



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 135

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to restructure the membership of the New York City Board of Education, by providing the New York City Council with the power to select four Board members, parents with the power to elect four board members, the Mayor with the power to select four Board members, and the Board of Education with the power to appoint the Chancellor, subject to the advice and consent of the City Council, thereby ensuring greater accountability and parental input in the public school system.

By Council Members Barron, Comrie, Martinez, Sanders Jr., Brewer, Clarke, James, Seabrook, Stewart and Jackson

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

Whereas, According to the Fiscal 2003 Mayor's Management Report (the "MMR"), the four-year graduation rate in Fiscal 2002 was only 50.8%, while only 39.5% of students passed the exams required for a Regents diploma; and

Whereas, The MMR also indicates that, for Fiscal 2002, only 39.3% of students in grades three through eight met or exceeded standards in English Language Arts, and only 37.3% met or exceeded standards in mathematics; and

Whereas, The great majority 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, Approximately one-quarter of New York City schoolchildren attend schools that are designated "Schools in Need of Improvement" under the Federal No Child Left Behind Act, which are schools

that fail to meet certain standards for student performance and educational progress; and

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 required every teacher to be certified by 2003, the MMR indicates that in Fiscal 2002, approximately 17% 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 incurred an estimated \$2.8 billion deficit, which has been blamed on mismanagement and misleading cost estimates provided by school officials; and

Whereas, Pursuant to Article 52-A of the New York State Education Law, the New York City school system is managed by a thirteen-member Board of Education that must approve certain significant policy initiatives and contracts with respect to the public school system, as well as each recurring five-year capital plan; and

Whereas, State law provides that the five borough presidents appoint one Board member each, and the Mayor appoints seven members and the Chancellor, who becomes the thirteenth member of the Board; 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 Board; and

Whereas, The State Legislature should address the lack of input by the City Council and parents on the Board by restructuring the Board to provide that the City Council select four members, parents select four members, and the Mayor select four members; and

Whereas, The State Legislature should further address the lack of input by the City Council by

restructuring the Board so that the Board (acting without the then-current Chancellor, if any) selects the Chancellor with the advice and consent of the City Council; 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 New York State Legislature restructure the membership of the New York City Board of Education, by providing the New York City Council with the power to select four Board members, parents with the power to elect four board members, the Mayor with the power to select four Board members, and the Board of Education with the power to appoint the Chancellor, subject to the advice and consent of the City Council, thereby ensuring greater accountability and parental input in the public school system.