



Testimony of Reinvent Albany for the Joint Legislative Hearing on Elementary & Secondary Education

Re: New York City—Not State—Should Decide Who Runs NYC Schools

February 1, 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for the education budget hearing. Reinvent Albany advocates for open, accountable New York government.

One core issue 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. The Governor has proposed a four-year extension of mayoral control in her budget.

We think that there is a different question that should 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, with sophisticated executive and legislative branches elected by New York City voters. According to the [latest census data](#), New York City comprises 42% 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.

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 should be managed like other local agencies, with a commissioner appointed by the executive and subject to local laws passed by the Legislature – including laws about community engagement and transparency to ensure that parents of public school children are informed stakeholders. Our experience as a government watchdog is that boards and commissions are generally less accountable, less transparent, and less effective than executive-run agencies.

Thank you for your consideration.