



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 55

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to restructure the membership of the central Board of Education, by providing the New York City Council with the power to select five Board members and the Mayor with the power to select four Board members, thereby ensuring greater accountability and parental input in the public school system.

By Council Members Barron, Comrie, Martinez, Sanders Jr. and Brewer; also Council Member Clarke

Whereas, The current public education system in the City of New York fails to provide an appropriate education for many of its students; and

Whereas, According to the Fiscal 2001 Mayor's Management Report (the "MMR"), the four-year graduation rate in Fiscal 2000 was only 49.9%, while the Regents diploma rate was only 30%; and

Whereas, The MMR also indicates that only 39.8% of students in grades three through eight met or exceeded standards in English Language Arts, and only 33.7% met or exceeded standards in mathematics; and

Whereas, Ninety percent of the State's Schools Under Registration Review (SURR schools), which are the schools that have the lowest performance rates with respect to State standards, are located within New York City; and

Whereas, It has been reported that more than 30,000 students in grades three through eight were promoted in 2001, even though they had not attended summer school and failed standardized reading and math tests, and of those students mandated to attend summer school, approximately 15,300 failed the end-of-summer standardized tests, yet were still promoted anyway;

Whereas, The City's public schools are constantly dealing with a shortage of qualified teachers, particularly in the areas of math and science, and, despite a new State policy that requires every teacher to be certified by 2003, the MMR indicates that in Fiscal 2001, approximately 16% of teachers were uncertified; and

Whereas, Although overcrowding is still a significant problem in the City public school system, the Board's five-year capital facilities plan is facing an estimated \$2.8 billion deficit, which has been blamed on mismanagement and misleading cost estimates provided by Board of Education officials; and

Whereas, Pursuant to Article 52-A of the New York State Education Law, the New York City Community School District is managed by a seven-member Board of Education that is responsible for all major Board policy initiatives and for voting on and implementing contracts with respect to the public school system; and

Whereas, State law provides that the five borough presidents appoint one Board member each, and the Mayor appoints two members; and
Whereas, Despite the critical importance of parental involvement in the success of our City's public schools, there is no requirement currently that parents have a citywide voice in the public education system; and

Whereas, As the legislative body of the City of New York, the New York City Council is elected to be responsive to the needs of the City's residents and their children; and

Whereas, Despite the crucial role that the City Council plays in funding and overseeing the public school system, there is no requirement currently that the City Council have an appropriate voice in selecting the members of the citywide central Board; and

Whereas, The State Legislature should address the lack of input by the City Council on the citywide central Board by expanding and restructuring the Board to provide that the City Council selects five members and the Mayor selects four members; and

Whereas, Such restructuring would enhance school governance, improve accountability, and ensure a better mechanism for parental input and involvement in the school system; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to restructure the membership of the central Board of Education, by providing the New York City Council with the power to select five Board members and the Mayor with the power to select four Board members, thereby ensuring greater accountability and parental input in the public school system.

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