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Give parents a real voice in school closings and co-locations

In a recent Quinnipiac poll, almost 6 in 10 New Yorkers believe that the mayor's takeover of our schools has been a failure, while only 1 out of 8 New Yorkers say that mayoral control should continue as currently defined. More than four times as many New Yorkers believe that in the future, the mayor should share power with an independent body than retain complete control over our schools. (66% compared to 13%).

It is time for public school parents, our communities, and our elected officials to have a voice again as to the fate of our children's public schools.

School Closings and Co-locations

Proposal: All proposals to close, phase, truncate or co-locate NYC public schools must be approved by the district Community Education Council in which the school resides. Before taking a vote, the CEC shall solicit advice from the affected School Leadership Team(s), the district Presidents Council, the Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council, and the Citywide Council on Special Education and other community organizations. In the case of high schools, the district CEC shall also consider the advice of the Citywide Council on High Schools, in addition to the organizations listed above.

Rationale: Public schools are the lifeblood of our communities. Yet Mayoral Control, as currently structured, allows one person unilaterally to determine the fate and future of every school and student in this City, irrespective of the views and input of all other stakeholders including parents, students, teachers, community members, and elected officials. Using this power, and despite damaging effects on NYC students and overwhelming community opposition, the mayor has closed over 100 public schools and proposes to close more than fifty additional schools this year. He has also pushed through many divisive co-locations which have undermined the education students receive, created "separate and unequal" environments within their own schools and buildings.

Community Education Councils are elected bodies of parents that, according to state law, have the authority to approve or disapprove alterations in school zoning lines. Since school closings and co-locations can radically affect enrollment, it is only logical that these bodies should have the authority to approve or disapprove school closings and/or co-locations. CECs should also have the authority to monitor the shared space agreements to ensure they are properly followed.

Endorsed by Class Size Matters and the Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council, 3/8/12.