

MAYORAL INVOLVEMENT IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

CURRENT STATE OF MAYORAL CONTROL

August, 2009

There are several different forms of mayoral control: full control and partial control. A mayor who fully controls their city's education system appoints the school board and school superintendent, and controls the budget. Mayors currently control the education systems in six U.S. cities:

- Boston (1992)
- Chicago (1995)
- Cleveland (1998)
- Harrisburg (2000)
- New York City(2002)
- Washington, D.C. (2007)

Boston was the first mayor urban area to adopt mayoral control in 1992 after a period of low student achievement and a string of superintendents. Mayoral control does not look the same in each city. In Boston the Mayor appoints a school board which, in turn, appoints the schools superintendent. Similarly, the Cleveland Mayor appoints members to the school board, who serve a fixed term and appoint the school CEO, subject to the mayor's approval. The mayor in Cleveland cannot appoint all member of the school board at once and members may hold over from one mayor to the next, depending on when their terms end.

The mayors of Chicago, New York, and Washington, D.C. enjoy the most control over their respective school systems than any other mayor in the country. All three have the authority to appoint the head of schools (called the CEO in Chicago and the chancellor in New York and the District of Columbia). In the District of Columbia, the mayor's appointment must be approved by the City Council.

Several mayors enjoy partial control over their school districts. This usually means the mayor selects part of the school board, and may exercise partial control or oversight over the budget.

- Mayor Michael Nutter in Philadelphia appoints the school superintendent jointly with the Governor of Pennsylvania.
- Trenton Mayor Douglas Palmer selects the school board and plays a role in selecting the superintendent.
- St. Louis Mayor Francis G. Slay appoints one member of the three members of the Special Administrative Board. The Board assumed all powers over the school district—including the hiring of the superintendent—when the state of Missouri took over St. Louis's schools in 2007.

MORE CITIES CONSIDERING MAYORAL CONTROL

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan—who ran Chicago public schools under Mayor Daley—has made it clear that he supports an expansion of mayoral control. Several cities are currently considering instituting a form of mayoral control, including Detroit, Dallas, Milwaukee. Detroit implemented mayoral control in 1999, but voters rejected it in 2004. Secretary Duncan, Michigan Governor Jennifer M. Granholm, and the Detroit mayor's office have all expressed interest in bringing mayoral control back to the city.

PROMOTING CHARTER SCHOOLS

New York City

Charter schools have played a significant role in Mayor Bloomberg's school reform efforts in New York. When he took control of the city's 1.1 million student-school system in 2002 there were only 17 charter schools in the nation's largest school district. There are currently 98 and the Mayor is pushing for even more.

Charter schools in New York have been quite successful. In 2009, 90% of New York City charter school students passed the state math exam. This is noticeably better than the city-wide average of 81% at traditional public schools and the New York State average of 86%.

Indianapolis

Many mayors have played an active role in promoting charter schools. In May 2001, the Indiana state legislature authorized the Mayor of Indianapolis to charter schools. This places Mayor Ballard in a unique position as the only mayor in the country to actually issue school charters. The mayor established the Charter School Advisory Board to review charter school proposals and assist the mayor's office in deciding which proposals to accept and which to reject. Charters are granted for seven years, at which point the school is rigorously reviewed by the mayor's office and its charter is either renewed or revoked. There will be 18 Mayor-sponsored schools by fall 2009 and 20 by 2010.

Mayor Ballard's office oversees a rigorous accountability system to review charter schools and evaluate their effectiveness. Charter school performance is assessed annually through a variety of measurements including frequent school visits, surveys, analysis of student performance data, and a review of school finances.

Representatives from the Mayor's office are very active in supporting the schools. Staff members make a pre-school visit to ensure the school is ready for students in the fall, meet monthly with school leaders, and attend every school governing board meeting. The Mayor's office contracts with an outside accounting firm to analyze each school's finances.

Charter Schools in Other Cities

While few mayors are as involved with charter schools as Mayor Bloomberg and Mayor Ballard, many are vocal supporters. Mayor Frank Ortis has been an outspoken proponent of charter schools in Pembroke Pines and sits on the city's five-member charter school board. Several mayors provide capital funding for

MAYORS DEVELOPING INNOVATIVE WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Mayors understand that education is one of the most important issues in a city. Good schools not only make a city more competitive in the national and international markets, but also attract new residents. Families consistently report that the quality of local schools is one of the most important factors in deciding where to live.

Most school districts in the United States are overseen by elected school boards. As a result, mayors in most cities play little formal role in public education, but they do understand the importance of ensuring children in their communities attend great schools. Mayors, therefore, have developed many creative ways to support and improve education. Below are a handful of some exciting and innovative ways in which mayors are supporting education in their cities.

Kansas City

Kansas City Mayor Mark Funkhouser is currently working on two education-related initiatives. The first is the Educating Summit, which will bring together hundreds of participants from diverse backgrounds. The goal is to create an action agenda for a reinvestment in education and a renewed commitment to children in Kansas City.

The second initiative is to replicate New York City's Harlem Children's Zone. The program is still in the planning stages, but aims to focus on children who face the most serious challenges in the most deeply wounded area of the city. The program will create a pipeline that supports every child from birth to adulthood in a defined geographical area. The Mayor has recruited and convened a group of critical partners and social service agencies. The group has put together a small budget and hired a coordinator.

Miami

Miami Mayor Manny Diaz partnered with Miami-Dade County Public Schools to develop a plan for the schools, the Education Compact. The Compact focuses on improving academic programs, meeting capital/infrastructure needs and increasing parental and community engagement to ensure that every high school graduate is fully prepared to enter college or a career. Miami schools have seen improvement under Mayor Diaz's leadership. Performance data for the past eight years shows that, after implementing key educational initiatives, the average

grade for City schools has increased from a D in 2001-2002 to a B average in the 2008-2009 school year.

St. Louis

Mayor Francis G. Slay has played a significant role in moving the agenda of school reform in St. Louis. Originally he convened a group of stakeholders from the various sectors in the region. This group endorsed a slate of candidates for the school board and held a common vision.

When candidates backed by the teacher's union's took over the board (several years later) and fired the reform-minded superintendent, the Mayor issued an RFP for charter schools (similar to Indianapolis.) The first of these Mayoral endorsed schools will open this fall. A second RFP will be out by the end of summer.

In addition to the pushing reform the Mayor has been active in/has lead efforts to: bring Teach For America to St. Louis, replicate College Summit, create a system to deliver high quality, daily after school programs throughout the city (with 3,000 new seats in the first year), created a Early Childhood Success Council, which was awarded \$1M ELOA grant targeting early literacy in hardest to reach communities, streamlined the childcare licensing process to increase the quality of early childhood programs, started a "First Day" campaign to encourage kids to attend school the first day, and led several drop out summits to bring attention to the crisis.

Oakland

In Oakland, CA, Mayor Ron Dellums established an education task force upon taking office in 2007. Many of the committee's recommendations were adopted by the Mayor and the Oakland Board of Education. One of the most significant initiatives Mayor Dellums has helped shepherd is the Teach Tomorrow in Oakland Program (TTO). TTO is a collaborative effort between the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD), Mayor Dellums, and the Oakland Education Association that seeks to recruit and retain teachers who are from Oakland and represent Oakland's diversity in culture, language, and experience. Local adults and college students are provided assistance with the fees, tests, and application procedures required to secure teaching credentials.

Mayor Dellums discussed TTO with fellow mayors and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan at the June 2009 Conference of Mayors in Providence. He explained that "providing our schools with quality teachers is a critical issue for urban mayors and urban school districts. Our children need teachers who live in the neighborhood, speak their language and share the same community experiences." TTO will place its first group of 25 teachers in fall 2009.

The city of Oakland has also implemented a number of anti-dropout initiatives, is hosting an anti-dropout summit with America's Promise Initiative, and provides funding for school-based health centers in all middle schools. As a result, students are provided healthcare services in schools (including dental, eye care, and mental health).

Tampa

Tampa Mayor Pam Iorio has initiated a number of programs that impact education and young people more generally. The Mayor's Youth Corps gives high school students chance to learn about city government and volunteer in Tampa. In 2004, Mayor's Mentoring Initiative was launched. City employees are given time during the workday to mentor students in targeted Hillsborough County Public Schools. Employees who take part in the program are given up to 90 minutes a week to spend quality time with students while also working on reading, writing, and math.

The Mayor's Arts Education Fund created to help music and art teachers buy supplies. Started in 2006, the Fund gives about \$30,000 annually to schools to purchase musical instruments and art supplies. The Mayor's Book Talk television show was created in 2007 to promote literacy. America's Promise has recently announced that it is providing a \$10,000 grant to hold a summit to improve the graduation rate to 90% by 2019. The planning committee is comprised of representatives from the city, Hillsborough County School District, and the Children's Board as well as other community partners and is supported by the mayor, school superintendent and CEO of the Children's Board.

Trenton

Mayor Douglass Palmer plays a large role in an innovative youth intervention program called YouthStat. YouthStat is a peer-review system for through open communication between all agencies of government and community organizations working with children. The program works with juveniles who have committed a crime and develops a unique individual intervention plan. It is based on the premise that no single person or agency has the ability to address all factors that contribute to juvenile crime and violence. These problems are best addressed with support and active participation of key stakeholders in the fields of law enforcement, education, social services, recreation, corrections, the Family court, and faith-based organizations.

Additional Mayoral Involvement

Mayor Dixon in Baltimore has provided capital funding charter schools that need assistance retro-fitting their facilities. A number of mayors also run school-based civic engagement programs, provide funds for security agents and crossing guards, and use their bully pulpit to advocate for their school districts at the state and national level. Mayor Patrick McCrory of Charlotte promotes mentoring and afterschool programs for students.