county lines, . . . and (iv) bear a rational relationship to geographic areas for which the City of New York plans and provides services"; and

Whereas, Additionally, the Boroughs of Brooklyn, the Bronx and Manhattan are covered jurisdictions under the Federal Voting Rights Act and require preclearance from the United States Department of Justice for any changes resulting in a de-facto elimination of representation, including the elimination of elected officials (in this case, the community school board members) and the consolidation of community school districts; and

Whereas, Furthermore, the State Legislature required the creation of a task force to make recommendations to facilitate parental involvement in children's education and to maximize meaningful participation by the public in the school system; and

Whereas, The Mayor and the Chancellor have proposed the restructuring plans absent any reference to the existence of this task force or in response to its formal recommendations publicized in the Final Report of the Task Force on Community School District Governance Reform, dated February 15, 2003; and

Whereas, There has been insufficient opportunity for public participation in these proposed changes to restructure and reorganize the New York City Public school system by way of public hearings or any other means; and

Whereas, The proposed Regional District restructuring plan will have the effect of centralizing school governance at the expense of marginalizing parental involvement in the educational process; and

Whereas, A structure of accountability can still be achieved in such a way that each local community will retain access to the school governance structure as it now exists in the 32 local community school districts; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the State Legislature and the Governor to take all necessary steps to preserve the structure and integrity of the existing 32 School Districts within the City of New York, including the offices of the 32 District Superintendents and their necessary support staff, and to ensure that parental rights are enhanced and protected.

(MHG)

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