

Good morning / afternoon members of the New York City Education Committee. My name is Stephen Stowe and I am the President of the Community Education Council in District 20 in southwest Brooklyn.

Every school district in this city is unique. The diversity that is upheld as a strength of this city must be honored in the governance of its school system. There are strong arguments to be made for centralizing control to ensure effective and timely decision-making. But that does not obviate the need to build a governance structure which honors and respects the diverse parent voices in our system

We recognize there will be no significant overhaul of Mayoral Control this year. Nonetheless, we believe incremental changes must be made. The Community Superintendent position is the most important direct contact for parents in a District. The current system enshrines CEC's as a voice in the process but grants very little authority over the Superintendent evaluation.

At our February meeting, our CEC unanimously approved with 1 abstention a resolution calling for reform to section 2590-E, Subsection 15 of the State Education Law. The section currently grants CEC's the power to conduct an annual evaluation of the Community Superintendent.

Specifically we request that:

- Allowing for CEC attendance and / or participation in the DOE review meeting of the Community Superintendent.
- Require that the CEC evaluation is included in the formal DOE evaluation of the Community Superintendent with equal weight applied to CEC and DOE evaluations.
- Require that the final DOE evaluation of the Community Superintendent is made available to the CEC.
- Require the DOE to provide a written response to the CEC's annual evaluation of the Community Superintendent.
- Require that a summary of the CEC evaluation and the DOE response is posted publicly on the DOE website.

We believe these changes will incrementally strengthen parent voice. However we recognize this can not be done in a way that leads to unacceptably high job insecurity for Superintendents. As elected parent representatives, our role is to establish a strong working relationship with the Superintendent. This is a complex and nuanced process and should not be reduced to the extremes of arbitrary and capricious criticism nor passive and resigned submission. We believe the changes recommended above will ensure these extremes do not rule the day and will strike a proper balance of motives in the parent-Superintendent relationship.

Thank you for your time.