

The Coalition for  
Public Education



Coalición por la  
Educación Pública

*Parent, Educator and Student Power! / ¡Poder de Padres, Educadores y Estudiantes!*

## A HUMAN RIGHTS BASED SYSTEM OF PUBLIC EDUCATION FOR NYC:



***Local schools with wrap around services supported by their community***

**AFFIRMING** that public education has the potential to be the cornerstone of democracy and that participation in shared decision making at our local public schools serves as one important entry point into that democratic process,

**RECOGNIZING** that the mayoral control “reform” -- like previous efforts to change the system’s governance without clearly articulating the educational purpose of the reform or facing society’s deep systemic problems of poverty and racism -- still leaves the city with schools that fail to meet the academic, social and emotional needs of our students;

**REGRETTING** that the mayor’s dictatorial corporate reform model with its emphasis on high stakes testing, a narrow test driven curriculum, competition, so called “school choice”, no real public voice in decision making, school closings that punish rather than support and privatization policies has failed to uphold fundamental principles of democracy, equity, transparency, system accountability, student-centered pedagogy, and respect for diversity and our local communities;

**AFFIRMING** that a more democratic, equitable and collaborative system is possible where local schools supported by the entire community provide excellent education and the wrap around services needed to meet each child’s right to reach his/her full human potential and their community’s right for social and economic development,

**Call** on the legislature to pass bill # \_\_\_\_\_



## SUMMARY OF BILL

**Broadly speaking the purpose of this bill is to**

**ESTABLISH A GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE**, independent checks and balances, decision making processes, grievance mechanisms, administrative guidelines and capacity building opportunities that assure parents, educators, community members and students are informed, knowledgeable and collaborative partners in the education system in NYC.

**CODIFY A SET OF WORKING PRINCIPLES THAT WILL GUIDE THE SYSTEM AS A WHOLE** guaranteeing that every child's human right to a quality education is fulfilled without regard to his/her economic status, race, gender, language, disability, sexual orientation or nationality



The bill is grounded in the following seven Human Rights principles. These principles along with the NYC Common Core standards when enacted and implemented overtime at the school, district and citywide levels into concrete policies, regulations, programs practices and beliefs will increase student learning and make NYC a model for urban education.

### **Individual Rights:**

Every individual child must have equal access to a quality education adapted to meet his or her particular needs.

### **Aims of Education:**

The aims of education must be directed toward the full development of each child's personality and potential, preparing all children to participate in society and to do work that is rewarding and adequately remunerative, and to continue learning throughout life.

### **Dignity:**

Schools must respect the inherent human dignity of every child, creating an environment of mutual respect and tolerance in the classroom, preventing practices and disciplinary policies that cause harm or humiliation to children, and promoting self-confidence and self-expression.

### **Equity:**

There must be equitable distribution of resources in education across communities according to need, so communities with the highest need receive the greatest resources.

**Non-Discrimination:**

The government must ensure that the human right to education “will be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.” This obligation includes respectful treatment and accommodation of the cultural heritages of school children and their families.

**Participation:**

Students, parents and communities have the right to participate meaningfully in decisions that affect their schools and the right to education.

**The Right to Development:**

Human beings are the central subject of development: economic and social systems should be in service of the right of individuals and communities to develop themselves by means of education, work, and other vehicles for advancement. The lack of development on the part of individuals and communities does not justify abridgement of their rights.

**The Right to Decent Work:**

Teachers and others employed by the school system have the right to see their labor rights respected by public school systems and charter school operators, including the rights to free association and collective bargaining, fair and adequate remuneration, dignity, adequate rest and recreation, and favorable working conditions.



## **When fully implemented, the new education system for NYC will**

**INCREASE** community awareness and participation in the development of educational policy closely related to the diverse needs and aspirations of the city's population.

**OPEN NEW CHANNELS** and incentives to educational innovation and excellence,

**ACHIEVE GREATER FLEXIBILITY** in the administration of the schools,

**AFFORD** the children, parents, teachers other educators and the city at large a single school system that combines the advantages of big-city education with the opportunities of the finest small-city and suburban educational systems,

**STRENGTHEN** the individual school as an urban institution that enhances a sense of community and encourages close coordination and cooperation with other governmental and private efforts to advance the well-being of children, their families and the community at large.,

**SERVE**, be responsive to, and be informed by all of its students, particularly the neglected majority: low-income and students of color, immigrants, and students with special needs;

**DISTRIBUTE** resources according to need and to those historically under-resourced by the impact of structural, racial and economic discrimination ending the inequities in the current segregated and unequal system that favors those with race and class privilege;

**ENCOURAGE** curricula and pedagogies that promote creative and challenging opportunities to learn, that emphasize problem solving and critical thinking, and that reflect and build upon the histories, experiences, interests, languages, special needs, and capabilities of all our students;

**CREATE** a system of assessment that de-emphasizes high stakes testing, requires multiple forms of accountability including work sampling and performance-based assessment, enhances quality education, and is an outgrowth of student-centered, and culturally responsive curriculum and instruction;

**RECOGNIZE** parents and family as our children's first educators and public advocates, and establish structures to level the playing field to insure parent, family and student participation in the education process and in substantive decisions affecting public education and local schools;

**VALUE** the role of educators together with parents, students and communities in improving our schools;

**REALIZE** the importance of collaborating with educators who develop caring, trusting relationships with their students and reflect and respect the communities that their students are from;

**ENCOURAGE** schools to build interactive partnerships with community members and community-based groups that support the overall well-being of students, their families, and the community.



To put NYC on track to achieve these broad goals and aspirations the bill provides that:

1. The New York City public schools will be reorganized into a Community School System, consisting of a federation of largely autonomous school districts and a central education agency.
2. In order to coordinate with their Community service Councils (made up of representatives from city agencies such as health, youth services, police, transportation, etc). 59 Community School Districts will be created co-terminus with existing Community Planning Boards. They will range in size from about 12,000 to 40,000 pupils- large enough to offer a full range of educational services and yet small enough to promote administrative flexibility and proximity to community needs and diversity.

3. The Community School Districts will have authority for all regular elementary and secondary education within their boundaries and responsibility for adhering to State education standards and moving towards fully implementing Human Rights principles.. District Education Councils will have authority to close, open and co-locate schools within their districts. They will also set up 2-3 Neighborhood School Councils within their district made up of educators, parents, students and community members whose function will be to articulate the curriculum of feeder schools within the neighborhoods and district and support the social/ emotional health of students and families within each neighborhood. The Neighborhood School Councils will also liaison, with both local businesses to provide internships and institutions of higher learning (academic & vocational) to stay abreast of entry requirements and scholarship opportunities

4 A central education agency, together with a Chancellor (Commissioner?) and his/her staff, will have operating responsibility for special educational functions and citywide educational policies. It will also provide certain centralized services to the Community School Districts and others on the districts' request.

5. The State Commissioner of Education and the city's central educational agency shall retain their responsibilities for the maintenance of educational standards in all public schools in the city. In addition the central education agency and the (People's) Board of Education will be responsible for developing policies and procedures with supports, benchmarks and timelines so that schools, districts and the system as a whole make progress towards meeting Human Rights goals as defined above.

6. The Community School Districts will be governed by District Education Councils. The DEC will be composed of **9-15 seats reserved for parents (one for each school?)** elected by parents, two students (selected by the student union district chapter) and two community seats elected by residents of the district. One parent seat shall be reserved for a parent with a child receiving special education services and one seat for a parent of an ELL student. The DEC will hire and supervise a community District Superintendent. Along with the DEC the superintendent's role is to be supportive of schools within his/her district as they decide how to implement Common Core Standards and Human Rights goals. These decisions will be made by consensus by the **School leadership team**. Each school's SLT (parents, students when appropriate educators, staff and community partners) hires their own principal as leader of the school community and then collaboratively makes decisions about curriculum, school policy and budget to ensure the full development of each child. The Superintendent along with the SLT will supervise and evaluate the principal.

7. The central education agency will be governed by a People's Board of Education that includes 15 parent members based on school age population. 5 from Brooklyn, 4 from Queens, 3 from the Bronx, two from Manhattan, 1 from Staten Island **These parents will be selected by an assembly of Community School District Councils in each Borough. ADDITION HERE.** Five student members, one from each Borough nominated by the Student Union chapter in that

Borough. There will be a seat for a parent of a student receiving Special education services, a seat for a parent of an English Language Learner and a representative from the adult education community. Their respective citywide Councils will choose each of these representatives (ie. Special Education, English Language Learners, Adult education).

Five additional non voting members will be selected by the People's Board of Education from a list of professional educators, academics, accountants, human rights experts, lawyers, former parent leaders, mediators, etc. who are willing to serve and able to round out the skill sets and expertise of the elected Board. These professionals will be nonvoting members. The Board will form working committees (such as curriculum and assessment, culturally responsive pedagogy, equity and inclusion, conflict resolution, finance, personnel, etc. These committees will include non Board members as well including academics, educators, parents, students, and community members. The People's Board shall hire and supervise a chancellor (Commissioner?) who must be an educator.

8. Community School Districts should receive a total annual allocation of operation funds, determined by an objective and equitable formula, which they should be permitted to use with the widest possible discretion within educational standards and goals, human rights principles and union contract obligations.

9. District Education Councils should have broad personnel powers, including the hiring of a community superintendent on a contract basis.

**10. All existing tenure rights of teachers and supervisory personnel should be preserved as the reorganized system goes into effect.**

**11. The process of qualification for appointment and promotion in the system should be so revised that Community School Districts will be free to hire teachers and other professional staff from the widest possible sources so long as hiring is competitive and applicants meet state qualifications and do not have a conflict of interest with their employer.**

12. District Education Councils should establish procedures and channels for the closest possible consultation with parents, community residents, teachers, and supervisory personnel at the individual-school level and with associations of parents, teachers, and supervisors.

13. The People's Board of Education and the central education agency will have authority and responsibility for advancing human rights principles and, *to overrule measures that support discrimination, exclusion or other practices inimical to an open society and human rights principles.*





14. The Community School system should go into effect for the school year beginning September \_\_\_\_\_.,

**15. The main responsibility for supervising and monitoring the transition from the existing system to the Community School System should rest with \_\_\_\_\_ ( State Commissioner of Education.) The principal planning and operation functions should be assigned to a Transition Commission made up of elders HOW & WHO SELECTED) and representatives from each stakeholder group (i.e. teachers, support staff, administrators and parents) that should work closely with the Borough representatives of the current Board of Education, the Chancellor and his Staff. The Transition Commission will have x months to complete their plan for approval by all stakeholder groups.**

**16. The Transition period should include extensive programs of discussion and orientation on operations and responsibilities under the Community School System and on educational and human rights goals generally. District Education Council members and members of the People's) Board of Education should be afforded opportunities for training and provided with technical assistance on budgeting, curriculum, and other school functions.**

17. An Independent Parent Union and Training Academy funded by 1% of state tax levy money (Title 1?) will be established with a citywide executive staff, trainers, organizers and local school and district chapters An organizing committee made up of \_\_\_\_\_ and chosen by \_\_\_\_\_ will develop bylaws to be submitted to a Parent Union Organizing convention by \_\_\_\_\_ Date. The Parent Union will train, certify and support parents as they assume leadership roles in their schools, districts and citywide. Policies & regulations affecting parents role in the school will be decided collaboratively between the Parent Union & the People's Board of Education.

**18. An Independent Student Union and Training Academy funded by 1% of state tax levy money will be established with a citywide executive staff,**

**trainers and organizers and local school and district chapters An organizing committee made up of \_\_\_\_\_ and chosen by \_\_\_\_\_ will develop bylaws to be submitted to a Student Union Organizing convention by \_\_\_\_\_ Date. . The Student Union will train, certify and support students as they assume leadership roles in their schools, districts and citywide. Policies & regulations affecting student roles in the schools with be decided collaboratively between the Student Union & the People’s Board of Education. Student should receive civic credits for their participation in Student Union activities.**

**19. An Independent Education Ombudsperson will be added to the Public advocates office and funded by the city**

**20. An Independent research organization will be established and work on contract with committees of the People’s Board of Education as needed.**

**21. The Comptroller’s office will audit all uses of public funds and have access to all relevant data.**

