

Renewing Mayoral Control 2024

Division of Family and Community Engagement
and External Affairs

***With comments & info added on why Mayoral Control should NOT be renewed
Questions?email info@classsizematters.org***



Mayoral Accountability Talking Points

We've earned another 4 years of Mayoral Accountability through the relationships we've built and the progress we've achieved

- **NYC Reads:** - Developed comprehensive city-wide strategy to address the crisis in reading, ensuring all curriculum and instruction is rooted in the science of reading and dyslexic students are supported
 - *Many teachers, parents, & students say the DOE's choices of the NYC Reads curriculums are highly flawed, with little evidence behind them. The chancellor's own Literacy Advisory Council was not even consulted.*
- **Enrollment Increasing:**
 - Up by 8,000 students *This is due to influx of migrant students, not mayoral control.*
 - First increase in 8 years *See above.*
- **Chronic Absenteeism:**
 - Reduced from 38% in Dec. '22 to 29.6% in Dec. '23 *Still, this is far too high.*
- **Navigating Crises:**
 - Kept schools open and safe for all students during COVID crisis, working in close coordination with other city agencies, e.g. DOHMH
 - *Many districts not under mayoral control kept schools open; in NYC schools Covid transmission was high, with DOE spending millions on faulty non-HEPA air purifiers.*
 - Seamlessly enrolled and supported over 32,000 migrant students since July '22 through Project Open Arms, working in close coordination with other city agencies, e.g. OEM
 - *Many NYC schools report insufficient funding & staff to provide these students with services they need, & DOE intends to cut funding for shelter-based school coordinators.*
 - Meet the Moment: Developed comprehensive city-wide response to increase in antisemitism and islamophobia
 - *Still unclear to many what that policy is.*

Mayoral Accountability Talking Points (cont.)

- **Student Achievement: Up 12% in math and almost 3% in ELA**
State education officials have said these scores cannot be compared to year before as their standards, exams, & scoring has changed, yet the mayor & chancellor continue to do so.
- **Gains outpace the rest of the state (NYC at 51% ELA vs. 46% rest of state)**
See above; moreover, gains made by NYC on state tests are not replicated on more reliable national exams (NAEPs).
- **Student Pathways: Committing that all students will graduate HS prepared for rewarding careers and economic security**
Commitment means little, especially when too many students are crammed into overcrowded classes.
- **40% increase in the number of schools offering career connected learning**
It's unclear how many students are involved, especially given on-going planned budget cuts. According to Chalkbeat, DOE's goal is to reach only 40% of HS students by 2030.
- **Innovative new schools opened, e.g. Bard Bronx, Motion Picture Tech**
How innovative given there are existing Bard HS in Manhattan and Queens, and a Digital Arts and Cinema Technology HS in Brooklyn?
- **Increasing School Funding**
To the contrary, school budgets have been repeatedly cut since Adams took office, leading to larger classes in most schools & loss of services and programs.
- **Overhauled Fair Student Funding Formula**
The FSF formula remains flawed, as it's aligned to large class sizes and fails to provide many schools with sufficient staffing for a quality education; Chicago schools are moving away from the same system for these reasons.
- **~\$100M for schools serving students in temporary housing and concentrations of high- need students**
See above; also FSF formula retains extra subsidy for the most selective HS, despite recommendation of Chancellor's own FSF working group .
- **Holistic Support for Students - Food and Nutrition Initiatives**
Funding for school food was cut this year, & DOE plans to continue cutting food budgets every year until 2028.
- **Citywide mindfulness/breathing**
It would be useful to see a controlled analysis of the results of this initiative; yet none have been announced.

Consequences if we don't renew MC

1. Lack of Clear Leadership

- Under the prior governance structure, there was not a single person or body responsible for the city school district; the structure reflected compromises that divided responsibility between community school boards, superintendents, Chancellor, and citywide board of education, making it difficult to make meaningful improvement
 - *Checks and balances lead to better results than one-man rule, enabling input from experts and stakeholder groups*
- PEP will be replaced with a citywide, unelected Board of Education (BOE) – 9 total members THIS
 - *This will depend on what governance system replaces it. The PEP is now composed of mostly unelected members appointed by the Mayor who vote lockstep with him without discussion or explanation of their positions.*
- CECs will be replaced with 9-member Community School Boards (CSBs)
 - *Unclear; see above.*
- CSB members and voters did not need to be parents of child in a public school
- Outside interests and politics played large role in elections
 - *Now politics and the interests of business groups & wealthy contributors wield excessive influence in education policies (e.g. the charter school lobby).*

2. Inequality and Poor Student Outcomes

- Prior community school board control led to poor outcomes for students and gross impropriety
Inequality and poor student outcomes persist after 20 years of mayoral control, and there have been many cases of multi-million dollar fraud and corruption under mayoral control.
- For several decades leading up to mayoral control, elementary and middle schools had been governed by community school boards; this was intended to promote community input and control, but resulted in inefficiency, corruption, and mismanagement
The ability of Community School Boards to hire and spend large funds was eliminated in 1996, 6 years before mayoral control; there were few if any examples of corruption since that occurred.

Consequences if we don't renew MC cont.

3. More politics, less accountability

- BOE and CSBs will operate independently from the rest of the city, *resulting in lack of accountability for city school district as a whole*
The vast majority of school districts in New York & nationwide have elected school boards; resulting in more accountability, transparency, checks and balances, and public input.
- The BOE/CSB structure previously resulted in inequity among districts, kickbacks and inefficiencies, jobs in exchange for votes for CSB members, and poor educational outcomes for students
Far too much cronyism still exists in the current DOE system; plus CSB authority & scandals ended in 1996, 6 years before mayoral control
- CSBs were stripped of much of their authority even before the establishment of mayoral control due to inequity and corruption
True, but this undermines claims above.

Consequences if we don't renew MC cont.

4. Less Parental input and participation

- Extensions of mayoral control over the past 20 years have served to increase parental input and participation, transparency, and accountability
This is false, as shown by the hundreds of parents who spoke at the borough hearings, expressing how their concerns & priorities have been consistently dismissed; transparency has also been weak with data & other information denied to the public.
- “Mayoral control” looks quite different now than in 2002 when then- Mayor Bloomberg gained control: our current system is less top-down, with many more opportunities for parent and community involvement, including through the PEP and CECs
The system has not improved, with the views of parents, teachers, CECs and independent PEP members largely ignored.

5. Crisis Response

- Project Open Arms would not be able to be as effective under a non- centralized system, and local community control could allow some communities to opt-out of being a part of the citywide response.
Under any new governance system, there will still need to be centralized control over systemwide policies, such as enrollment, budget, and other critical issues.
- The city’s COVID-19 response was a massive undertaking that required the tools provided by mayoral control - rapid response, tight coordination, and the harnessing of citywide resources in support of schools.
See above; the DOE’s response was delayed and inadequate compared to several other districts with elected school boards.

What can you do?

- Use talking points with your community about why mayoral control is important, especially parents and elected officials (talking points available on Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent Summit Website)
Check out [our summary: 20 years of mayoral control: a failed reform](#).
- Continue to be responsive to elected official questions and requests
- Share the successes you see in your district
Send an email to your [legislators here](#) or at <https://tinyurl.com/endmayoralcontrol> to share what isn't working for your child, and urge them to improve the system by changing the composition of the PEP and creating a Commission to propose more fundamental reforms.
- Share one pagers with your local electeds (available on Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent Summit Website)
Share the [20 years of mayoral control document](#).
- NYC Public Schools will be traveling to Albany to push for an extension and we may reach out to you as we identify particular electeds who need engagement
Sign up for the [Class Size Matters newsletter](#) at classsizematters.org/subscribe to be kept up to date on actions you can take to ensure a better governance system for NYC students.