Legislation Details (With Text)

File #:	Res 0157-2010	**Version:**	A	**Name:**	Establish a School Transformation Zone.
Type:	Resolution			**Status:**	Adopted
				In control:	Committee on Education
On agenda:	4/14/2010				
Enactment date:				**Enactment #:**	

Title: Resolution calling upon the New York City Department of Education to establish a School Transformation Zone, based on the model proposed by the NYC Coalition for Educational Justice, to improve low-performing schools and prevent school closings.

Sponsors: Robert Jackson, Charles Barron, Margaret S. Chin, Daniel Dromm, Lewis A. Fidler, Letitia James, Brad S. Lander, Melissa Mark-Viverito, Annabel Palma, Diana Reyna, Ydanis A. Rodriguez, Deborah L. Rose, Larry B. Seabrook, Albert Vann, Jumaane D. Williams, Helen D. Foster, Inez E. Dickens, Karen Koslowitz, Stephen T. Levin, Fernando Cabrera, Rosie Mendez, Vincent J. Gentile, James G. Van Bramer, Thomas White, Jr., Erik Martin Dilan, Elizabeth S. Crowley, Gale A. Brewer, Domenic M. Recchia, Jr., Leroy G. Comrie, Jr., Julissa Ferreras-Copeland, Mathieu Eugene, Sara M. Gonzalez, James Sanders, Jr., Michael C. Nelson, David G. Greenfield, Joel Rivera, Eric A. Ulrich

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Attachments: 1. Res. No. 157 - 4/14/10, 2. Committee Report 4/28/10, 3. Hearing Testimony 4/28/10, 4. Hearing Testimony (Con't) 4/28/10, 5. Hearing Transcript 4/28/10, 6. Committee Report 5/24/10, 7. Hearing Transcript 5/24/10, 8. Hearing Transcript - Stated Meeting 5/25/10

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
4/14/2010	*	City Council	Introduced by Council	
4/14/2010	*	City Council	Referred to Comm by Council	
4/28/2010	*	Committee on Education	Hearing Held by Committee	
4/28/2010	*	Committee on Education	Laid Over by Committee	
5/24/2010	*	Committee on Education	Hearing Held by Committee	
5/24/2010	*	Committee on Education	Amendment Proposed by Comm	
5/24/2010	*	Committee on Education	Amended by Committee	
5/24/2010	A	Committee on Education	Approved by Committee	Pass
5/25/2010	A	City Council	Approved, by Council	Pass

Res. No. 157-A

Resolution calling upon the New York City Department of Education to establish a School Transformation Zone, based on the model proposed by the NYC Coalition for Educational Justice, to improve low-performing schools and prevent school closings.

By Council Members Jackson, Barron, Chin, Dromm, Fidler, James, Lander, Mark-Viverito, Palma, Reyna, Rodriguez, Rose, Seabrook, Vann, Williams, Foster, Dickens, Koslowitz, Levin, Cabrera, Mendez, Van Bramer, White, Dilan, Crowley, Brewer, Recchia Jr., Comrie, Ferreras, Eugene, Gonzalez, Sanders Jr., Nelson, Greenfield, Rivera and Ulrich

Whereas, Since 2002 the New York City Department of Education (DOE) has closed 91 schools with low student achievement levels; and

Whereas, In December 2009, the DOE proposed phasing out an additional 20 low-performing schools, the most in any single year; and

Whereas, These proposed school closures generated considerable community opposition, public protests and a lawsuit filed by the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), advocacy organizations, parents and elected officials, including five members of the New York City Council; and

Whereas, Opponents of the DOE's school closure policy maintain that closing schools should be the method of last resort, used only after other strategies have been attempted to turn around low-performing schools; and

Whereas, Critics argue that DOE has not provided adequate resources or made sufficient effort to help struggling schools; and

Whereas, Furthermore, critics contend that DOE does not have a comprehensive improvement strategy or plan to assist low-performing schools; and

Whereas, The NYC Coalition for Educational Justice (CEJ) has proposed a comprehensive improvement strategy, development of a School Transformation Zone, for DOE to help transform low-performing schools; and

Whereas, Under CEJ's proposal, all struggling schools would have the opportunity to apply to join the Zone and turn themselves around before being subject to closure; and

Whereas, Schools that join the School Transformation Zone would undergo a redesign process to improve teaching and learning; and

Whereas, One of the required elements for Zone school redesign would be to add more instructional time to the school day and year; and

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Whereas, Another required element for Zone schools would be reduced class sizes in conformance with state-mandated Contract for Excellence (C4E) class size targets for New York City schools, with C4E funds or other resources provided to support this requirement; and

Whereas, Furthermore, Zone schools would be required to provide a well-rounded, enriched college preparatory curriculum for all students, including access to Regents courses that would be available to middle grade students and Advanced Placement or other college-level courses for high school students; and

Whereas, Schools in the Zone would also be required to take steps to attract, train and keep excellent teachers and principals by reducing class size, providing common planning time and extensive professional development and mentoring, among other efforts; and

Whereas, Zone schools would also be expected to offer strong, comprehensive support services for students, including small group and individual tutoring for struggling students, more guidance counselors and partnerships with local organizations to provide additional enrichment or services; and

Whereas, The final requirement for Zone schools would be to ensure active parent and community involvement by including them in decision-making, providing translation services at all school functions and offering adult education courses, for example; and

Whereas, For each school in the Zone, the School Leadership Team, or other body including parents, teachers and other key stakeholders, will serve as the School Transformation Committee to lead the re-design process; and

Whereas, Under CEJ's proposal, an expert educator with a track record in turning around struggling schools would be designated by DOE to lead the School Transformation Zone; and

Whereas, Further, a Zone Coordinating Committee including key stakeholders would be formed to advise and monitor the initiative; and

Whereas, CEJ also proposes that schools be permitted to remain in the Zone for 3 years to have an adequate opportunity to improve student achievement before being subject to closure; and

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Whereas, Additionally, CEJ proposes that all schools receiving federal School Improvement Grants be part of the Zone; and

Whereas, Finally, CEJ proposes that DOE apply for federal Innovation Funds to support the School Transformation Zone; and

Whereas, Students in New York City's public schools would benefit from implementation of the School Transformation Zone model to help turn around low-performing schools rather than closing them; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York City Department of Education to establish a School Transformation Zone, based on the model proposed by the NYC Coalition for Educational Justice, to improve low-performing schools and prevent school closings.

LS# 962
JA
5/13/10, 10:45 am