



Testimony to Joint Legislative Hearing on NYC School Governance and Mayoral Accountability

March 4, 2022

Thank you Chairs for holding this hearing on NYC school governance and mayoral accountability. Reinvent Albany advocates for transparent accountable New York government.

New York State has had a two-century long debate on the home rule power of local governments, including New York City. According to the last census, New York City comprised 44% of the state's population and [experts](#) estimate that, pre-COVID, businesses and people working in New York City paid at least 53% of all New York State taxes.

One of the core issues you are exploring today is whether State law should continue to grant the mayor of New York City the authority to run the New York City public schools.

We think that there is another important question that should also be answered. Why should the State of New York have the power to decide how New York City governs its school system? New York City has a robust democracy and sophisticated executive and legislative branches selected by New York City voters.

We understand it is a big political lift given Albany's penchant for meddling in New York City affairs, but we urge you to pass a state law giving New York City's mayor, city council and city voters the permanent right to determine how they want their schools managed.

Our general perspective is that public K-12 schools everywhere should be managed like other state and city agencies and have a commissioner appointed by the local executive and subject to local laws passed by the local legislature. Our experience as a government watchdog is that generally boards and commissions are less accountable, less transparent and less effective than executive run agencies.

Thank you for your consideration.