

## End Mayoral Control

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After many years we have seen that mayoral control has not led to a school system that meets the needs of the children of New York City. The mayor is selected on the basis of many factors relating to the overall city administration. Expertise in education is not part of the qualifications for mayors. For a good school system there must be input from the public, especially parents. There must be concern for the research on learning and instruction. There must be checks and balances and oversight in running the school system. There must be defense against businesses that want to make money off schools. The schools must focus on the needs and goals of children, and on society's need for citizens who can solve problems and exercise good judgement.

The best alternative to Mayoral control would be a People's Board of Education to be made up of "parents, grandparents, students, community members and educators who will be charged to serve only the interests of parents, students and their communities."

Among its guiding principles would be the right of parents, students and the community to:

1. Participate in the governance of the educational system;
2. Independently monitor the system;
3. Receive adequate training and information that would ensure effective participation in the system;
4. Employ effective and timely remedies when rights are being violated. The school-to-prison pipeline must be ended.

The people's board of education should be elected by New York City citizens and parents who have children in the public schools. Candidates must be vetted by professional educators for their understanding of learning and instruction. They must be vetted by social justice organizations for their commitment to providing equitable education to needy children and privileged children and to children of all racial and ethnic backgrounds. They must be vetted to avoid ties to businesses seeking to make money off schools.

Assessment of learning must be authentic. Standardized tests have been uniformly biased, with test scores highly correlated with socioeconomic status. Value added models of gains on standardized test are rejected as invalid by the American Statistical Association and the American Educational Research Society. Criterion based standardized tests are subject to manipulation by those in power whose goals are more closely related to political power than to the good of our students. The use of standardized tests for assessment of schools has distorted the instructional process with stress on test preparation, rather than interactive instruction, deep thinking, and in depth reading and expressive writing. Students must learn to research a topic, state a position and present information to justify it.

Charter schools must be carefully supervised. They must not be allowed to discourage or expel children who do not get high test scores or children who have disabilities or personal problems. They must not be allowed to employ teachers who have not met state licensing requirements.

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