



Community District Education Council 26

New York City Department of Education

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Resolution on Improving School Governance under Mayoral Control of New York City Public Schools

WHEREAS, pursuant to Chapter 364 of the Laws of 2022, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) conducted a comprehensive review of the structure, accountability, and community engagement practices under mayoral control of New York City public schoolsⁱ; and

WHEREAS, at public hearings convened by NYSED between December 5, 2023 and January 29, 2024, testimony overwhelmingly identified the following systemic failures in the current governance structureⁱⁱ:

- Excessive concentration of authority in a single executive, reducing transparency on consequential policy decisions, including budget cuts that directly affect students and schools;
- Centralized decision-making creating a “one-size-fits-all” approach that disregards local community needs;
- Limited institutional checks and balances to constrain the exercise of unilateral authority by the mayor and chancellor;
- Too many mayoral appointees on the Panel for Educational Policy (PEP) and their lack of independence;
- Lack of meaningful community engagement, such that divergent and pluralistic views are largely excluded;
- Absence of meaningful policymaking authority for Community and Citywide Education Councils (CCECs), bodies established by law specifically to ensure democratic community input into school governance; and

WHEREAS, the public testimony yielded the following reform recommendationsⁱⁱⁱ:

- Reducing the share of PEP seats held by mayoral appointees to restore balance among stakeholder voices;
- Restructuring PEP membership to ensure proportional representation for parents and school communities;
- Strengthening CCEC authority relative to the PEP so that families and communities have genuine decision-making power at the district level;
- Holding public forums on major policy changes to allow for meaningful deliberation and shared decision-making; and

WHEREAS, the New York City Council Committee on Education convened a public hearing on mayoral control of NYCPS on February 10, 2026; testimony at that hearing substantially reiterated the structural concerns documented in the NYSED report, confirming that the identified failures remain unaddressed^{iv}; and

WHEREAS, effective governance of the public school system requires a balance of executive accountability, democratic representation, operational efficiency, and meaningful community participation, and reforms to mayoral control should seek to strengthen these principles while preserving the system’s ability to implement coherent citywide policy; and

WHEREAS, the statutory authorization for mayoral control of New York City Public Schools is scheduled to expire on June 30, 2026^v and Governor Hochul has proposed a four-year extension of mayoral control as part of the State Executive Budget released on January 20, 2026^{vi}; and

WHEREAS, Mayor Zohran Mamdani has expressed support for a four-year extension of mayoral control, citing the need for clear accountability and the capacity to execute system-wide policy changes across a school system of New York City’s scale and complexity, and has proposed the following reforms as part of that extension:

- Meaningfully engaging parents, teachers, and students in decision-making^{vii};
- Expanding awareness of and participation in CCEC meetings, with particular attention to accessibility for working parents^{viii};
- Expanding the authority and scope of CCECs^{ix}; and

WHEREAS, Chancellor Kamar Samuels has similarly supported a four-year extension, committing to give families and communities greater voice in how the school system operates, and has initiated borough-level community conversations with parents, advocates, and community members to gather input on governance and policy^x; and

WHEREAS, in April 2024, the State Legislature expanded the PEP to 24 voting members and CECs to 12 members; while the expansion was intended to broaden representation, it instead produced a governing body of unwieldy size^{xi}; and

WHEREAS, the governing boards of the 15 largest school districts in the United States range in size from 5 to 24 members, with a mean of 10.3 and a median of 9 members; the PEP's 24 members represent a statistically significant outlier among these systems, raising serious concerns about deliberative effectiveness (see Exhibit 1); and

WHEREAS, research on nonprofit and public governance consistently finds that decision-making bodies larger than approximately ten to twelve members experience diminishing deliberative effectiveness, as discussion becomes concentrated among a small subset of participants while the larger body functions primarily as a ratifying forum^{xii}; a 24-member PEP far exceeds this evidence-based threshold and, as demonstrated by the comparative analysis in Exhibit 2, is a pronounced statistical outlier among the governance structures of the nation's largest school systems^{xiii}; and

WHEREAS, under the current 24-member PEP, the mayor controls 58% of appointments (14 members, one of whom is an independent chair selected by the mayor from a nominee list provided by state leaders), borough presidents hold 21% (5 members), and CECs select just 5 members—the same number as unelected borough president appointees—effectively marginalizing the parent community whose children are directly served by the system^{xiv}; and

WHEREAS, Education Law § 2590-B provides that 5 PEP members shall be selected by CECs, yet that selection is not a democratic election open to parents at large; instead, candidates are screened and chosen by a small group of CEC presidents within each borough, excluding the broader parent community from meaningful participation in determining who represents them on the PEP^{xv}; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to § 2590-B, Regulation of the Chancellor D-200 “Composition and Selection of Members of The New York City Board of Education”^{xvi} establishes a process whereby a nominating committee screens applicants and presents a narrowed slate for election by CEC presidents alone—a process conducted without public notice or transparency, and in which parents who are not CEC presidents have no vote and no visibility; and

WHEREAS, the five borough president appointees to the PEP are a carryover from the pre-2002 Board of Education governance structure; borough president appointees, unlike democratically engaged parent representatives, bear no direct accountability to the school communities they govern, meaning their presence on the PEP as voting members dilutes the influence of the elected parent members; and

WHEREAS, CECs are intended to represent the interests of parents, and their most important duty as stated in § 2590-E is to “promote achievement of educational standards and objectives relating to the instruction of students,” yet the same section also states “the community councils shall have no executive or administrative powers or functions,”^{xvii} which effectively prevents CECs from fulfilling their statutory mandate, further disenfranchising parent voices; and

WHEREAS, state law requires CECs to “submit an annual evaluation of the superintendent to the chancellor,”^{xviii} yet no equivalent obligation exists requiring the PEP to evaluate the Chancellor—the executive whose decisions most directly affect the system's nearly 1 million students—creating a fundamental asymmetry in accountability; and

WHEREAS, state law increased the number of authorized non-voting student members on CECs to two in 2022^{xix}; however, the restrictive eligibility criteria—limiting candidates to high school seniors who hold elected student leadership positions—has produced an 84% vacancy rate across the city, demonstrating that the current standard fails to generate a sufficient pool of engaged and qualified applicants; and

WHEREAS, neither borough president nor public advocate appointees to the CCECs are required to be parents of children enrolled in public schools or to have any children in the district; Education Law § 2590-C authorizes borough presidents to appoint two voting members to each CEC, and Education Law § 2590-B authorizes the public advocate to appoint two voting members to each of the four citywide councils (one to CCHS), on the shared basis that such appointees “will make a significant contribution to improving education in the district”—yet the statute imposes no requirement that

either set of appointees have a direct stake in the schools they govern, undermining the accountability these appointments imply; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, Community Education Council (CEC) 26 formally urges the New York State Legislature to condition the extension of mayoral control on the enactment of the following structural amendments to Education Law § 2590 et seq., as necessary to address the systemic governance failures documented in the NYSED report on Mayoral Control of New York City Public Schools:

Improvements for the PEP (Education Law § 2590-B)

1. **Streamlined Governance:** Reduce the number of voting members on the Panel for Educational Policy (PEP) to twelve, to bring its size within the evidence-based range associated with effective deliberative governance;
2. **Balanced Appointments:** Six members shall be appointed by the mayor; at least three of those six must be parents or legal guardians of children enrolled in specialized programs (special education/IEP, bilingual or English as a New Language, or District 75), and one independent member who shall serve as chair of the board;
3. **Democratic Representation:** Five voting members shall be parents or legal guardians of children currently enrolled in New York City public schools, elected citywide through a democratic process administered by the Department of Education's Office of Family and Community Empowerment (FACE) using the established CCEC election infrastructure; any parent or legal guardian with an active NYC Schools Account (NYCSA) shall be eligible to vote;
4. **Independent Chair Nomination:** The independent chair shall be selected by the Mayor from a pool of nominees provided by the Public Advocate and the five Borough Presidents, replacing the current selection process involving state legislative leaders as codified in Education Law § 2590-B;
5. **Ex-Officio Advisory Expertise:** Designate Borough President appointees as non-voting Ex-Officio Advisory Members with the right to introduce motions, participate in executive sessions, and serve on standing committees, ensuring borough-specific perspectives inform citywide policy while final voting authority remains with the eleven elected, mayoral-appointed members and independent chair;
6. **Chancellor Accountability:** Require the PEP to conduct and submit to the Mayor and City Council an annual performance evaluation of the Chancellor, parallel to the existing statutory obligation of CECs to evaluate district superintendents, and require that the evaluation be made publicly available within 30 days of submission, followed by a written response by the Chancellor; and
7. **Continuity of Service:** Extend elected PEP member terms from one to two years to allow sufficient time for members to develop subject-matter expertise, build productive working relationships with DOE leadership, and provide meaningful oversight, consistent with term lengths used in comparable public governance bodies;

Improvements for CCECs (Education Law § 2590-B, 2590-C, and 2590-E)

1. **Decentralization/District-Level Flexibility:** Grant greater decision-making rights to district superintendents to tailor district-wide educational policies, in consultation with CCECs, to address the unique needs of the community, for example, improving access to high-demand academic programs that may be curtailed under "one-size-fits-all" policies that are centrally determined;
2. **Shared Decision-Making:** Building on the district-level flexibility granted above, and with respect to the statutory duty of CCECs to "promote achievement of educational standards and objectives relating to the instruction of students," authorize shared decision-making rights for CCECs and the district superintendent on the development of high-level educational goals for the district comprehensive educational plan; such shared decision-making shall include participation in establishing district priorities, reviewing proposed programmatic changes affecting multiple schools, and providing recommendations on district-wide academic initiatives prior to final approval by the superintendent;
3. **Increased Student Voice:** Expand eligibility for non-voting student CEC members to include any high school senior residing in the district who demonstrates civic engagement through honor societies, competitive academic or athletic teams, or student union involvement;
4. **Ex-Officio Advisory Status:** Designate Borough President and Public Advocate appointees to CCECs as non-voting Ex-Officio Advisory Members with the right to introduce motions, participate in executive sessions, and serve on committees, while reserving final voting authority for the democratically elected parent members;
5. **Quorum Integrity:** Amend Education Law to exempt CCECs from General Construction Law § 41 by defining quorum as a majority of currently seated (in-office) members rather than a majority of total authorized membership; unfilled vacancies can prevent councils from conducting lawful business, effectively suspending

community representation in affected districts (see CEC 26 Resolution “Mitigating the Effects of Vacancies in Community and Citywide Education Councils,” December 11, 2025);

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, CEC 26 urges FACE to take the following administrative actions to complement the statutory reforms above and ensure broader, more equitable community participation:

- **Meaningful Community Engagement:** Convene public forums prior to the adoption of any major policy change, providing communities with adequate notice and opportunity for meaningful deliberation before a decision is finalized;
- **Student Engagement:** Develop and implement a structured outreach protocol, in coordination with high school superintendents and school principals, to actively recruit eligible student members and ensure every CEC student seat is filled within 60 days of a vacancy arising. A comparable recruitment protocol shall be developed for the appointing authorities responsible for student seats on the four citywide councils — the Office of Special Education (CCSE), the District 75 Superintendent (CCD75), the Division of Multilingual Learners (CCELL), and the Citywide Student Advisory Council (CCHS);
- **CEC Authority:** Coordinate with the PEP to amend Regulation of the Chancellor A-655 to include the president of the District CEC (or designee) as a required voting member of the District Leadership Team;
- **Direct Democratic Elections:** Coordinate with the PEP to amend Regulation of the Chancellor D-200 to eliminate the nominating committee and allow for a full democratic election open to all eligible parents, consistent with the process used for election of CCEC members;
- **Elections Infrastructure:** Publicize the PEP candidate application period using existing outreach mechanisms, but administer the election of parent PEP members using the existing CCEC elections infrastructure, including NYCSA for voting, and publish a public election calendar no later than 90 days before each election date; contract the services of an independent advisory services firm to ensure independence of the election process.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, CEC 26 urges that the reforms described herein should take effect upon the enactment of the necessary amendments to Education Law § 2590, with elections for parent PEP representatives under the new structure to be administered before December 31, 2026.

During the CEC 26 meeting held on March 26, 2026, the resolution was reviewed and unanimously approved by all members in attendance.

ⁱ <https://www.nysed.gov/news/2024/state-education-department-releases-report-mayoral-control-new-york-city-schools#:~:text=FOR%20IMMEDIATE%20RELEASE,and%20review%20of%20mayoral%20control>.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7858190&GUID=406BCE21-05FC-4F94-97DB-AD186C587967&Options=&Search=>

^v <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/EDN/2590-B>

^{vi} <https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2026/01/20/hochul-budget-education-mayoral-control-school-funding-2-care/>

^{vii} <https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2025/12/31/zohran-mamdani-taps-kamar-samuels-as-chancellor-and-reverses-mayoral-control-stance/>

^{viii} Ibid

^{ix} <https://gothamist.com/news/inside-mamdanis-reversal-on-mayoral-control-of-nyc-schools>

^x <https://www.nysenate.gov/sites/default/files/admin/structure/media/manage/filefile/a/2026-01/updated-cks-state-budget-testimony-fy2027.pdf>

^{xi} <https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2024/04/20/ny-lawmakers-governor-hochul-extend-mayoral-control-in-budget-deal/>

^{xii} https://theliptonarchive.org/wp-content/uploads/1056040_1.pdf

^{xiii} <https://www.bain.com/insights/effective-decision-making-and-the-rule-of-7/#:~:text=Once%20you%27ve%20got%207,Michael%20Mankins%2C%20and%20Paul%20Rogers>

^{xiv} <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/EDN/2590-B>

^{xv} Ibid

^{xvi} <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/docs/default-source/default-document-library/d-200-composition-and-selection-of-members-of-the-new-york-city-board-of-education.pdf>

^{xvii} <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/EDN/2590-E>

^{xviii} Ibid

^{xix} <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2021/S9459>

Exhibit 1 – Number of School Board Members in the 15 Largest School Systems in the U.S. 2025

School System	Board Members
New York City Public Schools	24
Los Angeles Unified School District	7
Miami-Dade Public Schools	9
Chicago Public Schools	21
Clark County Public Schools	11
Broward County Public Schools	9
Hillsborough County Public Schools	7
Orange County Public Schools	8
Palm Beach County School District	7
Houston Independent School District	9
Gwinnett County	5
Fairfax County	12
Hawaii DOE	9
Wake County Schools	9
Montgomery County	8

Board Members	
Mean	10.33333
Standard Error	1.354592
Median	9
Mode	9
Standard Deviation	5.246314
Sample Variance	27.52381
Kurtosis	3.352212
Skewness	1.981187
Range	19
Minimum	5
Maximum	24
Sum	155
Count	15
Confidence Level(95.0%)	2.905312

Source: <https://www.edsurge.com/news/2025-01-23-how-enrollment-in-the-100-largest-school-districts-has-changed-since-the-pandemic>

Exhibit 2 – Outliers in Number of School Board Members of the 15 Largest School Systems in the U.S.

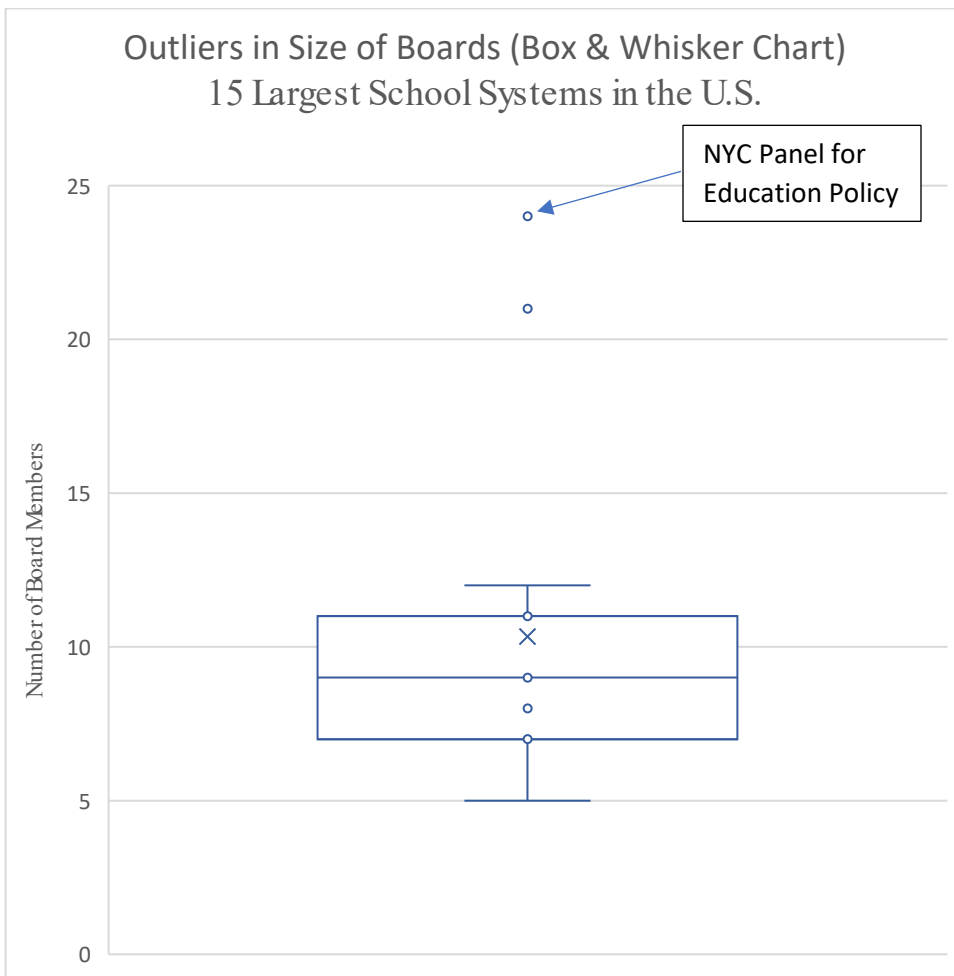


Exhibit 3 – Seated Student Members on Community Education Councils

CEC	# of Student Members
1	1
2	2
3	1
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	1
9	
10	
11	
12	1
13	
14	
15	
16	
17	
18	
19	
20	
21	
22	
23	
24	
25	
26	2
27	
28	
29	
30	
31	2
32	