A Study of the Impact of Mayoral Control and School Reform Legislation Upon New York City Leaders and School Administrators

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A STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF MAYORAL CONTROL AND SCHOOL REFORM LEGISLATION UPON NEW YORK CITY LEADERS AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

BY

WILLIAM C. JUBINO-GOMEZ

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Education
Seton Hall University
2007
Abstract

The overarching goal of the study was to ascertain if the changes underway as a result of the New York City School Reform act will have meaningful impact on the quality of education offered to over 1 million schoolchildren? Additionally, will mayoral control in the New York City public school system guarantee basic human rights standards? Will consideration be given to the associated conditions of poverty and limited opportunities? Will mayoral control contribute towards fighting disparities in resources?

The purpose of this research is to study the impact of school reform legislation upon New York City leaders and school administrators. In December 1996, the New York State Legislature convened a special legislative session and passed a compromise bill.

A qualitative research design that utilized semi-structured ethnographic interviews was used with the intention of collecting data from a vast experience base possessed by each of my informants. This contributed to a wide range of organized discussion. The primary focus was to analyze the informants’ individual attitudes, beliefs and feelings on our research topics.
Though the pace of governance reforms has quickened, the latest reforms, by themselves, will not help schools or districts improve student achievement. Past reforms, as well as the current governance change, have altered structures, but have not provided the incentive or support for improving the core relationships of effective schooling—the relationships between schools, parents, and communities.

Analysis of the data indicated that the system's top-down bureaucracy prevents flexibility in reform efforts, and keeps the power to change the system away from parents, students, educators and communities. These problems run too deep for any one change in policy or shift in governance to solve. A whole system change in education is needed.

Remedies that are envisioned include the need to reframe the New York City School Reform as a civic project. A comprehensive effort must be launched to incorporate a range of state, city, community and locally provided social, medical, library, cultural, and recreational services in and out of school. The services should be rooted in principals of youth development that seeks broader goals for youth.
Acknowledgements

A special thank you to Dr. Juan Cobarrubias, mentor, for his advice and expert counsel. Your patience, trust and continued support will forever be remembered. Thank you to Rev. Dr. Kevin Hanbury, reader, for your continued guidance and assistance. I also wish to thank Dr. Robert Hickson for your friendship, assistance and willingness to serve on my Dissertation Committee.

A heartfelt thank you to the exceptional educators and community leaders who participated in this study. Your experience, insight and genuine concern for others will have a lasting impact for generations to come. To the Martinez family and in particular Juan David Martinez and Juan Radames Martinez who have inspired hundreds to respond to a special calling to serve children. We stand on the shoulders of these two “giants”. To my lifelong mentor and friend Kenneth Diaz, most of what I have accomplished would not have happened without your daily support and prayer. To Jose Garcia and Barry Finkelman, thank you for leading the way. Thank you to Jamille Hillario, high school senior, who served as a clerical assistant during the preparation of the final manuscript.

A special note of appreciation to Sarah Zhuatkin, for your help in preparing the dissertation manuscript. Thank you Eileen Depaolo for your constant encouragement.

Most importantly, thank you to all of the teachers, administrators and support personnel who on a daily basis respond to the calling to educate and prepare our children for the challenges of the 21st century.

iii
DEDICATION

"If high salaries for school teachers and small class size and attractive spacious buildings equipped with beautiful libraries and computers are good for the son or daughter of a president or a member of the Senate or a CEO, then they're also good for the poorest child..."

Jonathan Kozol

My Parents

To my parents, William Justin, Sr. and Anna Gomez-Jusino, for the sacrifices made throughout their lives, so that their children could reap the benefits of the "American Dream."

My Grandparents

To my grandparents, Gervasio and Petra Gomez, who exerted the greatest influence on my life through their painstaking and faithful ideals of courage, hope and survival in a new land.

My Children

To my children William Luis and Amanda Mia who serve as my daily inspiration. I am forever thankful for my kids and believe I have one of the best relationships that a father could have with his children. They are the most beautiful gifts that our Heavenly Father could ever give me. They amaze me every day.

To my brothers David and Dennis and my sisters Lucy, Diana and Lillian - my life would have turned out so differently without your love, laughter and encouragement.

My Wife

A special thanks to my wife, Marta Joan Colon - Jusino, for your belief in my ability to soar to new heights. The advice that you provide will continue to support me in supporting the work of magnificent educators that we are privileged to lead.

NYC School Children

Most especially, this study is dedicated to the 1 million children attending NYC schools. Their hopes, dreams and aspirations rest with the decisions that we make on their behalf. How they are taught today will determine what our world will look like tomorrow.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPYRIGHT PAGE</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDICES</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Background</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of Study</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the Study</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayoral Control in New York City</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of School Decentralization</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics of School Districts</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Recentralization of School Districts</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Sensitivity</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elements of Grounded Theory</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Process</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informants</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant/Informant Profiles</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample and Data Collection</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Data Analysis

- Theoretical Sampling: 113
- Open Coding: 123
- Axial Coding: 124
- Summary: 124

## IV. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analysis and Findings of the Data</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing, Interpreting and Reporting Findings</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayoral Control</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Control</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is Reform Really Needed</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Considerations</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Impact of Racial and Ethnic Change</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions Explored</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## V. SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of the Teachers Union (UFT) in School Reform</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate Funding</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racism Creates Ineffective Schools</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations - Strategic Plan for School Reform</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestions for Future Research</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretations</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## REFERENCES

265
APPENDICES

Appendix A  Sample Interview Consent Form  280
Appendix B  Sample Letter to Principals  281
Appendix C  Sample Letter to Community Leaders  284
Appendix D  Letter to Deputy/Assistant Superintendents  287
Appendix E  Transcripts from Speeches and Testimonials  289
Appendix F  Identifying Themes—Coding Patterns  323
Appendix G  Transcripts from Recorded Informant Interviews  393
LIST OF TABLES

| TABLE 1: Informant Interview Log | 106 |
| TABLE 2: New York City Department of Education Organization Chart - Senior Staff | 152 |
| TABLE 3: New York City Department of Education Organization Chart - Regional Staff | 153 |
| TABLE 4: New York City Department of Education Organization Chart - Support Services Staff | 155 |
| TABLE 5: New York City Department of Education Organization Chart - Regional Operations Staff | 156 |
| TABLE 6: New York City Department of Education Four Year School Completion Outcomes - Class of 2004 by Race/Ethnicity | 205 |
| TABLE 7: New York City Department of Education Four Year School Completion Outcomes - Class of 2004 by Gender | 208 |
| TABLE 8: New York City Regent’s Graduation Rate - Class of 2004 by Race/Ethnicity | 209 |
| TABLE 9: Report Card for the Department of Education, 2004-05 School Year | 231 |
CHAPTER I

Introduction

This is a study of mayoral leadership focused on recent changes in the New York City public school system. In the course of studying urban school reform and more specifically, urban school leadership, I was particularly interested in a study that would provide focus on the needs of a large urban school district. For this reason, the New York City Public School system, the largest in the nation, was selected. The study will examine whether the new policies enacted as a result of mayoral control will have meaningful impact on the quality of education offered to over 1 million schoolchildren?

Additionally, will mayoral control in the New York City public school system guarantee basic human rights standards for children? Human rights are universal, and civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights belong to all human beings, including children and young people. Children and youth also enjoy certain human rights specifically linked to their status as minors and to their need for special care and protection. The human right to education -- to free and compulsory elementary education, to readily available forms of secondary and higher education, and to freedom from all types of discrimination at all levels of education.
It is of utmost importance to determine whether school children be provided with the skills and knowledge they need as a result of adequate resources in the classroom, less crowded and well built schools, movement away from the pressure and narrow focus of testing? Can a transparent system of accountability be designed to assess whether education funding is being used to improve educational outcomes? Will consideration be given to the associated conditions of poverty and limited opportunities? Will mayoral control contribute towards fighting disparities in resources?

Meanwhile, the Governor’s budget represents a commitment to full and fair funding for the schools of each and every child. At stake is a new budget proposal that includes a $3.2 billion increased investment in New York City schools and a $3.8 billion increase for schools in suburban and upstate New York. New York City will also invest an additional $2.2 billion in the New York City school system bringing the total new investment in education to $9.2 billion statewide including $5.4 billion for New York City.

At issue is the appalling number of New York children who continue to fall short of the federal standards. This clearly demonstrates the absolute need for an increased investment in
New York City schools. An astonishing 450,000 kids in New York City - more than the total population of the school enrollment in Chicago - are in substandard schools according to NCLB and other data released by the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) and the Alliance for Quality Education (AQE). Statewide, more than 725,000 students - nearly the size of the entire Los Angeles school district -- attend failing schools according to the same data.

These staggering numbers underscore the need for newly elected Governor Spitzer’s to fulfill his promise of new investment and the implementation of an accountability system that assures that the new funds are invested in strategies that work - universal pre-kindergarten, quality teachers and class size reduction (Campaign for Fiscal Equity, 2007).

The recent governance changes in New York City can be traced to the mid-1990’s differences when leadership requirements of urban school systems became a focal point for many researchers. Our nation’s schools, particularly those in most need, are poorly matched to current popular reforms and leadership formulas packaged like brand-name products for schools across the country. For those who lead urban schools, different expectations, different obligations, and different city histories require far more moxie, skills, and political
finesse than for their colleagues in middle and upper-class, racially isolated suburbs. The all-purpose reform solution now treats all schools as the same while neglecting the vital linkages between cities, their schools, and the country’s economic and social wellbeing (Cuban, 2001).

The New York State legislature in an extraordinary session, on December 17, 1996, passed a new statute entitled The New York City School Reform Act of 1996. The new school law was intended to specifically restructure the NYC public school system. After significant lobbying from former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, the city’s private sector and editorial pages and then, newly elected Mayor Michael Bloomberg, the New York State Legislature passed yet another school governance reform measure in June 2002 to increase the mayor’s investment in the city’s schools by consolidating governance authority in the office of the mayor.

The 1996 reform was perceived by many as an insufficient structural change. The 2002 legislation gave the mayor sole responsibility over Chancellor and superintendent appointments and mayoral control until the law sunsets in 2009.

Because three decades of decentralization failed to significantly improve the quality of education in most of the city’s poor neighborhoods, and because corruption and educational neglect were endemic in at least a third of the
city’s community school boards, demands for reforming the city’s school governance structure intensified throughout the 1980’s and 1990’s.

In February 1996, former Chancellor Rudy Crew took over two Bronx school boards, citing allegations of corruption. He then escalated his campaign to reduce the power of school boards, primarily by shifting their hiring and oversight powers to district superintendents (Mediratta, K., Fruchter, N., and Choi, J. W., 1999).

The Mayor and state legislative leaders called for centralizing governance under the Mayor, borough boards or an expanded central board, and offered a variety of proposals for parental participation at the school-level. In response, community-based organizations and parents began organizing for the creation of Chicago-style school councils through which significant parental decision-making authority would be lodged in local schools (Mediratta, K., & Fruchter, N., 2003).

The New York State Legislature convened a special legislative session in December 1996 and passed a compromise bill. This new governance legislation centralized and augmented Chancellor and district superintendent authority over administrative appointments, and expanded school-level authority over planning for instructional improvement and budgeting.
Community school boards were stripped of much of their power, retaining responsibility only for overseeing the superintendent selection process, recommending superintendent candidates, voting on zoning, and convening public meetings. The Chancellor gained the authority to hire and remove district superintendents, and to take control of poorly performing schools and districts, on the basis of persistent educational failure. District superintendents gained sole authority to operate their district’s schools, the power to appoint and remove principals and hold them accountable for school performance, as well as the power to allocate district funds and approve school budgets (Mediratta, K., & Fruchter, N., 2003).

An advisory education committee, the Panel for Educational Policy, with a majority of its 13 members appointed by the Mayor, replaced the seven-member Board of Education. Community school boards were phased out by June 2003. The law required the legislative task force to develop a proposal for forms of parent and community participation to replace community school boards, although whatever arrangements are ultimately legislated will have no formal governance role (Mediratta, K., & Fruchter, N., 2003).

After months of negotiation between the Republican mayor of New York City and state legislative leaders from both parties a
new governance bill was produced. It sailed through the Assembly on June 10, 2002, passed the Senate on June 11, 2002, and picked up New York State Gov. George E. Pataki’s signature on June 2002. The bill (A1627) altered the New York City school governance structure to provide for greater mayoral control; required that the Department of Education retain its role regarding educational policy issues and standards, including approval of any contracts that would significantly impact the provision of educational services, the budget, and capital plan; create a process to encourage real parental and community involvement; and require a strong maintenance of effort by the City.

Subsequent to the 2002 amendments to the school governance legislation, the Mayor introduced his “Children First” agenda, a plan to bring greater educational opportunity to every child in the New York City school system. There have since been three phases of Children First (each of which is described in more detail below), each of which is guided by three main principals: leadership, empowerment and accountability. In the first phase, the Mayor made significant changes to the structure and administration of the school system by dismantling the system’s 32 semi-autonomous school districts (though, under State law, these offices cannot be entirely abolished) and replacing them
with 10 Regions composed of three to four community school districts each (approximately 120-150 schools). Regional offices are led by Regional Superintendents who oversee approximately 10-12 Local Instructional Superintendents ("LIS"), who are in turn responsible for providing instructional leadership to a network of schools (approximately 10-12 schools) and their principals. Regional offices provide instructional leadership and assist principals and teachers with implementing new instructional initiatives to regional restructuring, according to the DOE, was to provide each school with "greater individualized support and supervision" and to reduce administrative bureaucracy, which was intended to generate cost savings (New York City Council, 2007).

In his second term, the Mayor announced another major phase of reforms, expanding the "autonomy zone" initiative into the "empowerment schools" initiative, which includes 331 schools, including 10 charter schools. Similar to the autonomy zone schools, principals of empowerment schools are given greater autonomy in exchange for greater accountability. In order to fulfill these responsibilities, empowerment schools receive an average of $100,000 in newly unrestricted funds and $150,000 in new, discretionary funds (New York City Council, 2007). The third and most recent restructuring, involves the dissolution of
the regional structure in favor of a return to local school
districts (32) the creation of high school regions. Principals will now have the ability to select from three (3)
governance structures. The first includes participating as an
empowerment school; the second as a member school in a learning
service organization and the third option is participating as a
member of a partnership service organization. We know from our
experience that these groups have much to offer. They are
unafraid to innovate and willing to challenge orthodoxies. So,
if principals believe that bringing in support and expertise
from outside the DOE is the key to their students' success, they
should have that option. These partner organizations might
include any of the non-profit intermediary organizations that
are already working with many of our schools. They might also
include other non-profits or colleges and universities (Klein,
2007).

The legislation represents the most significant overhaul of
New York City's school system in a generation, sharply curtailing
school decentralization and vesting broad new authority in the
schools chancellor to hire the people who run the city's schools.

After years of partisan and ideological fighting that often
seemed beyond resolution, the Legislature approved a bill that
stripped all hiring power from the city's 32 community school
boards. Under the old system, the local elected school boards wielded significant power over their districts. New York City's public education system is the nation's largest. As of January 2007, over a million pre-Kindergarten through 12th-grade students attend its 1,400-plus school.

Thirty-two separate school districts formerly managed their elementary and middle schools. Run by the superintendents, each district elected its own community school board to set educational policy. Schools report directly to the Board of Education. There is extraordinary variety across the system: schools of every size and stripe, and at every echelon from first-rate to failing.

They alone picked the school superintendents and the principals who ran the NYC's elementary and junior high schools. But under the new measure, the schools chancellor hires superintendents from lists offered by the school boards. If the chancellor disagrees with their recommendations, he can demand new ones. The superintendents, in turn, hire principals and other top administrators for each district.

City school officials consider these changes particularly important because principals set many of the policies that determine whether a school succeeds or fails. They say it will
insure that principals as well as superintendents are accountable to the Chancellor, and not to local political leaders.

But while the legislation consolidates much more power in the Chancellor's office, it also includes several provisions intended to increase the role of parents, teachers and principals in making decisions. The state legislature insisted on those provisions because many Democrats have been supporters of decentralization and would not have voted for the bill unless it contained something to increase parental involvement in school policy making.

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Chancellor Joel I. Klein gained unprecedented power over the public education of over 1 million schoolchildren in New York more than four years ago. Unfortunately, critics claim, since the legislation was enacted education advocates and elected officials claim that Mayor Bloomberg has utilized a leadership style that may be effective in the corporate world but alienates many parents — precisely the public needed to bring pressure on legislators — who feel excluded from influencing decisions about the system. "His problem all along has been a lack of buy-in with the stakeholders of the system: parents, teachers and principals. Most recently, the chairman of the Chancellor's Parent Advisory
Council, indicated that “an election every four years is not enough to check and balance a mayor, especially a mayor with billions of dollars. He added that the parents “are more frustrated than ever,” especially given the several reorganizations undertaken by Mr. Bloomberg and Chancellor Joel I. Klein.

One of the legislative provisions requires all schools to have management teams composed of parents, teachers, principals and other school staff members. The School Leadership teams (SLT) are required to meet periodically with the principal and give him non-binding advice on almost any educational issue from how much money to provide for athletics to what kinds of books to buy for the library.

Additionally, the Mayor and Chancellor sought greater parental involvement as a critical component of their Children First Reform effort - “We also cannot be successful in reforming our schools without the active participation of parents. From our end, we need to promote parent engagement, address parent concerns and create parent-friendly schools. In September [2003], every school in the City was allowed to hire a full-time Parent Coordinator who reports to the Principal. These individuals will engage parents in their children’s education and resolve issues raised by parents. They will bring programs
to their schools to provide parents with the tools they need to participate fully in their children's education.

Another of the Democratic provisions gives principals and the school management teams more say over the drafting of school budgets. Until now, the chancellor allocated a certain amount of money to every district, and the local superintendent determined how that money would be spent in each school. Under the new legislation, the principal, with advice from parents and teachers, develops a budget for his school. The superintendent then approves that spending plan.

Restoring public confidence in the public schools became a legislative and gubernatorial priority in December 1996. In the previous May, largely as a result of the New York City Board of Education Chancellor's steady criticism of community boards and voter turnout; election of new board members was the lowest in the 26-year history of the decentralization law (Bloomfield, Cooper 1997).

The 1996 Act considerably weakened the authority of the (decentralized) community school boards, instead giving the executive officer, the School Chancellor, much greater latitude and responsibility to hire, evaluate, train, transfer and fire community superintendents and remove or supersede elected
community school boards or individual board members (Bloomfield, 1997).

Governor Pataki, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, Senate Majority Leader Joe Bruno and the State's Legislators supported legislation to establish Mayoral control of New York City's schools for the first time since 1969. Under the new law, Mayor Bloomberg took responsibility for New York City's public schools and commenced a comprehensive effort to fix a public education system that was neither centralized nor decentralized and suffered from a governance structure with no accountability that yielded decades of inefficiency and failure.

This legislation provides the Mayor and Chancellor with unprecedented authority and would dramatically change the way New York City schools are governed. Mayoral control would establish an innovative way to provide leadership and direction to over 1400 schools. A new leadership paradigm was created.

With the new law, the nation's largest school system joined Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, and Detroit on the growing list of big cities that have put mayors in charge of their schools. The law, most of which took effect on July 1, 2002 shifted power from the appointed and elected boards that controlled the city's 1,400 schools to the financial-media mogul who was elected mayor that year (Education Week, 2002).
In a high-stakes political victory, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg secured near-total control over New York City's vast public school system. This state law, signed by the governor, represented the most profound governance change for the city's schools in 30 years. The Mayor now possess unfettered power over New York's public schools that would pave the way for his ambitious overhaul of the city's educational system, which he considered the signature achievement of his first term. But that law is set to expire in 2009, and faced with the looming deadline, Mr. Bloomberg has embarked on a high-profile offensive to make mayoral control permanent. At stake, the administration fears, is the long-term fate of his changes to the school system, which it believes will define his two terms as mayor much as the reductions in crime defined Rudolph W. Giuliani's years in City Hall (New York Times, 2006).

Though the final bill was far more limited in scope than many people had wanted, it still represents the largest change in the way city schools are governed since the Legislature voted in 1969 to decentralize the system by giving local school boards new powers, including the hiring of principals and superintendents.
Purpose of the Study

The central purpose of this research is to study leadership and school reform legislation in the New York City Public School System. This study will examine how mayoral leadership has transformed the New York City Public School System. In December, 1996, the New York State Legislature convened a special legislative session and passed another compromise bill. This new governance legislation centralized Chancellor and district superintendent authority. The Chancellor was empowered to have authority over administrative appointments. Additionally, he was granted expanded school-level authority over planning for instructional improvement and budgeting.

In June, 2002, after significant lobbying from former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, the city’s private sector and editorial pages and newly elected Mayor Michael Bloomberg, the New York State Legislature passed yet another school governance reform measure to increase the mayor’s investment in the city’s schools by consolidating governance authority in the office of the mayor.

I embarked on this study seeking to answer the following questions: Has this new authority resulted in improved educational opportunities for over 1 million NYC school children? After four years of mayoral control will this new leadership paradigm result in increased graduation rates,
increased test scores, equity and access to specialized programs, class size reductions and significant institutional savings that make their way to the schools? Is having the Mayor in charge of schools the best way to get things done? After four years of mayoral control will this new leadership paradigm distinguish itself from other major urban school districts?

The data from this study will be used to (1) study the influences of mayoral control and mayoral leadership on the NYC Public School system, (2) compare opinions of stakeholders, community leaders and school administrators, and (3) make recommendations for further reform of the New York City Public School system.

During the first year of Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg’s administration, the mayor sought to improve dramatically its school system and provide New York’s children with the first class education that they deserve. The cornerstone of the reform program was the dissolution of the Board of Education and the establishment of the Department of Education (DOE) accountable to the Mayor. The mayor’s choice to head the newly designated Department of Education was Joel I. Klein.

Joel I. Klein became New York City schools chancellor in July 2002. As Chancellor, he oversees more than 1,450 schools with over 1.1 million students, 136,000 employees, and a $15-
billion operating budget. New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg appointed Mr. Klein, a native New Yorker, as the first Chancellor of the newly-reorganized Department of Education.

Formerly chairman and CEO of Bertelsmann, Inc., a media company, he directs Children First, the multi-year strategy to reform the City’s public school system. Mr. Klein was Assistant U.S. Attorney General in charge of the Antitrust Division of the U.S. Department of Justice from 1995-2000 and Deputy White House Counsel to President Clinton from 1993-1995 (NYC Department of Education, 2007).

In the first four months since Joel Klein was named the first Schools Chancellor under this governance structure, the Mayor and the Chancellor embarked on an aggressive program of reform for the City’s schools. Improving the City’s schools is built on four themes: Creating Accountability, Increasing Efficiency, Strengthening Classroom Education and Encouraging Community Involvement (Bloomberg, 2002).

This has been an amazing year of transformation and opportunity for our City’s Schools. For the first time in a generation, New Yorkers can hold their Mayor accountable for the success or failure of their schools. No longer will parents search for who is responsible for educating their children, they can look to one person and one agency and know where the buck
stop. The era of finger pointing is over. Joel Klein has the support, autonomy and the accountability to fix our schools. However, the state legislature has only given us the opportunity to fix our schools; now it is up to us to prove that their trust was well founded (Bloomberg, 2002).

Chancellor Klein in assuming responsibility for the school system indicated that, "for too long in our City, the interests and needs of others have too frequently taken precedence over the educational needs of our children and, consequently, the system-wide results have been abysmal. Under the Mayor’s leadership and with my own strong personal support, we have devised a reform agenda that does what it says - i.e., put the needs of children first. To implement that agenda, we must manage and organize our system of 1400 schools and 1.1 million students in a way that maximizes our focus on instruction and that is not wasteful in terms of needlessly duplicative functions."

Chancellor Klein reported that the Children First agenda will introduce a system-wide coherent and comprehensive instructional approach to reading, writing and math accompanied by a rigorous professional development program for our teachers. To better support our schools, we are reorganizing our management structure to focus
resources on classroom instruction, to instill accountability at all levels of the system, and to empower our educators to do the best they can for our children. To nurture the partnership with parents that are necessary for student achievement, we are creating unprecedented access to the school system by appointing Parent Coordinators in every school, creating Parent Support Offices in every Division and establishing a Parent Academy to support effective parent engagement.

According to the Mayor and Chancellor the new authority granted has allowed them to undertake reforms including streamlining and functionally integrating the School Construction Authority and the Division of School Facilities; appointing superintendents in districts where leadership broke down thereby ensuring continuity; modernizing and downsizing central administration; and providing a standard and coherent approach to language and math literacy for the hundreds of schools across the City that struggle with a plethora of competing curricula. In addition, we are making our schools safer for students and teachers so that learning can go on in an orderly atmosphere, free of fear. "You have given me something that no chancellor has enjoyed, a true partnership with the
Mayor in support of high achievement standards for all public school children in New York City. I cannot emphasize enough how critical I believe this change to be. The new unity of purpose between the Department and the City has allowed us to make timely and decisive change in support of systemic school improvement. I am deeply grateful for your leadership and courage in adopting such fundamental reform.”

The mayor and chancellor have taken credit for a number of changes that were immediately instituted upon receipt of the new authority and power. These initiatives included:

**Strengthening Classroom Education**

**Ending Teacher Shortage:**

On June 10th 2002, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and United Federation of Teachers President (UFT) Randi Weingarten announced an agreement on a new contract for 117,000 employees of the New York City Board of Education, including 80,000 teachers. The 16 percent increase, conforming to the City's collective bargaining pattern, significantly increased teachers' salaries, making them competitive with the surrounding counties. Starting teachers now earn $39,000 a year with the top salary increased to $81,231. The much-deserved raise increased both the recruitment of new teachers and the retention of experienced teachers. These raises make our salaries competitive with our suburban counterparts and are attracting a new generation of teachers to our schools. As a result of this increase, the DOE hired over 8,000 certified teachers last year, the largest group ever hired in a single year.
Increasing Classroom Instruction Time:
As a result of the new contract, every teacher will teach an additional twenty minutes per day, resulting in more than a week of extra classroom instruction for our students—over and above the two additional instructional days added by the Chancellor in his first week on the job.

Improving School Safety:
In September, Mayor Bloomberg and Schools Chancellor Klein announced the creation of the Department of Education's Office of School Safety and Planning as well as the appointment of Benjamin B. Tucker as its Chief Executive. The newly created office works collaboratively with the New York City Police Department and the Mayor's Criminal Justice Coordinator implementing a comprehensive new school safety plan and providing support to all schools on the effective, coordinated use of disciplinary tools, truancy prevention programs, and school safety resources.

The Mayor and the Chancellor also announced a new data-driven strategy, known as Operation Safe Schools, which will focus on those schools with the highest rates of criminal incidents that continue to account for a disproportionate amount of school-based crime. Since the beginning of the school year and as a result of the School Safety initiatives, there has been an 11% decrease in the seven major crimes in schools and a 25% reduction in minor infractions.

Encouraging Parent and Community Involvement:
Office of Strategic Partnerships:
In October, DOE opened the Office of Strategic Partnerships to oversee the development and management of strategic partnerships between the New York City public schools and the private sector. The new Office, directed by Caroline Kennedy, brings together several disparate programs within the Department of Education to ensure a coordinated entry point for corporations, foundations, the arts community, volunteer and mentoring organizations, and the educational non-profit community.
The Office ensures that public-private partnerships are targeted to major reform initiatives and effectively integrated throughout the school system. The Office targets educational needs throughout the school system and then secures private sector resources for reform efforts. Strategic partnerships range from system-wide initiatives, such as those supporting literacy, small schools, or professional development, to individual school-business partnerships, where a Corporation "partners" with a particular school, providing in-kind gifts, mentoring and internship opportunities, and financial resources.

Parental and Community Engagement:
To build community and parental involvement, the Department of Education has embarked on a comprehensive outreach effort to listen to the ideas of parents, teachers, principals, superintendents, students, community-based organizations, corporations, foundations, institutions of higher education, faith-based organizations, and public officials. To date, more than 50,000 parents and community members have been engaged in this effort (Bloomberg, M.R., December, 2002).

The new structure holds the Mayor accountable for the City's schools, while providing avenues for input from parents, community and advocates. Under the governance law, the new Department of Education has a Chancellor who is appointed by the Mayor and reports directly to him. Also the law establishes a New York City Panel for Educational Policy with 13 members to advise the Chancellor on educational policy. The members are the Chancellor, seven additional Mayoral appointments and five appointments by the Borough Presidents.

Conversely, opponents contend that the New York model of mayoral control gives Mr. Bloomberg too much power over the
After four years of mayoral control there exist an increasing number of outspoken critics. Diane Ravitch, a historian of the city’s schools and a professor of education at New York University, said Mr. Bloomberg’s three years in office have prompted her to re­evaluate her own advocacy of strong mayoral control. To a large extent her concerns revolve around what she sees as “overly concentrated power that resulted when Mr. Bloomberg eliminated the elected and appointed board of education in favor of an all-appointed panel, a majority of who are named by the mayor. I feel very chastened, because I now see the value of a lay board rather than having the mayor and the chancellor responsible.” She has also indicated that the mayor’s control over the panel majority, combined with an atmosphere hostile to dissent, has produced an administration that, in her view, “operates with no meaningful public oversight” and “never admits mistakes.”

The current “mania for accountability,” with rewards and punishments for students, teachers and administrators, was borrowed from the corporate world. It’s like Enron, pointing to all the ways that educators can cook the books to make attendance, graduation rates and test scores appear better than they are. When the goal is the numbers, it leads to distortion
of the data. The connection to reality gets problematic (Gross, 2002).

This model of overly concentrated power was quickly felt when Mr. Bloomberg eliminated the elected community school boards and appointed central board of education in favor of an all-appointed panel, a majority of whom are named by the mayor. In addition, teachers and principals are being micromanaged so intensely—down to precise guidelines for their classroom bulletin boards—that morale has plummeted; academic programs fall short of being a true curriculum and lack a solid research base; critics have questioned whether the leadership that resulted in a rise in reading scores might have been caused by a change in the tests, or a decision that allowed large numbers of students learning English to be excluded from taking them.

The mayor and chancellor’s proclamation of success continues to be questioned. I’m not saying he’s failed; he may have succeeded, but what does success mean? That every teacher in every class has to teach the same way? Is it appropriate to take the public role out of education? (Education Week, June 8, 2005).

This study of the mayor’s role in schools in New York City suggests that “unbridled control can be counterproductive” and
harmful to children. According to Frederick M. Hess, the
director of education policy studies at the American Enterprise
Institute, “as school governance continues to be debated, it’s
important not to see mayoral control either as a cure-all for
what ails schools or as a danger to be avoided, lay boards of
education have their own limitations and shouldn’t be
romanticized.”

To improve schools, many aspects of districts’ functions
must be improved. School boards—whether elected or appointed—are
a key part of good governance. They offer community involvement,
transparency in their business, and continuity of leadership
when mayors leave office. Bloomberg’s policies can’t yet be
fully assessed, but the issues raised so far deserve public
attention (Education Week, 2005).

In recent months, we have seen articles in the mainstream
press exposing some major foibles of the “BloomKlein” hostile
takeover of the NYC school system. Norman Scott, retired New
York City educator and contributor to the Wave provided a short
list of “crimes and misdemeanors” committed by the NYC
Department of Education:

• Inflated graduation rates.

• Inflated test scores and cover-ups of massive cheating
scandals in addition to scores being pumped up by

26
constant test prep. “Test-mania fuels cheating at many schools, teachers say,” said just one headline that is just the tip of the iceberg. The overwhelming majority of school personnel will remain silent due to fear.

- Inflated boasts for the success of the small schools where there are no at-risk students for the first 2 years (and bet on discouragement of their enrollment forever) while destroying so many children’s lives and teacher careers in large comprehensive high school.
- Inflated salaries at the revolving door at Tweed.
- Inflated amounts given to consultants.
- Inflated claims for the impact of the reorganization that has left so many crucial services in shambles.
- Inflated claims that the money saved is going to classroom instruction rather than pet projects.
- Inflated (enormously) gifts to real estate developers to squeeze houses anywhere they want without making arrangement to provide for adequate schools.
- Inflated claims of class size reduction while NYC has the highest class sizes in the state, if not the nation.

Statement of the Problem

Amid the rush to introduce accountability-driven school reforms, local municipalities have embraced major changes in urban school governance. In the early to mid-1990’s, former U.S. Army generals have led Seattle and District of Columbia schools; an ex-U.S. Attorney was named school chief in San Diego in 1998; a former governor was appointed Los Angeles’s superintendent in 2000; and in New York City, the Board of Education appointed a corporate attorney in 2000 (Cuban, L. and Usdan, M., 2003). In a historic reversal, the law abolishes the
boards that govern the city's 32 community school districts, bodies set up during the Civil rights movement to give New Yorkers a say in running their schools. The New York City Public Schools were assigned as a new department in the city's administration.

The seven-member City board of education was expanded to 13 members. The mayor's appointments will increase from two to eight, including the schools Chancellor, who now chairs the board. The board had previously made the chancellor's selection. The presidents of New York's five boroughs will continue to appoint one member each, but their appointees must be parents of New York City public school students.

Under the law, New York's 32 elected community school boards, long criticized as being ineffective and rife with corruption, were abolished on June 15, 2004. These boards had chosen the local superintendents who manage the city's 900 elementary and middle schools; instead, the chancellor will make those appointments. Elimination of the community school boards occurred with the approval of the U.S. Department of Justice, which determined that the voting power of minority groups was not weakened.
Historical Background

The changes in New York represent yet another turn in the cycle of centralizing and decentralizing that has churned the city's school system for 150 years. In the mid-1800s, 17 elected local boards and a weak central board ran the schools. But by the 1890s, those bodies were under attack for corruption and inefficiency, so the state legislature centralized school authority under one mayoral appointed board (Ravitch, 1987).

The social tumult of the 1960s turned the wheel yet again. Black and Hispanic activists pressed for more community control of schools, resulting in a 1969 state law that created the 30 local elected boards and a central board of five members appointed by the borough presidents. In 1973, the mayor was allowed to add two appointees to that board, expanding it to seven (Ravitch, 1987). She argued that such a hybrid system made it difficult for an education leader to advance an agenda and for residents to establish a clear line of responsibility for educational failure (Ravitch, 1987). Education leaders caution that even such a profound governance change must be viewed as the vehicle, rather than the substance, of school improvement.

A governance change can provide the political stability necessary for reform, but that a sound educational strategy, backed by enough money, is crucial. There are two contrasting
In Boston, where the mayor controls the schools and has seen substantial improvement, and Baltimore, where the mayor was responsible for the schools until a state takeover in 1997 and saw little such improvement (Cuban, 2000).

Up until the late 19th century, most big city school systems were decentralized according to wards and other subdivisions. Even after the consolidation of New York City in 1898, each borough had its own school board and its own superintendent of schools. Only in 1902 with the appointment of the City's first school superintendent, was a single system created with a standardized curriculum throughout the City (Marchi, 1991).

The shifts from centralization to decentralization and back again are virtually meaningless because these reforms focus more on changing the status quo than on the best organizational structures for school improvement. In any specific case, decentralization reforms seem, at least on the surface, to provide plausible answers to the ills of public education. In general, however, repeated cycles of centralization and decentralization reforms in education have little discernible effect on the efficiency, accountability or effectiveness of public school. A debate ensures about the merits of centralization and decentralization. At any given point in the
debate the "correct" or "enlightened" position is usually clear, it is the opposite of whatever was previously correct. Each doctrine is well developed to the point where it can be recited more or less as a mantra by reformers and practitioners (Elmore, 1993).

Operating against the national trend towards decentralization is a tendency to recentralize. In 1988, a survey of large districts revealed that the percentage of urban districts that were decentralized had dropped from 60 to 31 percent (Ornstein, 1989).

The seesaw between centralization and decentralization has a long history. We know, for example, that the 1996 Act was not the first time that the State Legislature had changed the governance arrangements in the New York City schools. As summarized in Governing for Results: Decentralization with Accountability (Marchi Commission, 1991), until the late 19th century, most big city school systems were decentralized according to wards and other political subdivisions. Even after the consolidation of New York City in 1898, each borough had its own school board and its own superintendent of schools. Only in 1902, with the appointment of William Henry Maxwell as the City's first school superintendent was a single system created.
with a standardized curriculum throughout the City (Marchi, 1991, p. 58). Since then, lawmakers have continued to tinker with this centralization-decentralization debate in order to create "the one best system" (Tyack, 1978). In 1969, the New York State Legislature devolved power to its 32 regional Community School districts under the New York City Decentralization Law (Chapter 330 of the Laws of 1969) to meet activists' demands for "community control"; and then later an effort was made to decentralize still further—to school-site governance—under former State Commissioner Thomas Sobol's directive. (A New Compact for Learning, 1990).

Thirty-three years after the New York State legislature passed the Decentralization Act of 1969, school governance reform efforts continue to provoke debate and concern. Decentralization has become one of the cornerstones of the urban education reform movement (Stinnette, 1993).

The 1996 Act might appear to be just another round in the centralization-decentralization effort, vesting new control in the office of the Schools Chancellor. The image often used is that of a pendulum, swinging between lesser and greater centrism and decentralism, of more central bureaucracy versus more local autonomy (Wohlstetter, 1995; Sharpe, 1979). Richard Elmore
Elmore writes:

In any specific case, decentralizing reforms seem, at least on the surface, to provide very plausible answers to the ills of public education. In general, however, repeated cycles of centralizing and decentralizing reforms in education have little discernible effect on the efficiency, accountability or effectiveness of public schools. A debate ensues about the merits of centralization and decentralization. At any given point in the debate, the 'correct' or 'enlightened' position is usually clear; it is the opposite of whatever was previously correct. Each doctrine is well developed, to the point where it can be recited more or less as a mantra by reformers and practitioners (Elmore, 1993).

Even though the pendulum metaphor has a certain appeal and fits our notions of history repeating itself in dynamic cycles, this image is both incorrect and misleading: that the new powers of the Chancellor introduce a shift from procedural controls to
the key elements of strategic management, constituting a sea change in urban school governance (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992). Instead of changes along the centralization-decentralization continuum, the New York State statute grants the Chancellor and others throughout the system the discretionary authority and resources to attain qualitative outcomes, not merely to engage in mandated protocols geared to achieving regulatory compliance.

The debate over the role of parents in school governance is closely related to the centuries-old debate over lay versus professional control of education. The first schools in many American communities relied heavily on parents, who often hired teachers and shared responsibility for their room and board. But, from the earliest years of the Republic, political leaders questioned the wisdom of giving parents control over their children's education.

By the late 19th and early 20th centuries, however, professional educators had managed, with the help of a new generation of reformers, to consolidate their control over the governance of the schools. "Decentralized, ward-based, patronage-focused, lay-controlled school boards were gradually replaced by centralized, citywide, professionally directed, reform-oriented boards (Peterson, 2001)."
Tyack argues that educators of this era preferred a business model for education partly because they did not want to have to cater to the wishes of parents. And outside of urban areas, a widespread belief that small school districts were inefficient fueled pressures for districts to consolidate. Population dynamics, combined with school-district consolidations, transformed locally controlled institutions into the bureaucratized systems we have today. Between 1930 and 1972, the enrollment of the average public-school district grew from 200 students to almost 3,000 students (Guthrie, 1998).

At the same time, an average school-board member represented only 250 students 60 years ago; by 1972, each represented more than 2,000 students. The unresponsiveness of such large school bureaucracies came under attack in a number of cities during the 1960's, in what is now known as the "Community-control movement." The movement reflected rising dissatisfaction with the quality of education in some of the nation's largest urban districts, and was fueled by the frustration felt by many blacks toward the slow pace of integration in their schools. In New York City, where the movement reached its peak, it was sparked by the Board of Education's inability to meet its promise to open P.S. 201, in East Harlem, as an integrated school. Charging that both the
school board and teachers' organizations were insensitive to the
needs of the city's minority population, the Minority Community
backed away from its demands for integration and developed a new
strategy for community control.

In 1969, after a heated battle that pitted black leaders
against the school board and teachers' groups, the New York
legislature approved a compromise plan that divided governance
between a central board and 32 community districts. "Most
community-control forces viewed the legislation as a defeat," Mr. Seeley says. "They said it was a trick bag, not community
control." In recent years, some of the community districts have
been plagued by problems of patronage and corruption, leading to
calls for a fundamental overhaul of the decentralization law.

Some backers of the current system believe that it would work
better if more parents were elected to the community boards,
which in the past have typically been controlled by candidates
backed by unions and local political parties (Guthrie, 1998).

Decentralization as a reform strategy is not new. It dates
back to an experiment in New York City that began in 1970. Like
other cities, New York had experienced an influx of poor blacks
and Hispanics and a corresponding exodus of middle-class whites
in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. Leaders of these minority groups
regarded the school's central bureaucracy as unresponsive to the
needs of the growing minority populations and unwilling to improve the quality of education. Decentralization was considered a strategy to rectify that situation and, at the same time, increase the number of minorities on school faculties. Responding to these concerns, the New York state legislature passed the Decentralization Act of 1969, which established community-based school districts beginning in 1970 (Sunderman, 1996).

More recent decentralization efforts began in the 1980s when large urban districts like Chicago, Houston, and Miami (Dade County) started implementing site-based management. By 1990, seven of the eight largest school districts in the United States had adopted some form of decentralized management. Many of these efforts stemmed from the 1983 release of A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform, by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. This report argued that schools were failing to educate American youth adequately and called for nationwide reform of the school system. Among other reform strategies, the report specifically advocated deregulation and decentralization.

Research Questions

Subproblems or Possible Research Questions

Specifically, in this study, answers were sought to the following questions:
Research Question #1
Has this new authority resulted in improved educational opportunities for over 1 million NYC school children?

Research Question #2
After four years of mayoral control will this new leadership paradigm result in increased graduation rates, increased test scores, equity and access to specialized programs, class size reductions and significant institutional savings that make their way to the schools?

Research Question #3
Is having the mayor in charge of schools the best way to get things done?

Research Question #4
How did the NYC School Governance Reform law strengthen the Chancellor's authority?

Research Question #5
How did the NYC School Governance Reform Act make school officials accountable for student achievement and school performance?

Research Question #6
What is the respondent's personal experience with the governance changes in the NYC decentralization law?

Research Question #7
What was the NYC School Governance Reform Act seeking to accomplish? Is it happening, what not? Has it been successful?

Research Question #8
Is the school system generally better off under mayoral control?

Research Question #9
What is your assessment of the school systems' graduation rate?
Research Question #10

What is your opinion of the New York City Department of Education's Principals Academy training program?

Research Question #11

Are regional superintendents or local instructional superintendents conducting their charge of providing instructional support to schools?

Research Question #12

Has the reform act effectively lead to a decisive role for parents, community education councils and community-based organizations?

Research Question #13

After four years of mayoral control will this new leadership paradigm distinguish itself from other major urban school districts?

Research Question #14

What changes did the NYC School Governance Reform Act bring about at the community level of involvement in school governance and policy? (Let informants tell you what changes)

Research Question #15

How did changes in the NYC School Governance Reform Act affect the selection process for School District Superintendents?

Definitions of Terms

Throughout this study, each term identified was defined and used as prescribed below:

1. Community Leaders are those members of the community who are involved in assessing the impact of decentralization as representatives of the community.
2. School administrators are those who hold administrative level positions at the level of school principal or higher.
3. Elected Officials are those who hold elective office as school board member, city council, state senate or U.S. Congress.
4. Centralization - decentralization paradigm
5. New York City Decentralization Law (Chapter 330 of the Laws of the 1969) The New York City school reform act of 1996 was passed during a special legislative session concerned specifically to address the restructuring of NYC public schools.
6. Personal experience with governance changes is the perception of respondents concerning their roles and involvement in the decentralization process.
7. Persistent educational failure refers to a pattern of poor or declining attendance; disruption or violence; and continuing failure to meet the Chancellor's performance standards or other standards.
8. Governance Reform refers to strategies employed by states and school districts to improve schools.
9. Community School Board Member is an individual serving on the board of one of the community school districts of New
York City as specified in section 2590-c. Title II, Article 52, Chapter 16 of the Consolidated Laws of New York State.

10. Community School Superintendent is an individual serving as superintendent of schools of a community school district in the capacity of chief executive officer of the community school district.

11. C30 process: The process by which principals are permanently appointed to their schools.

12. C37 process: Process by which community superintendents are appointed to districts.

13. CBO: Community-based organization.

14. Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council (CPAC): The Council focuses on building strong coalitions of parents who are knowledgeable and active partners with the New York City Department of Education.

15. Children First: A multi-year effort launched by Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Chancellor Joel I. Klein, aimed at significantly improving New York City’s public schools. The goal of Children First is to create a system of outstanding schools where effective teaching and learning is a reality for every teacher and child.


18. Community Education Councils (CEC): Newly formed by the State education law, CECs will replace the Community School Boards effective July 1, 2004. There are 32 CECs, one for each school district.

19. Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP): The tool used for school planning that allows for a systematic review and
analysis of student needs and existing activities to determine how instructional areas can be improved. See information.

20. Corrective Action Schools: Schools that have not met their proficiency target for two consecutive years.

21. The Council of School Supervisors and Administrators (CSA): A union that represents its members individually and collectively in matters concerning salaries, working conditions and educational policies, and all other areas which relate to the administration and supervision of schools and that assists members in matters concerning their welfare.

22. CSE (Committee on Special Education): CSEs are responsible for ensuring timely evaluations and recommendations for students who are initially referred or re-evaluations of and recommendations for students already receiving special education services.

23. DC 37: The union in New York City representing clerical and family workers and school aides.

24. District 75: Citywide district for special education, which provides educational, vocational and behavioral support programs for approximately 20,000 students with a broad range of abilities, disabilities and support needs through specialized instructional environments and services.

25. ELA: English Language Arts.

26. ELL: English Language Learners (over 15% of NYC public school students).

27. ELL Instructional Support Specialists: There are over 100 ELL Instructional Support Specialists who each work with approximately six schools. They support teachers in ELL classrooms and report on the quality of education for ELLs.

28. Emergency Information Center (EIC): Must be provided with timely information on incidents or accidents being reported by our schools.
29. **Grow Report**: A system of integrated print reports, web tools, instructional materials, and professional development, which transforms the results of large-scale assessments into clear and effective tools for action. The Grow Network's reports and tools are based on data from the citywide and statewide exams taken by students in grades 3 through 8 throughout the New York City public schools.

30. **Learning Support Centers (LSC)**: Each region has at least one Learning Support Center, which houses the regional superintendent, student support staff and a team of "parent support officers." The staff members in the parent support office are charged with helping parents with any school-related questions.

31. **Local Instructional Superintendents (LIS)**: Each region has approximately ten local instructional superintendents who each oversee instruction in about twelve schools. They support the principals in each of their assigned schools and evaluate how well each principal is doing. The local instruction superintendent can be found in the learning support centers.

32. **Math and Reading Coaches**: As part of Children First, reading and math coaches were placed in schools to train teachers on the best ways to teach reading and math and provide support to the teachers when needed.

33. **New Century Schools**: Large comprehensive high schools that have been broken down into smaller schools.

34. **New York City Department of Education website**: [www.nycenet.edu](http://www.nycenet.edu)

35. **New York City Leadership Academy**: Founded in January, 2003 by Chancellor Klein, the Academy recruits, develops, and supports principals in the New York City Department of Education. The Academy's programs, which include aspiring, new, and incumbent principals, are designed to develop strong instructional and transformational leaders.

36. **New York City Teaching Fellows**: NYC Teaching Fellows is a highly selective fellowship that mobilizes talented professionals to commit to teach in our city's most underperforming schools. When schools continuously fall below
the state's guidelines for achievement, the school may then be designated as a SURR school (Schools Under Registration Review). These schools are targeted for immediate intervention and improvement, including placement of a NYC Teaching Fellow.


38. Panel for Educational Policy: A thirteen member body also known as the Board of Education, the Panel for Educational Policy is a part of the governance structure responsible for the City School District of the City of New York.

39. Parent Association (PA): A PA is an organization of parents of students in a NYC public school created and established by vote of the parents, which has adopted bylaws, elected officers, and holds regular meetings. Every public school in the City must have a PA. The PA may vote to become a parent-teacher association (PTA). The PA should be representative of all parents within the school, including parents of children in special education, English Language Learners, Title I, gifted, talented, and magnet programs.

40. Parent Coordinators (PCs): Staff members who work out of each school in the City and are responsible for helping address parent concerns and supporting parent involvement in the schools. The parent coordinators report to the principals in the schools in which they work.

41. PENCIL (Public Education Needs Civic Involvement In Learning): Founded in 1995 to develop meaningful civic involvement in the New York City public schools.

42. President's Council (PC): An organization of presidents or designated representatives of parent members of parent associations within a given jurisdiction, which represents parent associations on a district, regional, or citywide basis.

43. Principal for a Day: An initiative led by PENCIL in which leaders in entertainment, politics, business, academia, media and the arts visit schools across the City to meet students, teachers and parents in order to better understand New York's diverse school system.
44. Super visors of Parent Support: A person who supervises the parent support staff at each regional learning center.

45. Regional School Leadership Team Coordinators: Each region is staffed by a Regional School Leadership Team Coordinator (10 SLT Coordinators in total). These individuals work directly with regional and local instructional superintendents, principals and schools to provide comprehensive services, including professional development and technical support. SLT Coordinators act as facilitators to assist SLTs in accomplishing their responsibilities.

46. Regional Superintendent: Each regional superintendent is responsible for putting the new curriculum in effect, providing support to teachers and overseeing all aspects of instruction in their region. The regional superintendents each oversee approximately ten local instructional supervisors.

47. Regional Operation Centers (ROCs): The new operation centers and their directors are charged with handling much of the “back-office” work of the schools, from overseeing school budgets to providing food, custodial and transportation services throughout the City.

48. Supplemental Education Services (SES): Under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, parents of students who are enrolled in certain Title I schools and who are also eligible for free lunch are able to select for their children free academic assistance/tutoring programs, known as Supplemental Educational Services (SES).

49. Schools in Need of Improvement (SINIs): The New York State Education Department identifies schools that have not met adequate yearly progress in achieving state academic standards as “Title I Schools in Need of Improvement.” These schools include Title I SURR and Title I Schools in Corrective Action or Restructuring. These identifications are based on New York State English language arts and mathematics assessments of students in grades 4 and 8. Identification of high schools is based on students’ progress in English language arts and mathematics compared to students in the same grade citywide.
50. **SLT (School Leadership Team):** The fundamental purpose of the school leadership team is to determine the school’s educational direction—that is, the school’s overall educational vision, its goals and priorities, the strategies that will be used to achieve that vision, and the alignment of resources to accomplish those strategies. To carry out this charge, the work of the team will focus on two core responsibilities:

51. The creation of the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP), including annual goals and objectives.

52. The development of a school-based budget and staffing plan aligned with the CEP.

53. The team is comprised of parents, teachers, and administrators and its existence is mandated by the New York State Department of Education.

54. **Schools Under Registration Review (SURR):** Each year, the NY State Education Department places a number of low performing schools on registration review, based on recent results of the Grades 4 and 8 ELA and math assessments (for CSD’s), Regents cohort pass rates (for HS’s), and dropout rates (also for HS’s). Once placed on the SURR list, schools can be removed if they meet targeted improvements mandated by the state. A school’s status is assessed annually.

55. **School Report Card:** DoE report generated annually documenting several dimensions of school performance (including student performance, teacher certification, student/teacher absences, student demographics and suspensions).

56. **Tweed Courthouse:** The New York City Department of Education’s main office:

57. **UFT (United Federation of Teachers):** Teachers’ union.

58. **United Parents’ Association (UPA):** A federation of Parent Associations in New York City public schools. UPA believes that parent involvement is critical to improving student performance and that parents must be included as
partners at every level of decision making that affects children's education.

**Significance of Study**

This is the only known study of New York City's Decentralization Act accompanying bill (A11627) which alters the New York City school governance structure to provide for greater mayoral control; requires that the board of education retain its role regarding educational policy issues and standards, including approval of any contracts that significantly impact the provision of educational services, the budget, and capital plan; create a process to encourage real parental and community involvement; and requires a strong maintenance of effort by the City.

This study focuses on the impact of centralized leadership on New York City leaders and school administrators who are affected by governance changes in the New York City School Reform Act. It will be of interest to elected officials, school leaders, NYC Department of Education officials, school board members, community leaders and other stakeholders.

This study was timely as the mandate for school governance changes are new to political, educational, and community leaders. This study is significant because it examines laws strengthening the mayor and chancellor's authority. This study also added to the body of research in school governance reform.
Limitations of the Study

1. The present study is an ethnographic study, which is limited by its sampling method and responding sample, by the operational definitions of its variables, and by other aspects of its design. Accordingly, its conclusions must be tentative and any generalization must be made with due caution.

2. The target groups of this descriptive study were members of community school boards, community leaders, elected officials, and a former community school district assistant superintendent. No school superintendent or school board members outside of New York City were asked to participate.

3. The study was limited by the nature of the qualitative, descriptive survey research design, specifically; respondents were required to limit their answers to those identified in the questionnaires included.

4. A study of this nature, which will include a relatively small sample of community leaders and their insight, can only begin to identify current thought and opinions relating to governance reform.

5. Additionally, the voluntary nature of respondents interviewed in this study may indeed skew the findings since...
Thus, the study is limited by the reliability and validity of the instruments used to measure respondents' insight of the impact of decentralization on the community. Quantitative information related to individual responses was not included in this study. The study is limited by research methodology that requires respondents to recall information accrued over a 20-30 year period in an interview situation.

Summary

Even the most successful school governance reforms clearly are not enough to make significant improvements in teaching and learning. The business of public schools—educating students—cannot improve until certain challenges are addressed. First, school governance reform must devote more attention to the appropriate functions and responsibilities of each level of the school system. The central administration can perform bureaucratic and management functions, such as purchasing, hiring, scheduling, record keeping, transportation, and the budget process. The state government has a legitimate role in monitoring student performance, certifying teachers, and enforcing fiscal accountability. But local schools and teachers are the best equipped to modify their instructional strategies.
to meet the needs of individual students. Second, teachers and principals need better access to information on developments in curriculum, instruction, and school organization. Schools exist to provide instruction, yet new instructional strategies often do not reach those who could use them in the classroom. Third, teacher training must be ongoing. Teachers are the people who put policies into practice in the classroom. The teacher's choice of curriculum, instruction, and evaluation largely determines the learning opportunities available to students. District-supported teacher training should address core areas of instruction, assessment, student learning, and classroom management in order to improve teaching practice and student outcomes.

Fourth, school governance reform assumes that altering the authority structure in the schools will improve education. But such a simple solution is inadequate. It ignores the underlying problems facing most large urban districts - concentrated poverty and racial segregation. Metropolitan districts such as Los Angeles and Chicago that are highly segregated by income and race reveal a strong connection between poverty and low achievement. Our city schools require much broader, more comprehensive change to address the problems that more and more urban school children face every day.
Urban public education has proven extremely resistant to change. Although there are and always have been good urban public schools, the disappointing results of recent reforms have brought public faith in educators and the educational system to new lows. John Chubb and Terry Moe (1990) have argued that the public school system is fundamentally unreformable. They claim that the trappings of public control—legislative rule making, daily governance of schools by political boards, civil service employment of teachers, and accountability based on processes and inputs—are fundamentally incompatible with effective schooling. Their chosen agents of change are antigovernment forces—aroused citizens voting in referenda or Thatcher-style state and national leaders—that will disestablish public education as an institution and replace it with a market based on publicly funded vouchers.

There is a growing consensus in favor of greater school-level responsibility for instructional decision-making and student performance. Support for school-level initiative might simply represent a swing of the centralization-decentralization pendulum. But it also reflects the results of serious research showing that many different curricula and instructional approaches can work, if they are thoughtfully implemented by teachers and principals who accept responsibility for the results. For over 20 years, research
on school effectiveness has shown the importance of clear goals for what students are to learn, concentration of staff and student effort on learning, principal leadership focused on student learning, and habits of collaboration and sharing among teachers.

There is, however, great uncertainty about how to promote school-level initiative. Many site-based management plans leave intact the mandates, civil service system, and labor contracts that constrain schools. Superintendents have proven unable to keep their own assistant and associate superintendents from imposing new restrictions on schools; school boards have been unable to resist solving problems—with new mandates; school district financial officers cannot find ways to create school-site lump-sum budgets; and teachers unions cannot agree to site-level teacher evaluation, salary determination, or firing (Hill & Bonan, 1992; Malen & Ogawa, 1988; Murphy & Beck, 1995).

Our efforts at educational improvement often do not work to guarantee good schools for everyone. Reforms that focus solely on changing structures or school governance will never succeed in building positive organic forms that will form all our students. Reforms that bring new technologies or higher standards won't succeed without being embedded in supportive, spirit-filled cultures (Deal, T. and Peterson, K., 1999).
This study will investigate a number of basic assumptions that are driving the school reform and restructuring effort in New York City’s Public School system. This study will examine in detail basic assumptions relating to:

- When non-educators who lead urban districts are connected openly to existing political structures (including business elites), chances of improving and sustaining students’ academic achievement increase.
- Linking urban school governance to existing political structures will produce organizational effectiveness, which in turn will lead to improved teaching and learning as measured by standardized test scores and enhanced coordination with city provided offerings in recreation, the arts, and medical and social services.
- Better managers, whether educators or non-educators, will make urban school systems more efficient and effective by tightly aligning organizational goals, curriculum, rewards and sanctions, professional development of teachers and principals, and classroom instruction to academic achievement.

Unfortunately, little evidence exists about the impact of earlier governance changes upon academic achievement (e.g. 53
decentralization, community control experiments in the 1960's) and evidence is even more scant on the relationship between recent changes (i.e., nontraditional leaders, mayoral involvement) and students' academic performance (Cuban, L. and Usdan, M., 2003).

Though the pace of governance reforms and mayoral leadership, in New York City, has occurred in what many believe is lightening speed, the latest reforms, by themselves, may not effectively improve student achievement and graduation rates. Past reforms, as well as the current governance change, have altered structures, but have not provided the incentive or support for improving the core relationships of effective schooling—the relationships between schools, parents, and communities.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Political Perspective

Another way to consider the move to recentralize is that it can be a product of group and personal interests that might not be coincident with the district goals. This perspective is articulated clearly by Boyd (1982). If recentralization is viewed as a political change instead of a structural one, other factors emerge. A key question is, who are the people or groups who lobby against Decentralization and therefore may be expected to support Recentralization? Let us consider why and how they currently oppose school-based management.

Probably the most prominent among the groups that work against the implementation of decentralization is central office staff. Among the "best and brightest" personnel in the district, these important employees perceive that their positions, power, and budgets are threatened.

They become very concerned, especially with suggestions that central office might be restructured to offer support services to schools on a user pay basis.
Mayoral Control in New York City

Barrett, (2003) provides criticism of the mayor’s decision to bring the central staff to the Tweed building, located adjacent to City Hall. “It has had the advantage of putting it in the mayor’s backyard, but yanking it out of Brooklyn sends another Manhattan-centric signal from an administration already saddled with that baggage. Rather than moving into the most elegant, city-owned property, refurbished at a $100 million public price, Klein and company would’ve been wiser to locate in an outer-borough public school, and Bloomberg would’ve been wiser to get himself there, often and openly. The marble majesty and bubble élan of Tweed, so distant from schools with overloaded classes in bathrooms, just makes it all the more difficult to build frontline acceptance for all the change, much of it salutary, that Klein is forcing simultaneously. Closing community offices within blocks of most parents’ homes and concentrating real power in a fastidiously secure Manhattan castle (visitors must wear the picture ID guards take) is neither smart politics nor democratic education. It will eventually breed boisterous public frustration”.

Carver (2000), a governance theorist questions the familiar even cherished -- practices of school boards are strangling public education. Most of what school boards currently do is a
travesty of their important role. Much of what is published for boards -- including advice appearing regularly in these pages -- reinforces errors of the past or, at best, teaches trustees how to do the wrong things better. School boards don't need improvement so much as total redesign. And they are not alone in this predicament, for governance is the least-developed function in all enterprises.

A strategy for school governance with a business mold has been made popular in the recent work of John Carver (2000), whose Policy Governance model assigns the school superintendent a role parallel to that of the corporate CEO. Carver says the role of the school board is "to govern the system, rather than run it." He claims that school boards have traditionally micromanaged the educational process, something that would spell doom for any manager in a business setting.

Preparing people for contributing, satisfying adulthood is worth the most effective governance a board can achieve. If school boards must completely reinvent themselves to be worthy of their mission -- as I'm convinced they must -- then so be it. If that means much of current board training must be discarded -- as I'm convinced it must -- then let it be done. No role deserves transformation more than that of the nation's school boards (Carver, 2000).
Chubb & Moe's (1990) argument for introduction of market forces and school choice, and the education reforms advocated under Reagan. Beginning with A Nation at Risk (National Commission, 1983) and other education reform manifestos of the 1980's, there has been a steady push for standards, accountability, and regulation of schools, teachers, and students and an explicit linkage of corporate interests with educational practices and goals. Business rhetoric of efficiency and performance standards and the redefinition of education to serve the labor market has become the common vocabulary of educational policies across the U.S. Indeed, apart from Bush's proposal to use public funds for vouchers for private school tuition, his plan is not unlike Clinton and Gore's emphasis on standards and tests. It was, after all, Clinton who declared Chicago, with its high-stakes testing and sanctions for failure, a model for the nation.

Cibulka (2000) concludes that "public school educators may help to reshape the institution by their willingness to experiment with new institutional forms, but they are unlikely to preserve the 'one best system' as we have known it." He notes that "resistance to change" in old structures "is likely to further weaken the institution's capacity to achieve its goals, and to maintain its legitimacy and survival."
A study conducted by Kavitha Mediratta, Norm Fruchter and Anne Lewis, entitled "Organizing for School reform: How Communities Are Finding their Voice and Reclaiming their Public Schools", is based on surveys and interviews with 66 community groups organizing to improve schools in seven urban areas and rural Mississippi. It found that these groups played a significant role in creating the political context in which change can happen. These groups prompted schools to focus on critical issues and identified and built support for key interventions. Their activities also established a stronger sense of accountability between schools and communities.

Kirst, Michael W., Mayoral Influence - In several cities over the past 10 years, mayors have achieved a greater amount of control over school districts. According to the author, governance structure changes that give mayors more control must be understood in the context of each particular city. Still, on the whole, while mayors have been able to help balance the budget, improve buildings and increase school supplies, intervention in the classroom has been more difficult (Kirst, 2002).

experiences and the many inequalities he sees between the white upper class and the poor lower class schools. The atrocities he describes are heartbreaking. Kozol discovers that not only are upper and lower class schools not equally cared for, but in a supposedly integrated society, these children are segregated. Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians have their poorer schools while whites have their rich.

Meier, Deborah. "Can the Odds Be Changed?" An article on school community and small schools examines her amazing project with small alternative public schools in East Harlem with underprivileged children, she is starting all over again in one of Boston’s pilot contract public schools. She considers how to make the 'exceptional' school the norm, and discusses some of the system barriers to bringing the small schools community concept to scale. She looks at what kinds of flexibility in the bureaucratic system will be needed to allow these schools to thrive.

Ravitch, D. (1974). The great school wars: However, they have neither achieved nor even attempted true decentralization, which requires that power over the budget be given to each school—and taken away from the central office. It’s the golden rule of power: whoever has the gold makes the rules. No one has made this point more clearly than New York University scholar
Diane Ravitch. Her 1974 book The Great School Wars describes how New York City has played educational three-card monte over its long public school history by moving apparent control over decisions up and down the system, between the central chancellor's office and the local superintendents, but never yielding any fraction of control to the schools.

Tyack and Hansot (1982) note the educational system has undergone a great deal of change during the twentieth century, but the social characteristics of superintendents have not. Almost all superintendents have been "married white males, middle-aged, Protestant, upwardly mobile, from favored ethnic groups, native-born, and of rural origins" (p. 169). In 1991, 594 of the nation's 10,683 K-12 superintendents were women (Bell & Chase, 1993). The male dominance of the occupation is striking because superintendents rise from the ranks of teachers, 70 percent of whom are women.

Recognizing the political and administrative realities of school governance, the National Commission on Governing America's Schools (1999) recommended, without preference, one of two forms of governance: "(1) a system of publicly authorized, publicly funded and publicly operated schools, based on some of the more promising trends within the prevailing system of public education governance, and (2) a system of publicly authorized,
publicly funded and independently operated schools, based on some of the more promising alternatives to the prevailing system of public education governance."

A few economically based strategies for changes in school governance have been proposed since the publication of the commission’s report. Wang and Walberg (1999) recommend a system of governance whereby states and local boards would create basic standards that schools could devise their own ways to meet.

Civic, business, and educational reformers a century apart worked to make both cities and their schools vital places to live, work, and learn. In the century between the Progressives’ reform of urban schools and the reformers in the 1990's, other generations of leaders applied the solvent of school reform to national and urban problems (Cuban, L. and Usdan, M., 2003).

Prior to 1897, each borough had its own Board of Education and sent representatives to the New York City Board of Education, which had 19 members with the adoption of the new charter in 1897, however, there began a steady trend toward centralization. In 1902 the borough boards were abolished and 46 local school boards whose members were appointed by the borough president were established instead. Each of the boards sent a representative to the City Board, which had 46 members. In 1917,
the number of members in the central board was reduced from 46 to 7 in the interests of efficiency. The 46 local boards were retained but only in an advisory capacity.

This structure with slight modifications prevailed until 1961 (Cresap, McCormick and Paget, 1970). Zimet (1973), noted that by 1967, the New York City Public School system had grown into a vast complex covering the five boroughs and comprising 870 day schools, more than 2,000 pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classes, and about 100 evening elementary, high and trade schools. The school population was over one million pupils, with educational needs ranging from special schools and classes for the emotionally and physically handicapped to special schools and classes for the intellectually gifted and talented. This complex structure was staffed by over 60,000 teachers, supported by school psychologist, social workers, guidance counselors and school community coordinators, as well as, other technical and pedagogical specialists. It was administered by a highly centralized, many-leveled bureaucracy with headquarters at 110 Livingston Street in Brooklyn—the Board of Education.

Schray (1969), has noted that in recent years, the ability of a highly centralized school system to carry out its mandate to provide an educational ladder that was open to all children
despite their widely diversified economical, social and cultural backgrounds, had begun to meet with increasing skepticism. Referring to the fact that the public school had always been viewed as the great American social instrument, the device that converted the raw material of immigration into an endless stream of social success. Now, oddly enough, the school seems to be failing in the very functions on which its reputation has always been based. It does not seem to be able to bring the most indigenous of all “immigrants” the main stream or even to give them the educational qualifications that life in the main stream requires (Schray, 1969).

Rogers (1968) conducted a comprehensive study of the New York City Board of Education. Centrally administered public education has failed in New York City. In order to reverse that failure and change the structure to one that allows success, it is, of course, necessary to understand the existing structure and its contributions to the failure and the political and social forces that affect and are dealt with by that structure (Rogers, 1968). To a large extent the inability of the public school system to meet the needs of its changing clientele can be traced to the pathologies of an oversized bureaucracy. The central Board of Education had a system of formulas that dictated the application of programs to schools in various
categories without taking into account the gradations within each category. The effect was to minimize the flexibility and effective distribution of personnel and materials.

Headquarters officials were deeply preoccupied with forcing field personnel to conform to numerous rules and directives. At the same time, few headquarters professionals or Board members knew how poorly staffed and equipped the ghetto schools really were since they rarely visited these schools. Innovation by field personnel was discouraged. All decisions about curriculum and instruction were made at central headquarters despite its remoteness from local conditions. As a result, field supervisors became so accustomed to their limited authority and lack of encouragement that they practically abandoned any responsibility they may have had for innovating.

The backbone of the political science position on decentralization is the proposition that the closer government is to the people the more likely is to be responsive to their demands and interests. Interwoven in this grassroots notion of responsiveness are issues of democracy, constituent influence and control over organizational decisions, ownership of public institutions, trust, and organizational accountability. Proponents of devolution believe that decentralized units increase knowledge about, access to, and participation in
governance; make organizations easier to change; and prevent undue consolidation of power at geographically distant locations and hierarchically remote organizational levels (Murphy, 1991).

Restructuring advocates have consistently appealed to the purported political benefits of decentralization in their calls for the transformation of public education. Malen et al., (1989), noted proponents of this perspective agree that, by altering influence relationships in these ways, school based management [SBM] can make schools more successful with their clients.

Freire (1993) writes the notion of educational transformation involves the democratization of the pedagogical and educational power so that students, staff, teachers, educational specialists, and parents come together to develop a plan that is grassroots generated, accepting the tension and contradictions that are always present in all participatory efforts, thereby searching for a demographic substantively.

Freire points out that the issue of who controls schools is rarely raised in the US educational debate the politics of which content gets taught, to whom, in favor of what, of whom, against what, against whom is seldom critically understood. Such an understanding requires not only a thorough analysis of the structure of schooling and the ideology that informs it, but it
also necessitates a critical understanding of the structure of schooling and the ideology that informs it, but it also necessitates a critical understanding of the interdependence between schooling and socio-cultural and political reality for the society within which the schools exist.

Macedo (1995) characterized President Bush's America 2000 plan as having failed to articulate that drugs and violence in schools are directly linked to the savage inequalities in the society that generates despair of poverty, loss of dignity, dehumanization, and hopelessness. It would make immensely more sense if Bush's America removed students from the yoke of poverty, social injustices racism, sexism and other discriminatory practices that characterize their reality. A democratic society that acquiesces its public responsibility is a democracy in crisis. A society that equates for profit privatization with democracy is a society with confused priorities. A democratic society that falsely believes, in view of the savings and loan debacle and the Wall Street scandals, for example, that quality, productivity, honesty and efficiency can be achieved only through for profit privatization is a society characterized by a bankruptcy of ideas. If we follow the argument that "private" is best we should once again consider Jack Beaty's question: "would we set up a private Pentagon to

67
improve our public defense establishment. Would private is best-logic eradicate the on-going problems in the military that range from rampant sexual harassment, as exemplified by the tailhook scandal, payment of over six hundred dollars for a toilet seat to billions for planes that don't fly and Pentagon officials turn consultants through the revolving door effect (Beaty, 1992).

School transformation must speak directly to the undemocratic nature of schools, which is part and parcel of a colonial legacy. Educators must realize that beneath the democratic veil of schools lies a colonial historical will that has bequeathed us the rampant social inequality along the lines of race, class, gender, language, and ethnicity. Once educators became cognizant of the colonial ideology that still informs our schools, they can begin to create pedagogical structures that will lead to a total decolonization so as to achieve democratization.

Decentralization is the popular centerpiece of the current wave of education reform. The idea has been promoted through a variety of recent commission reports, including those by the Carnegie Commission on Teaching as a Profession (1986), the Education Commission of the States (1986), and the National Governors' Association (1986), as a way to include community
more fully in school decision making. In addition, the literature on effective schools has argued that school-based management is an important means of improving student performance (Purkey and Smith 1985). President Bush and the nation's governors placed restructuring on the government's agenda at the 1989 Education Summit when they recommended improving schools by decentralizing management. By the end of 1989, fourteen states had sponsored school-based management projects and numerous local districts had initiated school restructuring experiments of their own. (see Council of Chief State School Officers [1989] for highlights of state and local school district restructuring efforts).

Cloaked in many terms--restructuring, school-based management, shared decision-making, school decentralization--shifts formal decision making from the central administration to a smaller decision-making arena--the community and the school. Decentralized schools alter the educational power structure by empowering school personnel, community groups, or both to make decisions about budgets, personnel, and programs.

Earlier studies of decentralization suggest that decisions to decentralize vary from city to city and that the range of possible structural and educational outcomes is diverse (Clune and White 1988; Malen, Ogawa, and Kranz 1989). What is not known
about decentralization is how the composition and interests of decision makers and other policy players effect new governance structures and, hence, the likelihood of successful implementation and significant educational improvement. The study reported here, examined the decision to decentralize in three large urban school districts (Chicago, Los Angeles, and Miami), analyzes the relationship between the political context of districts and the districts' choice of decentralization policy— who governs and with what effects.

Characteristics of School Decentralization

This study focuses on identifying what policy consequences emerge from different patterns of power and leadership. In general, we expected that district politics would affect decentralization policies in three ways:

- the form of decentralization adopted;
- the extremeness or degree of decentralization, that is, the extent of difference from past management practice; and
- the catalyst for change.

The literature on school decentralization distinguishes between two forms of decentralization: administrative decentralization and community control. In the first model, school districts are divided into smaller field units that are empowered to make some decisions formerly made by the central
administration (Ornstein 1974). Even though decision-making authority is delegated down the ranks of the hierarchy, accountability remains directed upward (Hanson 1979). Thus the locus of authority remains with the central administration and board of education.

By contrast, community control, referred to in the 1980s as local empowerment, shifts power from professionals and the board of education to community groups not previously involved in school governance. Thus laypersons, not the professional hierarchy, are in control, and accountability is directed outward toward the community (Ornstein 1974, 1983).

A second way to characterize decentralization efforts is by the extremeness or degree of change it represents from past management practice. Decentralization is most radical when groups heretofore excluded are in power, and change is slight when decision making is retained in the school organization by the original decision makers or by a few groups or individuals in the organization (Levy 1966; Wissler and Ortiz 1986). In addition, Ornstein (1974) defines degree in terms of power:

Community control of the schools carried to the fullest extent implies total governance by the community. over personnel (hiring, firing, and promoting), curriculum
course electives, textbooks, and evaluation), student policy (student-teacher relationships, discipline, and testing), and financing (federal funding, allocation of money, and determination of the budget).

Extrapolating from Ornstein’s definition, administrative decentralization at the extreme implies governance by the field unit over personnel, curriculum, student policy, and financing.

Politics of School Decentralization

School decentralization also may be characterized by who precipitates the restructuring process (Wissler and Ortiz 1988). Some efforts to decentralize are internal choices decided by members of the district organization in response to demands of school constituencies. Other efforts are external decisions imposed on the district by, for instance, the state legislature mandating reform in the name of school improvement.

Case studies of decentralization efforts in the 1960s and 1970s suggest that the catalyst for the reform strongly influenced the form of decentralization adopted. When the demand for decentralization arose within the district, from the superintendent or teachers’ union, for example, the response was an internal change—administrative decentralization—and power was not shifted outside the district organization to the
community (Fantini and Gittell 1973; Greenberg and Johnston 1972; Thompson 1967). On the other hand, when the push for decentralization came from outside the district, it often ended in a change of power that involved external actors in school district affairs (Fantini and Gittell 1973; Greenberg and Johnston 1972; McCurdy 1989; O'Shea 1975; Peterson 1976).

School personnel and administrators expect administrative decentralization when decentralization reflects an internal choice. Likewise, local empowerment is expected when the decision to decentralize is imposed on a district by outsiders, namely, groups and individuals who were not part of the local school district organization.

One way to analyze the politics of school districts is with the conceptual framework of a community power structure, originally developed by political scientists studying urban politics (Clark 1968; Dahl 1961; Hunter 1953; Walton 1970). A community power structure is based on the idea that power in a city is dispersed across groups with multiple interests that compete to influence decision making. Hence, for major decisions made by cities, policy outcomes emerge from different patterns of power and leadership (city politics).
In the education arena, the community-structure paradigm was first applied by Crain in his 1968 study of desegregation policies in fifteen cities in the United States. His work suggested that power over school districts was dispersed across multiple actors—some of whom were outside the district organization and others of whom were inside—creating an "educational power structure." Crain found that cities resembling each other in their handling of desegregation also had fundamental similarities in their educational power structures, with school board decisions being determined by the amount of influence held by outside actors.

In this study, the decision to decentralize was expected to reflect the balance of power between actors within the school district organization and those outside the district organization. When actors outside the system dominate, we expected to find a reform that disburses power toward the community, such as local empowerment. Conversely, administrative decentralization would occur when the balance of power rests with actors within the school district organization.

Leadership, the second dimension of school district politics, was defined in this study by three measures: (1) level of conflict among inside actors, (2) perceived effectiveness of inside actors, and (3) stability of inside actors.
Level of Conflict

In his 1968 study of desegregation policies, references found that the level of conflict among school board members greatly affected the choice of a final desegregation plan. Boards with high levels of conflict were less able to make decisions regarding desegregation and often took no action either for or against integration. A similar outcome was expected in the case of decentralization reform: conflict among actors within the school district would limit their policy-making ability and provide an opportunity for outside actors to take control of the reform process.

Perceived Effectiveness

In analyzing 1960s decentralization reform in Detroit and New York, McCurdy (1989) argued that outside actors, and specifically the state, intervened and mandated reform because district leadership was faltering:

In both New York City and Detroit race riots over desegregation issues created a crisis of public authority. The failure of local school leaders to prevent the riots may have led to the weakening of the traditional educational leadership and allowed external forces to impose a reform.
In this study, actors outside the school district, such as the state legislature, also were expected to step in and impose decentralization when insiders were perceived as ineffective.

Stability Of Inside Actors

In their study of efforts in Riverside, California, to decentralize during the 1960s and 1970s, Wissler and Ortiz (1988) found that the district superintendent (who pushed for administrative decentralization) successfully implemented the reform gradually with the full support of school board members and without interference from actors outside the district organization, such as the state legislature.

The authors concluded, moreover, that the stability of the superintendent in terms of experience in the school district and length of time in a leadership position helped him implement the reform of his choice. Hence, in the present study, stability among inside actors was expected to enhance district leadership and the ability of insiders to control the decision to decentralize.

The Recentralization of School Districts

The prospect is advanced that school districts which are introducing school-based management now may recentralize their decision-making authority later: A study of five decentralized districts revealed many reasons why recentralization could
occurrences. An important distinction between two kinds of decentralization was made: one organizational (in which decisions are delegated), the other political (in which authority is given fully to autonomous groups). Structural reasons for recentralization included lack of provision for accountability, lack of evidence of effectiveness, and the advent of retrenchment. Political reasons for recentralization included the unwillingness of central office staff to share power.

Warnings about the ebb and flow of reforms in education are out. Miles and Ekholm (1991) reminded us that changes do not stay in place automatically. The larger picture of educational reforms reveals that the present directions have their historical antecedents: that reform efforts are episodic and that the pendulum metaphor may be an appropriate one (Warren, 1990). Movements to centralize or decentralize are not new but part of a cyclic pattern observable in quite recent educational experience (Cuban, 1990).

The idea of reform failure leads to the simple but sobering suggestion that the thrust toward decentralization today (with the hope that it will make schools more productive and accountable using the talents of individuals and groups) will become spent and be replaced with at least some movement toward
recentralization. Yet such a pessimistic thought runs contrary to the evidence that school-based management has some substantial merits, particularly in the flexibility that it offers schools (Brown, 1990).

Structural Perspective

Regardless of its form (organizational or political), decentralization is based on three key beliefs. First, personnel in school districts need to assume that some variability is good. Schools need not be strictly uniform in the programs offered or the resources deployed to support student learning. Second, schools often know best. This thought means that employees and parents at the school level have the immediate information to make the most sensible decisions for the welfare of children. Third, schools are usually trustworthy. School personnel and/or parents will normally keep the best interests of "their" children in mind (Brown, 1990, 1991). When one or more of these key beliefs is eroded, recentralization appears to be more probable.

Summary

Decentralization is clearly a structural change in school districts (Brown 1990). When school-based management is viewed in that way, three main reasons emerge as to why a district
might recentralize. One reason is the demand for accountability. School boards want to know where the money goes--how much and what for? When schools are given the flexibility to control their own budgets and specify the numbers and kinds of teachers, support staff, equipment, and supplies, boards want the assurance that the money was justifiably spent. Moreover, they want to know the results if they can be specified. Decentralized districts usually have budgetary reviews by board members. But they often do not incorporate satisfaction surveys (for parents, students and employees). When this omission occurs, boards have no assurance that school performance in the sense of general satisfaction with the educational service is at acceptable levels for the entire district or any part of it. They can gain the impression that they have "given away the farm," having surrendered authority and lost the control of "their" dollars. Such uneasiness is augmented by, say, a school with a large deficit, a principal who makes some spectacularly bad personnel decisions or noticeable conflict over budget items in some schools. Each of these problems may be seen as examples of the failure of decentralization rather than the failure of individual performance (Brown 1990).

As Mintzberg (1979) indicated in his writings on organizational structures, when those in the central office
believe that they can no longer trust persons in the divisional units (in this case, principals, teachers, and perhaps parents), then centralized control tends to be exerted. The principle that schools know best is discarded.

Another reason for recentralization lies in the hope that school-based management will produce much needed reforms. Particularly, achievement test scores should rise if the change is worth its salt, so the logic goes. While this argument appears to be a strong one, it overlooks the many other less easily measured goals that schools do attain. School district reading scores may not change as a result of restructuring in this way, just as the size of a business corporation's debt does not change just because it has been restructured. Unfortunately, when achievement does not change or becomes worse, districts may recentralize and try some other reform. Glickman (1990), a leading observer of restructuring, warned that if schools move too quickly and without a clear picture of the issues at stake, they will fail to improve education for students.

In addition, legislators will perceive that failure as another example of why teachers and schools need to be controlled and monitored more strictly than ever. With decentralization, the stakes are high: Education as a profession has much to gain, but it also has much to lose.
A third reason for districts to recentralize is the advent of retrenchment. During tough times, hard choices are made as to who goes and who stays. Many principals would rather not be involved in such difficult decisions. In addition, the desire to be fair with regard to layoff procedures motivates boards and central office personnel to decide how and who to cut. One principal shared a perception widely held in his district during a time of financial cutbacks: "Decentralization is a way to decentralize the agony." Broward County was an example of recentralization because of retrenchment some time ago. The more general literature supports the association of recentralization and retrenchment. Brooke (1984) indicated that the "threat of disaster" is the impetus for many organizations to recentralize so that important decisions may be made speedily. It is for reasons such as these that Mintzberg argues that decentralization in all organizations is unstable and quite likely to revert to a centralized structure.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Individual professional reflections are important variables in the determination of the impact on governance and school reform legislation. The value of examining reflections lies in the belief that such a study allows one to understand how leaders act based on their concept of self (Cimperman, 1986).

The seven (7) informants selected for this study possessed over one hundred forty years of collective experience in the New York City school system.

The Board of Education is the central governing body of the New York City public school system. When the Board was first formed in 1842, each city ward elected its own school commissioners, trustees, and inspectors, two of whom sat on the central Board of Education.

This study followed ethnographic protocols relating to interviewing. One-on-one, individualized interviews lasted between 45 to 90 minutes each. Informants were interviewed a minimum of three times each. The interviews were conducted at the homes of the informants or in the conference room of a local
high school. In ensuring that all informants were comfortable with the interview environment, a familiar interview location and environment was provided. Interviews were generally conducted after school, weekends and during vacation periods. The goal of the research study was carefully reviewed with each informant. Informed consent was obtained in writing for each participant. By utilizing open-ended questioning the researcher was able to compile a rich set of data relating to informants' views and perspectives on governance changes in the New York City School Reform Act and the ensuing mayoral control of the New York City school system.

The decision to conduct a study focusing on the insight of community leaders and school administrators was influenced primarily by the limited availability of researched-based literature describing the insight and subsequent decisions of school officials. Additionally, it is my personal experience and background as a career educator and administrator that inspired this research.

Within the study, the experience, analysis and grounded inferences from collected observations will be presented. This chapter describes the general context, in which the informants were selected, methodology selected, the procedures for identifying
informants, research instruments, research design, data collection procedures and the method of analysis of the data.

Research Design

In applying insight and theory development to this research study, a crucial issue arose: what is the relation of insight to theorizing from data? As part of a systematic comparative analysis, the researcher regarded all statements about events pertaining to this study as being data. Consistent with grounded theory development and in particular, insight and theory development, statements given by informants were part of an ongoing public discussion. For example, informant’s support of mayoral control in the New York City school system may base their opinion on current ideology rather than actuality—all may be vitiated by limited social perspective.

Every effort has been made to avoid accepting existing theory and simply elaborating on it, while suppressing or ignoring much rich data as well as potentially rich insights that could transcend the theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1999).

Research design is defined by Easterby-Smith et al (1990) as ... the overall configuration of a piece of research: what kind of evidence is gathered from where, and how such evidence is interpreted in order to provide good answers to the basic research question[s].
Ethnographers attempt to record, in an orderly manner, how natives behave and how they explain their behavior. And ethnography, strictly speaking, is an orderly report of this recording. Natives of people and situations anywhere—including children and youth schools—not just people who live in remote jungles or cozy peasant villages. We in many of our colleagues in educational anthropology have been concentrating lately on schooling as cultural transmission but we do not regard the ethnography of schooling more essentially different than ethnography anywhere (Spindler, 1987).

The researcher identified research monographs, journal articles, and books that have contributed to a body of literature recognized as belonging to the field of educational research known as the qualitative tradition.

In terms of method, generally speaking, the term “ethnography” refers to social research that has most of the following features (M. Hammersley, 1990).

(a) People’s behavior is studied in everyday contexts, rather than under experimental conditions created by the researcher.

(b) Data are gathered from a range of sources, but observation and/or relatively informal conversations are usually the main ones.
The approach to data collection is "unstructured in the sense that it does not involve following through a detailed plan set up at the beginning; nor are the categories used for interpreting what people say and do pre-given or fixed. This does not mean that the research is unsystematic; simply that initially the data are collected in as raw a form, and on as wide a front, as feasible.

(d) The focus is usually a single setting or group, of relatively small scale. In life history research the focus may even be a single individual.

e) The analysis of the data involves interpretation of the meanings and functions of human actions and mainly takes the form of verbal descriptions and explanations, with quantification and statistical analysis playing a subordinate role at most.

As a set of methods, ethnography is not far removed from the sort of approach that we all use in everyday life to make sense of our surroundings. It is less specialized and less technically sophisticated than approaches like the experiment or the social survey; though all social research methods have their historical origins in the ways in which human beings gain information about their world in everyday life.
Ethnography is "the work of describing a culture". The goal of ethnographic inquiry is to understand another way of life from the native point of view (Spradley, 1979). Although this approach is commonly used by anthropologists to study exotic cultures and primitive societies, it is a useful tool for understanding how other people see their experience.

Urban governance reform has been extensively studied over the last forty years. However, empirical research on the New York City Decentralization Law of 1996 is extremely limited. The overall theoretical rationale for this type of study stemmed from theory and studies on deregulation and decentralization.

The researcher identified research monographs, journal articles and books that have contributed to a body of literature recognized as belonging to the field of educational research known as the qualitative tradition.

Information was continuously gathered and analyzed using in-depth interviews. Skills applied included learning from the advice of other interviewers; selecting an interview topic, selecting appropriate participants; determining themes to be included in the interviews; conducting the interviews; transcribing the interview responses; and analyzing and synthesizing the information gathered.
Lincoln and Guba (1985) identify the characteristics that make humans the “instrument of choice” for naturalistic inquiry. Humans are responsive to environmental cues, and able to interact with the situation; they have the ability to collect information at multiple levels simultaneously; they are able to perceive situations holistically; they are able to process data as soon as they become available; they can provide immediate feedback and request verification of data; and they can explore atypical or unexpected responses.

Educational research draws its content and methods from a variety of disciplines and traditions. Qualitative research is typically associated with historical research and field based research such as anthropology, and ethnography, which is associated with anthropology. It is useful to provide a definition of what ethnography entails. Ethnographers seek to describe and analyze all or part of a culture or community by describing the beliefs and practices of the group studied and showing how the various parties contributed the culture as a unified consistent whole. Ethnography is a study of the world of a people. In the introduction to a recent book on ethnography in education, Woods suggests, “teaching” and “learning” may be “fronts” – dramatic activities designed to cover more significant
Ethnography is the art and science of describing a group or culture. The description may be of a small tribal group in an exotic land or a classroom in middle-class suburbia. The task is much like the one taken on by an investigative reporter, who interviews relevant people, reviews records, weighs the credibility of one person's opinions against another's, looks for ties to special interests and organizations, and writes the story for a concerned public and for professional colleagues. A key difference between the investigative reporter and the ethnographer, however, is that whereas the journalist seeks out the unusual, the murder, the plane crash, or the bank robbery, the ethnographer writes about the routine, daily lives of people. The more predictable patterns of human thought and behavior are the focus of inquiry.

Ethnographers are noted for their ability to keep an open mind about the group or culture they are studying. This quality, however, does not imply any lack of rigor. The ethnographer enters the field with an open mind, not an empty head. Before asking the first question in the field, the ethnographer begins with a problem, a theory or model, a research design, specific
Whereas in most research, analysis follows data collection, in ethnographic research analysis and data collection begin simultaneously. An ethnographer is a human instrument and must discriminate among different types of data and analyze the relative worth of one path over another at every turn in fieldwork, well before any formalized analysis takes place. Clearly, ethnographic research involves many different levels of analysis. Analysis is an ongoing responsibility and joy from the first moment an ethnographer envisions a new project to the final stages of writing and reporting the findings.

Spindler (1987) has set forth the following criterion for a good ethnography:

Criterion I. Observations are conceptualized, both in the immediate setting in which behavior is observed in further context beyond that context, as rather than it.

Criterion II. Hypotheses emerge in situ, as the study goes on in the setting selected for observation. Judgment on what may be significant to study in depth is deferred until the orienting phase of the field study has been completed. (We assume that the researcher will have searched the literature and defined the
"problem" before beginning fieldwork, however much the problem may be modified, or even discarded, as field research proceeds.)

Criterion III. Observation is prolonged and repetitive. Chains of events are observed more than once to establish the reliability of observations.

Criterion IV. The native view of reality is attended through inferences from observation and through the various forms of ethnographic inquiry (including interviews and other eliciting procedures).

Criterion V. Sociocultural knowledge held by social participants makes a social behavior and communication sensible. Therefore, a major part of the ethnographic task is to elicit that knowledge from informant-participants in as systematic a fashion as possible.

Criterion VI. Instruments, codes, schedules and agenda for interviews and so forth, should be generated in situ as a result of observation and ethnographic inquiry.

Criterion VII. A transcultural, comparative perspective is present though frequently as an unstated assumption. That is, cultural variation over time and space is considered a natural human condition. All cultures are seen as adaptations to the exigencies of human life and exhibit common as well as distinguishing features.
Criterion VIII. Some of the sociocultural knowledge affecting behavior and communication in any particular setting being studied is implicit or tacit, not known to some natives and known only ambiguously to others. A significant task of ethnography is therefore to make what is implicit and tacit to informant explicit.

Criterion IX. Since the informant (any person being interviewed) is one who knows and has the emic, native cultural knowledge, the ethnographic interviewer must not predetermine responses by the kinds of questions asked.

Criterion X. Any form of technical device that will enable the ethnographer to collect live data—immediate, natural, detailed behavior—will be used, such as cameras, audiotapes, videotapes, and field-based instruments.

Ethnographers attempt to record, in an orderly manner how natives behave and how they explain their behavior. And ethnography, strictly speaking, is an orderly report of this recording. Natives are people and situations anywhere—including children and youth in schools—not just people who live in remote jungles or cozy peasant villages. We and many of our colleagues in educational anthropology have been concentrating lately on schooling as cultural transmission but we do not regard the
ethnography all of schooling as essentially different to ethnography anywhere (Spindler, 1987).

One of the most important sources of case study information is the interview. The interviews selected became an important cornerstone in the researcher’s understanding of the informant’s role in the educational community. It permitted the researcher to understand factors that inhibit or enhance the community from the informants participating in the school system.

**Theoretical Sensitivity**

Glaser and Strauss (1999) and Strauss and Corbin (1990) refer to what they call the “theoretical sensitivity” of the researcher. This is a useful concept with which to evaluate a researcher’s skill and readiness to attempt a qualitative inquiry.

Theoretical sensitivity refers to a personal quality of the researcher. It indicates an awareness of the subtleties of meaning of data.... [It] refers to the attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and capability to separate the pertinent from that which isn’t (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

Strauss and Corbin, (1990) believe that theoretical sensitivity comes from a number of sources, including professional literature, professional experiences, and personal
experiences. The credibility of a qualitative research report relies heavily on the confidence readers have in the researcher’s ability to be sensitive to the data and to make appropriate decisions in the field (Eisner, 1991; Patton, 1990).

Many quantitative studies include open-ended survey questions, semi-structured interviews, or other forms of qualitative data. What distinguishes the data in a quantitative study from those generated in a qualitatively designed study is a set of assumptions, principles, and even values about truth and reality. Quantitative researchers accept that the goal of science is to discover the truths that exist in the world and to use the scientific method as a way to build a more complete understanding of reality. Although some qualitative researchers operate from a similar philosophical position, most recognize that the relevant reality as far as human experience is concerned is that which takes place in subjective experience, in social context, and in historical time. Thus, the qualitative research methodology was selected as a result of the researcher’s concern about uncovering knowledge about how people think and feel about mayoral control of city schools and the circumstances in which they find themselves.
Lincoln and Guba (1985) provide a fairly detailed outline for the design of naturalistic inquiry, which includes these general steps:

1. Determine a focus for the inquiry. This should establish a boundary for the study, and provide inclusion/exclusion criteria for new information. Boundaries, however, can be altered, and typically are.

2. Determine the fit of the research paradigm to the research focus. The researcher must compare the characteristics of the qualitative paradigm with the goals of the research.

3. Determine where and from whom data will be collected.

4. Determine what the successive phases of the inquiry will be. Phase one, for example, might feature open-ended data collection, while successive phases will be more focused.

5. Determine what additional instrumentation may be used, beyond the researcher as the human instrument.

6. Plan data collection and recording modes. This must include how detailed and specific research questions will be, and how faithfully data will be reproduced.

7. Plan which data analysis procedures will be used.

8. Plan the logistics of data collection, including scheduling and budgeting.
9. Plan the techniques that will be used to determine trustworthiness.

Elements of Grounded Theory

The three basic elements of grounded theory are concepts, categories and propositions. Concepts are the basic units of analysis since it is from conceptualization of data, not the actual data per se, that theory is developed.

The second element of grounded theory, categories, is defined by Corbin and Strauss, (1990) as higher in level as and more abstract than the concepts they represent. They are generated through the same analytic process of making comparisons to highlight similarities and differences that is used to produce lower level concepts. Categories are the "cornerstones" of developing theory. They provide the means by which the theory can be integrated. We can show how the grouping of concepts forms categories by continuing with the example presented above. In addition to the concept of "pacing," the analyst might generate the concepts of "self-medicating," "resting," and "watching one's diet." While coding, the analyst may note that, although these concepts are different in form, they seem to represent activities directed toward a similar process: keeping an illness under control.
The third element of grounded theory is propositions which indicate generalized relationships between a category and its concepts and between discrete categories. This third element was originally termed hypotheses. The comparison of differences and similarities among groups not only generates categories, but also rather speedily generates generalized relations among them (Glaser and Strauss, 1999).

One does not begin with a theory, and then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

Glaser and Strauss (1999) point that the root sources of all significant theorizing are the sensitive insights of the observer himself. The first corollary is that the researcher can get and cultivate crucial insights. A related corollary is that such insights need not come from one's own experience, but can be taken from others. In this case, the burden is on the sociologist to convert these borrowed experiences into his own insights.

Glaser and Strauss (1999) note that the validity of this point is easy to grasp, if one thinks of an interviewer beginning to theorize on the basis of an insight gotten from an interviewee's words. The anthropologist also does this when he listens to informants. If we can do this with an interviewee or
an informant, why not with the author of an autobiography or novel?

A third corollary involves how insights can be obtained from existing theory. Existing sources of insight are to be cultivated, though not at the expense of insights generated by the qualitative research, which is still closer to the data. A combination of both is definitely desirable.

The application of insight and grounded theory development support the researcher's position that his own personal experience as a community leader and school administrator provide an important springboard to systematic theorizing. This researcher was fortunate to be able to bring together prior knowledge and experience with what was confirmed through the research study. An interesting dichotomy was reached when a balance was needed between what was studied in the research literature (chapter 2), and the researcher's own personal insights.

Glaser and Strauss (1999) refer to this problem as part of their final corollary. An important insight should be cultivated until the inquiry's conclusion. But they should be cultivated within the framework of the developing theory by joint theoretical sampling and analysis.
Interview Process

During initial data collection, when the main categories are emerging, a full 'deep' coverage of the data is necessary. Subsequently, theoretical sampling requires only collecting data on categories, for the development of properties and propositions. The criterion for judging when to stop theoretical sampling is the categories or theories 'theoretical saturation'.

Glaser and Strauss, (1999) suggest that no additional data are being found whereby the (researcher) can develop properties of the category. As he sees similar instances over and over again, the researcher becomes empirically confident that a category is saturated ... when one category is saturated, nothing remains but to go on to new groups for data on other categories, and attempt to saturate these categories also.

The first step is to collect the data. Audiotapes should be collected to study the talk of a session or of an ethnographic interview (Spradley, 1979). From the transcribed conversations, patterns of experiences can be listed. This can come from direct quotes or paraphrasing common ideas.

In addition to participant observation and interviews, the researcher made use of various documents in answering guiding questions. These documents added additional insight and
information. Thinking carefully about the participants and how they function and asking questions of the informants helps to decide what kinds of documents might be available.

Possible documents include: meeting agendas, contracts, regulations, city/state legislative bills, annual reports, memos, school records, correspondence, informational brochures, teaching materials, newsletters, websites, posters, minutes of meetings, and many other kinds of written items. All of these things could greatly enrich the participant observation and the interviews that an ethnographer does.

Interviews were conducted with the following fieldwork protocols in mind:

(a) Build trust and rapport at the entry stage. Remember that the researcher-observer is also being observed and evaluated.

(b) Stay alert and disciplined during the more routine middle-phase of fieldwork.

(c) Focus on pulling together a useful synthesis as fieldwork draws to a close.

(d) Be disciplined and conscientious in taking detailed field notes at all stages of fieldwork.

(e) Be as involved as possible in experiencing the observed setting as fully as possible while maintaining an
There is no recipe for effective interviewing, but there are some useful guidelines that can be considered. These guidelines are summarized below (Patton, 1987).

1. Throughout all phases of interviewing, from planning through data collection to analysis, keep centered on the purpose of the research endeavor. Let that purpose guide the interviewing process.

2. The fundamental principle of qualitative interviewing is to provide a framework within which respondents can express their own understandings in their own terms.

3. Understand the strengths and weaknesses of different types of interviews: the informal conversational interview;
the interview guide approach; and the standardized open-ended interview.

4. Select the type of interview (or combination of types) that is most appropriate to the purposes of the research effort.

5. Understand the different kinds of information one can collect through interviews: behavioral data; opinions; feelings; knowledge; sensory data; and background information.

6. Think about and plan how these different kinds of questions can be most appropriately sequenced for each interview topic, including past, present, and future questions.

7. Ask truly open-ended questions.

8. Ask clear questions, using understandable and appropriate language.

9. Ask one question at a time.

10. Use probes and follow-up questions to solicit depth and detail.

11. Communicate clearly what information is desired, why that information is important, and let the interviewee know how the interview is progressing.
12. Listen attentively and respond appropriately to let the person know he or she is being heard.
13. Avoid leading questions.
14. Establish personal rapport and a sense of mutual interest.
15. Maintain neutrality toward the specific content of responses. You are there to collect information not to make judgments about that person.
16. Observe while interviewing. Be aware of and sensitive to how the person is affected by and responds to different questions.
17. Maintain control of the interview.
18. Tape record whenever possible to capture full and exact quotations for analysis and reporting.
19. Take notes to capture and highlight major points as the interview progresses.
20. Take whatever steps are appropriate and necessary to gather valid and reliable information.

Informants

Informants will be the primary source for data collection within this study. The method of interviewing participants describes focuses not on recounting events but on rendering a theory of cultural behavior. Informants were interviewed using
Interviewing an informant has proven to be an excellent starting place for beginning an ethnography. As each interview is completed and transcribed, the researcher begins to accumulate a respectable amount of tangible "data," recorded in informants own words and amenable to searching and sorting for themes. There is no better way to start this process than by letting people tell their personal "story" to an interested listener (Wolcott, 1987).

A list of potential participants was acquired by contacting the Personnel Directors of New York City Community School Districts and requesting them to identify potential informants who are employed or retired at the time of the study, who held positions of Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Executive Director, Principal or Assistant Principal. Community leaders were identified by elective office, involvement with community-based organizations, directories and/or their involvement with local schools.

The pool of subjects was chosen based on criteria identified for theoretical sampling. Informants were asked to answer a series of questions. Responses were audio-taped, as well as recorded by the researcher. The use of audio-tape will allow for the preservation of the opinions, statements and feelings of the participants.
One of the interviews took place in the informant’s home. I was impressed by the extensive library that the retired educator possessed. As I studied the collection of educational research journals, books and materials, I immediately realized that I was interviewing an informant who was well-versed in the history, culture and experiences of the New York City school system. In a sense, I felt privileged to be able to tap the knowledge base of an individual who had spent the greater part, of four decades serving the New York City educational system.

The researcher was aware of and sensitive to the different stages of fieldwork.

Each of the seven (7) informants was specially selected in order to obtaining several perspectives about the same topic. The careful selection of my informants was in congruence with the need to develop organized discussion with a selected group of individuals to gain information about their views and experiences of our research topic. The selected informants had specific knowledge that they were willing to share. Informants were generous with their time (Table 1). Their commitment to their schools, districts and communities was incomparable.

The informants possessed a commitment for deeper and substantial involvement in the study. Each of the selected informants was willing to allocate ample time to participate in the interviews.
I also sought to identify informants with whom I could build trust and rapport. I attempted to remain sensitive to that fact that the researcher-observer is also being observed and evaluated. Every effort was made to carefully understand their emic perspective, i.e., the ethnographic research approach to the way the members of the given culture perceive their world.

Unfortunately, a number of informants that were recruited to participate in the study were not able to commit to the time requirements needed.

Table 1: Informant Interview Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant No.</th>
<th>No. of Hours Interviewed</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.5 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.0 hours</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>9.0 hours</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>8.0 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.0 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

106
It was important to obtain insights into people’s shared understandings of everyday life in the NYC Department of Education and the ways in which informants are influenced by others. The informants were also selected because they possess over 180 years of combined experience in the New York City School system. This experience is in the form of student, parent, paraprofessional, teacher, assistant principal, principal, school district administrator, assistant superintendent, superintendent, school board president, parent’s association president, adjunct professor, non-profit agency director, consultant and community leader. Two of the informants served as assistant/deputy superintendents. Two of the informants served on the executive board of the local school board. Two of the informants served as PTA presidents. Two of the informants were not for profit directors. Five of the six informants attended the New York Public School system as students.

This vast experience base allowed for a wide range of organized discussion. Additionally, I was able to obtain individual attitudes, beliefs and feelings on our research topics.

Informants were identified for this study if they were believed to be acculturated in the field of New York City public
education. Moreover, it was expected that each informant would be highly motivated to share their views and opinions. The informants were known to be fully involved, experienced and distinguished in their respective roles. They participated as stakeholders in the research being studied.

Participant/Informant Profiles

Informant #1 is a retired assistant superintendent with over 35 years of experience in the New York City school system. Informant #1 has also served as a teacher, guidance counselor, and principal during his career. In addition, Informant #1 has held positions during his retirement as a hearing officer and consultant.

Informant #2 is a retired deputy superintendent with over 35 years of experience in the New York City school system. Informant #2 has also served as a teacher, principal and district administrator during his career. Informant #2 has had extensive involvement in community activities and community development.

Informant #3 is a parent of three children, school teacher and parent teachers' association president for over five years. She currently is assigned to one of the Regional Districts as an Attendance Teacher. Informant #3 has had extensive experience as an advocate for local school improvement.
Informant #4 is a community leader/advocate for over 30 years. He has served as an official of one of the largest not-for-profit/community development organizations in the nation. He currently serves as chairperson of a School Leadership Team. Informant #4 also serves as consultant/advisor to a host of organizations that serve NYC schools.

Informant #5 is President of a New York City not-for-profit organization. He previously served for over 10 years, as President of a local school board before the boards were abolished.

Informant #6 is a manager for a New York City municipal medical center. Informant #6 served for 10 years, as Vice President of a local school board before the boards were abolished. Informant #6 currently serves as the PTA President at a large urban high school and is Chairman of the Board of an AIDS Prevention program.

Informant #7 is a retired elementary school principal. Informant #7 served a school board member of local school board during the early 1970’s.

After carefully reviewing the audio-taped interviews and transcribed notes, the informants who made up the sample for this study, were all college-educated, highly intelligent and articulate. Without exception, all were dedicated and committed
professionals seeking to make an impact on the quality of
education in New York City schools. Informants unanimously
agreed that there were major changes in approaches that would be
necessary if the New York City Reform Act was to have a direct
impact on the lives of New York City students. Furthermore, all
informants, unequivocally challenged the Mayor and the Chancellor
to provide "real" opportunities for parental and community
involvement.

Their dissatisfaction with the massive reorganization
launched with complete centralization of control was unanimously
felt. Their concern was that they were entering a revolutionary
phase of mayoral control with no central board, and no local
boards. There was instead a pretend central board with no powers,
called the Panel on Education Policy, and pretend local boards,
called community education councils. Even mock community
superintendents of nonexistent districts. An informant's
frustration was evident when he indicated "in the new
arrangement, the mayor appoints a chancellor, and the chancellor
appoints everyone else. What was put in place is a corporate
model of tightly centralized hierarchical top down control with
all decisions made at Tweed".

The most important requirements for an ethnographic
approach, as we see it, is that behavior situations must be
explained from the natives point of view, and both the behavior in explanation must be recorded as carefully and systematically as possible, using what other aids are expedient, such as note taking, tape recorders and cameras. This obviously required being not to be President the situation parenthetical ceremonies chiefs Council, school board meetings) when behavior is happening, and as questions of the natives about their behavior (Spindler, 1987).

Sample and Data Collection

The source of data analyzed in this study, was a purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990) of six school administrators, community and parent leaders. Subjects were identified through an inventory conducted by contacting the Personnel Directors of New York City Community School Districts and requesting them to identify potential informants who are employed or retired at the time of the study, who held positions of Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Executive Director, Principal or Assistant Principal. Community leaders were identified by elective office, involvement with community-based organizations, directories and/or their involvement with local schools.

The group of seven informants were comprised of two retired deputy superintendent's, two school board members
(President and Vice President), two retired principals, one community leader—Executive Director of a community-based organization and one PTA president. These key informants were carefully selected. Every effort was made to draw on the wisdom of their informed perspectives, while keeping in mind that their perspectives may be limited.

Informants were contracted by telephone, facsimile, email, and/or postal mail. A consent letter was sent to each perspective participant asking if they would be willing to participate in the study. In a formal letter the researcher identified himself, gave the purpose for the contact, the title of the dissertation and its purpose (see Appendices D, E and F). The researcher then confirmed interviews dates and times. The informants were assured that all responses would be kept confidential and that data would be published in aggregate form only.

Among the numerous methods of data collection, those most commonly used included observation, interview, collection and review of related documents. Additionally, secondary data sources in this study were archival material in the form of reports in newspapers, trade journals, business journals, government publications, and NYC Department of Education documents and press releases.
Information was continuously gathered and analyzed using in-depth interviews. Skills applied included learning from the advice of other interviewers; selecting an interview topic, included in the interviews; conducting the interviews; transcribing the interview responses; and analyzing and synthesizing the information gathered.

Data Analysis

A qualification springs from the fact that not all categories are equally relevant, and accordingly the depth of enquiry into each one should not be the same. As a general rule, core categories, those with the greatest explanatory power, should be saturated as completely as possible. A theory is saturated when it is stable in the face of new data and rich in detail (Glaser and Strauss, 1999).

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data come in various forms. In many qualitative studies, the database consists of interview transcripts from open-ended, focused, but exploratory interviews. However, there is no limit to what might possibly constitute a qualitative database, and increasingly we are seeing more and more creative use of such sources as recorded observations (both video and participatory), focus groups, texts and documents, multi-media or public domain
Interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them (Merriam, 1988). The final product of the study is shaped by the data that are collected and the analysis that accompanies the entire process (Merriam, 1988, p.24).

This researcher was also determined to gather and analyze information through content analysis of educational materials (i.e. journalistic accounts and policy statements). Patton (1990) suggests the qualitative mode enables the researcher to find out what people know, think and feel by observing, interviewing and analyzing documents. Crucial skills of inductive reasoning were emphasized that included appropriate educational setting for the observations and reducing field notes to appropriate summary themes. A true ethnography is an orderly compilation of observations and native cultural knowledge. Inference is kept at a minimum, though some is necessary, even to know what questions to ask all informants (Spindler, 1987).

The purpose of analysis is to organize the description in a way that makes it manageable. Description is balanced by analysis and leads into interpretation.
Building grounded theory requires an integrative process of data collection, coding, analysis, and planning what to study next. This researcher made an attempt to be theoretically sensitive as data was collected and coded. This led to sense where the data was leading the research and what to do next (Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L., 1967).

Similar informants were selected in order to gain sensitivity to differences between the groups and to establish a definite set of conditions when a category existed. It has been suggested that at other times it is best to pick very different groups which will magnify the strategic similarities and broaden the scope of the emergent theory. The researcher takes the role of an active sampler, pursuing leads and groups without worrying about being incomplete (Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L., 1967).

Where do these themes come from? They come from reviewing the literature, of course. Richer literatures produce more themes. They come from the characteristics of the phenomena being studied. And they come from already-agreed-upon professional definitions, from local common-sense constructs, and from researchers' values, theoretical orientation, and personal experience with the subject matter (Bulmer 1979; Strauss 1987; Maxwell 1996).
Mostly, though, researchers who consider themselves part of the qualitative tradition in social science induce themes from texts. This is what grounded theorists call open coding, and what classic content analysts call qualitative analysis (Berleson, 1952) or latent coding (Shapiro and Markoff 1997). There are many variations on these methods. Unfortunately, however, they are (a) scattered across journals and books that are read by disparate groups of specialists; and (b) often entangled in the epistemological wars that have divided the social sciences. Our goal in this paper is to cross these boundaries and lay out a variety of theme-dredging methods so that all researchers who deal with texts can use them to solve common research problems.

I have outlined a few helpful techniques for discovering themes in texts. These techniques are based on: (1) an analysis of words (word repetitions, key-indigenous terms, and key-words-in-contexts); (2) a careful reading of larger blocks of texts (compare and contrast, social science queries, and searching for missing information); (3) an intentional analysis of linguistic features (metaphors, transitions, connectors); and (4) the physical manipulation of texts (unmarked texts, pawing, and cut and sort procedures).

116
We begin with word-based techniques. Word repetitions, key-indigenous terms, and key-words-in-contexts (KWIC) all draw on a simple observation—if you want to understand what people are talking about, look at the words they use.

Words that occur a lot are often seen as being salient in the minds of respondents. D'Andrade (1991) notes, Perhaps the simplest and most direct indication of schematic organization in naturalistic discourse is the repetition of associative linkages" He observes that "indeed, anyone who has listened to long stretches of talk, whether generated by a friend, spouse, workmate, informant, or patient, knows how frequently people circle through the same network of ideas.

Word repetitions can be analyzed formally and informally. In the informal mode, researchers simply read the text and note words or synonyms that people use a lot.

Generating a list of all the unique words in a text and counting the number of times each word occurred utilized a more formal analysis of word frequencies. My computer easily generated word-frequency lists from texts and is a quick and easy way to look for themes. Ryan and Weisner (1996) asked fathers and mothers of adolescents: "Describe your children. In your own words, just tell us about them." They produced a list of all the unique words in the set of responses and the number
of times each word was used by mothers and by fathers. Mothers were more likely than fathers to use words like friends, creative, time, and honest; fathers were more likely than mothers to use words like school, good, lack, student, enjoys, independent, and extremely. Ryan and Weisner (1996) used this information as clues for themes that they would use later in actually coding the texts.

I used a similar approach by selecting a list of "unique words" in the set of informant responses and the number of times each word was used. Respondents often used words like:

Coding Themes*

1. MAYORAL CONTROL/LEADERSHIP
2. POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT/ STATE LEGISLATION
3. EDUCATIONAL REFORM/ RESTRUCTURE
4. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT/ AWARENESS
5. SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION
6. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT
7. GRADUATION AND DROPOUT RATES
8. POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS
9. FUNDING AND EQUITY
10. RACISM AND ETHNIC CONCERNS

*Order does not indicate grade of significance
Another way to find themes is to look for local terms that may sound unfamiliar or are used in unfamiliar ways. Patton, (1990) refers to these as "indigenous categories" and contrasts them with "analyst-constructed typologies." Understanding indigenous categories and how they are organized has long been a goal of cognitive anthropologists. The basic idea in this area of research is that experience and expertise are often marked by specialized vocabulary. The aforementioned listing includes a number of "local terms" that were considered by the researcher as belonging to "indigenous categories."

I combed through recorded material and notes looking for verbatim statements made by informants about the research topic. On analyzing the statements, I found that most of the statements could fit into subcategories such as kinds of reforms, the various reforms, ways in which the reform affected their lives, kinds of people who are involved with reform, and the process by which the reform was enacted. I then returned to my informants and sought additional information from them on each of the subcategories.

Key-words-in-context (KWIC) is closely associated with indigenous categories. KWIC is based on a simple observation: if you want to understand a concept, then look at how it is used.
In this technique, I identified key words and then systematically searched the corpus of text to find all instances of the word or phrase. Themes were identified by physically sorting the examples into piles of similar meaning.

Since the study is qualitative in nature, conclusions are drawn from observations of the researcher, interviews with informants and review of pertinent literature. This constitutes a second limitation of the study.

Experiencing an environment as an insider is what necessitates the participant part of participant observation. At the same time, however, there is clearly an observer side to this process. As an employee of the New York City Department of Education; as a school administrator and as a community leader, the researcher meets the criteria established for selecting informants. The challenge is to combine participation and observation so as to become capable of understanding the experience as an insider while describing the experience for outsiders.

Disadvantages of the qualitative method include a possible bias due to the researcher's experience as a New York City Department of Education school administrator. However, although the experience of the researcher is significant, no hypothesis is being tested that would suggest a predetermined outcome of
The goal of the research is to generate new research and ongoing study all of governance changes and their effect on the school community.

The ethnographic focal point may include intensive language and culture learning, intensive study of a single field or domain, and a blend of historical, observational, and interview methods. Typical ethnographic research employs three kinds of data collection: interviews, observation, and documents. This in turn produces three kinds of data: quotations, descriptions, and excerpts of documents, result in one product: narrative description.

Ethnographic methods are a means of tapping local points of view, households and community "funds of knowledge" (Moll & Greenberg, 1990), a means of identifying significant categories of human experience up close and personal. Ethnography enhances and widens top down views and enriches the inquiry process, taps both bottom-up insights and perspectives of powerful policy-makers "at the top," and generates new analytic insights by engaging in interactive, team exploration of often subtle arenas of human difference and similarity. Through such findings ethnographers may inform others of their findings with an attempt to derive, for example, policy decisions or instructional innovations from such an analysis.
Data analysis in qualitative research begins soon after data collection begins, because the researcher checks on working hypothesis, unanticipated results and the like. In fact, data collection and data analysis usually run together: less data are collected and more analysis is produced as the research progresses. The first product of the case study was shaped by the data that was collected and the analysis that accompanied the entire process. It is with this research that the data provided afforded the researcher an abundance of information necessitating analysis. As the researcher gained new insights, further questions arose and new sources of data were identified.

Qualitative research often produces large quantities of descriptive information from field notes or interviews for example, the information needs to be organized and through this organization there should be data reductions.

**Theoretical Sampling**

An effort will be made by this researcher toward improving my capacity for generating theory that will be relevant to my research. Every effort will be made to vigorously verify quantitative data by carefully reviewing methods related to sampling coding, reliability and presentation of evidence.

The basic idea of the grounded theory approach is to read (and re-read) a textual database (such as a corpus of field
notes) and "discover" or label variables (called categories, concepts and properties) and their interrelationships. The ability to perceive variables and relationships is termed "theoretical sensitivity" and is affected by a number of things including one's reading of the literature and one's use of techniques designed to enhance sensitivity (Glaser and Strauss, 1999).

Open Coding

Open coding is the part of the analysis concerned with identifying, naming, categorizing and describing phenomena found in the text. Essentially, each line, sentence, paragraph etc. is read in search of the answer to the repeated question "what is this about? What is being referenced here?"

These labels refer to things like hospitals, information gathering, friendship, social loss, etc. They are the nouns and verbs of a conceptual world. Part of the analytic process is to identify the more general categories that these things are instances of, such as institutions, work activities, social relations, social outcomes, etc.

With open coding, the following process was used: 1. a color scheme of transcribed interviews was utilized to identify participant data, phrases, and paragraphs keywords were highlighting in order to find commonalities and differences in
Major and minor theme categories were then established.

It is important to have fairly abstract categories in addition to very concrete ones, as the abstract ones help to generate general theory.

**Axial Coding**

Axial coding is the process of relating codes (categories and properties) to each other, via a combination of inductive and deductive thinking. To simplify this process, rather than look for any and all kind of relations, grounded theorists emphasize causal relationships, and fit things into a basic frame of generic relationships.

In order to generate findings that transform raw data into new knowledge, a qualitative researcher must engage in active and demanding analytic processes throughout all phases of the research. Understanding these processes is therefore an important aspect not only of doing qualitative research, but also of reading, understanding, and interpreting it.

**Summary**

Corbin and Strauss, (1990) state that theories can't be built with actual incidents or activities as observed or reported; that is, from "raw data." The incidents, events,
happenings are taken as, or analyzed as, potential indicators of phenomena, which are thereby given conceptual labels. If a respondent says to the researcher, "Each day I spread my activities over the morning, resting between shaving and bathing," then the researcher might label this phenomenon as "pacing." As the researcher encounters other incidents, and when after comparison to the first, they appear to resemble the same phenomena, then these, too, can be labeled as "pacing." Only by comparing incidents and naming like phenomena with the same term can the theorist accumulate the basic units for theory.

Spindler (1987) points out that at the heart of qualitative data analysis is the task of discovering themes. By themes, we mean abstract, often fuzzy, constructs, which researchers identify before, during, and after data collection. Interviewing an informant has proven to be an excellent starting place for beginning and ethnography. As each entity is completed and transcribed, the researcher begins to accumulate a respectable amount of tangible "data," recorded in the informant's own words and amenable to searching and sorting for themes.

The interviews with the informants were taped recorded and then fully transcribed. The verbatim became the raw data that was analyzed and interpreted following the protocol for ethnographic research as described by Spradley (1979).
This researcher was determined to gather and analyze information through content analysis of educational materials (i.e., journalistic accounts and policy statements). Crucial skills of inductive reasoning were emphasized that included appropriate educational setting for the observations and reducing field notes to appropriate summary themes. The data were interpreted analytically using coding, categorizing, and identifying cultural themes.

By utilizing open-ended questioning the researcher was able to compile a rich set of data relating to informants views and perspectives on governance changes in the New York City School Reform Act and the ensuing mayoral control of the New York City school system.

The ethnographic interview is a commonly used interviewing process employed by researchers. From the conversations that take place in an interview or those that are encouraged for the sake of researching a process, ideas emerge that can be better understood under the control of a thematic analysis. Thematic analysis focuses on identifiable themes and patterns of behavior.

The first step is to collect the data. Audiotapes were transcribed to study the talk of a session or of an ethnographic interview (Spradley, 1979). From the transcribed
conversations, patterns of experiences were listed. This came from direct quotes or paraphrasing common ideas.

The next step to a thematic analysis is to identify all data that relate to the already classified themes. All of the verbatim that fits under the specific pattern was identified and placed with the corresponding theme.

The next step to a thematic analysis is to combine and catalogue related patterns into sub-themes. Themes that emerge from the informants' stories are pieced together to form a comprehensive picture of their collective experience.

While gathering sub-themes to obtain a comprehensive view of the information, it became apparent that patterns were emerging. As patterns emerged additional feedback was obtained from the informants. This was done as the interview was taking place or by asking the informants to give feedback from the transcribed conversations.

The next step was to build a valid argument for choosing the themes. This was done by reading the related literature. By referring back to the literature, this researcher gained information that allowed him to make inferences from the interview session. Once the themes were collected and the literature had been studied, this researcher was ready to formulate theme statements.
Interviewing an informant has proven to be an excellent starting place for beginning an ethnography. As each interview is completed and transcribed, the researcher begins to accumulate a respectable amount of tangible "data," recorded in informants own words and amenable to searching and sorting for themes (Spindler, 1987).

Grounded theory served an important role in helping to generate guiding questions for ethnographic investigation, allowing for larger questions to be addressed about how culture works among such a diverse group of school administrators and community leaders. This approach served to develop the organizing framework for Chapter 4 where analyses and findings all the data are reported.
The central purpose of this research is to study leadership and school reform legislation in the New York City Public School System. This study will examine how mayoral leadership has transformed the New York City Public School System. Furthermore, this study sought to determine the extent to which this impact was related to mayoral control of the schools. Accordingly, criteria were developed to determine areas to be investigated and procedures to be followed. Two central reasons were used to determine the guidelines: (a) providing a common focus, which would serve to ensure the collection of data, and (b) the use of common procedures which would allow a more unified presentation since the amount of research analysis and synthesis that had to be accomplished was substantial. Given the potential strengths and limitations of governance reform, this study examines the design, institutional arrangement, implementation, and effects on schooling outcomes in this reform initiative.

In the first part of this chapter, a focus is provided on analyzing, interpreting and reporting findings. Attention is
then provided to the critical study of big city mayoral
takeovers. We find mixed results for city and state takeovers
on both academic and management issues. Finally, we find
differences between city and state takeovers in terms of
accountability and resistance to reorganization.

The second part of this chapter focuses on New York City
Department of Education historical milestones. We also examine
the issue of community control and school administrators working
under a newly created governance structure and how this has
impacted on the administrator’s role as a school manager and
instructional leader. It presents information from the interview
protocols and will focus the perspective of all informants
interviewed.

At issue is how effective a city takeover and mayoral
control of its school system can be as a strategy to promote
higher quality teaching and learning, improve management, and
enhance public confidence. It is equally important to specify
the facilitating factors and the barriers to improve schools
under this kind of reform. Like other major reforms, mayoral
control takeover suggests both promises and limitations. On the
one hand, the takeover strategy has the potential to turn around
low performing schools. Takeover initiatives tend to hold
schools and students accountable to system wide standards.
This chapter presents the findings of the study based on the analysis and description of the data collected during the course of the effort to study the impact of school reform legislation upon New York City school administrators and community leaders. The analysis of the data presented is based upon a review of interview transcripts, documents and literature to determine the effectiveness of the new governance model for the New York City Public Schools.

Analyzing, Interpreting and Reporting Findings

The researcher is the detective looking for trends and patterns that occur across the various groups or within individuals (Krueger, 1994). The process of analysis and interpretation involve disciplined examination, creative insight, and careful attention to the purposes of the research study. Analysis and interpretation are conceptually separate processes. The analysis process begins with assembling the raw materials and getting an overview or total picture of the entire process. The researcher’s role in analysis covers a continuum with assembly of raw data on one extreme and interpretative comment on the other. Analysis is the process of bringing order to the data, organizing what is there into patterns, categories, and basic descriptive units. The analysis process involves consideration of words, tone, context, non-verbals, internal
consistency, frequency, extensiveness, intensity, specificity of responses and big ideas. Data reduction strategies are essential in the analysis (Krueger, 1994).

Qualitative measures were utilized in the form of individual interviews in or to capture the insight, attitudes and feelings of each informant (subject). A listing consisting of ten questions was developed seeking data to answer the following research questions:

Research Question #1
Has this new authority resulted in improved educational opportunities for over 1 million NYC school children?

Research Question #2
After four years of mayoral control will this new leadership paradigm result in increased graduation rates, increased test scores, equity and access to specialized programs, class size reductions and significant institutional savings that make their way to the schools?

Research Question #3
Is having the mayor in charge of schools the best way to get things done?

Research Question #4
How did the NYC School Governance Reform law strengthen the Chancellor's authority?

Research Question #5
How did the NYC School Governance Reform Act make school officials accountable for student achievement and school performance?

Research Question #6

132
What is the respondents' personal experience with the governance changes in the NYC decentralization law?

Research Question #7

What was the NYC School Governance Reform Act seeking to accomplish? Is it happening, what not? Has it been successful?

Research Question #8

Is the school system generally better off under mayoral control?

Research Question #9

What is your assessment of the school system's graduation rate?

Research Question #10

What is your opinion of the New York City Department of Education's Principals Academy training program?

Research Question #11

Are regional superintendents or local instructional superintendents conducting their charge of providing instruction support to schools?

Research Question #12

Has the reform act effectively lead to a decisive role for parents, community education councils and community-based organizations?

Research Question #13

After four years of mayoral control will this new leadership paradigm distinguish itself from other major urban school districts?

Research Question #14

What changes did the NYC School Governance Reform Act bring about at the community level of involvement in school governance and policy? (Let informants tell you what changes)
Research Question #15
How did changes in the NYC School Governance Reform Act affect the selection process for School District Superintendents?

To restore public trust, takeover reform maintains a strong focus on low performing schools and students, including allocating additional resources to those schools. Takeover reform also recruits non-traditional leaders to top management positions in order to change existing organizational practices and culture. On the other hand, professional educators view takeover initiatives as an infringement of their professional autonomy. Mayor - or state - appointed administrators might lack the expertise on instructional and curriculum issues. Too often, takeover reform pays primary attention to standardized test achievement as the most important measure of school improvement (Wong, 2004).

Mayoral Control

The present study investigated the New York City School Reform Act and Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg’s plan to improve the city’s schools collectively entitled “Children First.” The school-restructuring plan is having a direct impact on the leadership of over 1400 schools throughout New York City. Joel I. Klein was assigned the challenge of leading New York City’s public school system as the Chancellor of our nation’s largest
school system. As Chancellor, he oversees more than 1,400 schools with over 1.1 million students, 140,000 employees including 78,660 teachers and a $13.5 billion budget.

Through a comprehensive reform program called "Children First", Klein aims to transform the challenged school system, ensuring that "every child will graduate with the skills to become a fully engaged member of society."

The Children First reform agenda focuses the school system on improving teaching and learning in individual schools and classrooms. The goal of the reform agenda is to give all schools, and the teachers and principals within schools, the necessary resources and support to improve instruction. We want to ensure that students have the opportunity to fulfill their highest potential. Student achievement is the result of the work done everyday at each individual school by the principals, teachers, and staff who work with the City's 1.1 million students (New York City Department of Education).

The Chancellor indicated in his very first speech:

I owe those teachers, and this city school system, more than I can ever repay, I pledge to do all that I can to give each child in the city of New York a first-rate education.
Klein, who grew up in New York City and attended its public schools, is the first Chancellor in New York City to operate under a school system that is governed by the mayor. The Chancellor’s exuberance and excitement were obvious and very evident when he indicated:

"I am honored to have been given the opportunity to lead the New York City Department of Education at this time. With such a promising beginning to the renewal of public education in New York City we cannot gut the resources necessary to transform the school system. Too much outstanding work has been put into removing the seemingly intractable obstacles to reform to turn back now. The schools can only reach their full potential through the continuation of our partnership with the City Council in providing both the right policies and the necessary resources to give every public school student in the City the opportunity to excel." (NYCDOE Website).

Desperate to jumpstart the reform process in New York City schools, politicians, scholars, and school advocates increasingly looked to mayors for leadership.
One informant indicated his pessimism:

But does a stronger role for the Mayor represent real change and potential to improve our schools, or is this just the latest school reform effort that will also soon be forgotten?

These governance structures have not created the capacity or the incentive among educators to engage the students, families and communities who could be their greatest ally in improvement efforts. Instead of focusing on governance, we must develop bottom-up accountability: new relationships between schools, districts, and their parent and community constituencies that foster school accountability for improved academic outcomes (Kirst, 2002).

Informants complained that parents had previously been able to seek redress and offer input concerning their children’s education at their local community school boards were now forced to search for remote “regional” offices. These limited relationships were referred to quite often by informants frustrated with the reorganization:

One informant explained this phenomenon by saying:

Going back to what I said before, about throwing the baby out with the bath water just as we’ve
lost a lot of experienced people who committed their lives and their careers to the school system, we're also now taking an elite group of parents, elite meaning because of their experience and their past years of dedication, you're saying that they can't be part of this new structure.

This informant explained with a great deal of dismay:

I have questioned their ability to really be effective, the school leadership teams and the school reforms, all of the members of the school community constantly indicate that parents are the most important partner in schools and in the success of schools yet, the CEC's which are supposed to be the representative group in the school reform says that their most experienced individuals cannot become part of this. What does that mean in the end?

Another informant corroborated:

They become important partners at the table.

Department of Education personnel, our regional representatives, superintendents, our local instructional superintendents have a paid
individual that has the time and effort to sit at
the table and contribute on a daily basis, and
now you have this parent group who sit now on
this newly created body called CECs, but they
don't have the support system and the resources
to be true partners at the table.

Epstein (1995) notes that the school, the family, and the
community are "three major contexts in which students live and
grow;" these "overlapping spheres of influence" are extremely
important because they "directly affect children's learning and
development." This joint effort, explains Epstein (1995),
contributes to improved outcomes for children: "Partners
recognize their shared interests in and responsibilities for
children, and they work together to create better programs and
opportunities for students."

Informants unanimously agreed that parents were being
discouraged from participating in the reform effort. Parents
were not being reached out to as partners. It was generally
agreed that the reform effort failed to take into account the
needs of "parental entities". One informant stated, "I was very
cconcerned, in a country that values the First Amendment and
freedom of the press, the mayor who appointed these individuals,
prior to their appointment, indicated that they were not talk to the press."

**Additional Comments included:**

I have been the PTA president of a public high school for four years and it's been a very pleasant experience. It was more pleasant in the past, with the past structure but being a part of the PTA and being president is a lot of responsibility because you represent the community. In the past with the superintendent, we definitely used to have more meetings, every month, meetings where we are able to sit down and discuss concerns about these issues in the school.

Another informant with PTA experience indicated:

I would always look forward to meeting with him [superintendent], to hear that he will definitely give us an update on what's happening. He was able to discuss budgets and how to do things. He was very informative. It was a pleasure to make the time and come to the meeting.

As evidenced in the previous comment, informants were quite pessimistic when they talked about meeting with central office.
staff. Another example of the pessimism is exhibited in this comment:

We were able to give recommendations. We were able to give our opinion. We were able to express our feelings as parents, as the person in the community going to the meetings. I was always respected and listened to.

I never had a problem, never had a situation where I was not taken care of, at least listened to.

One informant who strongly disagreed with the NYC reform effort stated:

This doesn't bode well for the school reform efforts of the mayor and the chancellor and in the end, I believe and have hope in the fact that New Yorkers will get the opportunity to express themselves on the overhaul of this school system when the mayoral elections come about in 2005. Hopefully the outcome of the election will be a fair judge to the Bloomberg educational reforms.

Mayoral control over public education increasingly has been touted as the most promising way to turn around troubled school districts. Already mayors in several major cities Boston (1992), Chicago (1995), Cleveland (1996), Detroit (1999), Philadelphia (2001) and New York (2002) have been put in charge of education,
stripping school boards of their former power. The second largest school system in the nation, the Los Angeles Unified District is now considering Mayoral Control.

Schools in many of our city school districts are failing. Children who attend them are at risk. The risk is not just short-term but puts in jeopardy the learning careers of many minority students. Students in non-urban school districts are almost 50% more likely than urban students to score at above the basic level in reading, mathematics, and science. Much of this performance gap is attributable to social and economic problems, such as poverty and racial discrimination, which are largely outside the school's ability to control (Henig and Rich, 2004).

But the poor performance of inner-city schools is not solely attributable to the low incomes and minority status of the populations they serve. Although white students at large central city schools perform as well as their white counterparts nationally on SAT scores, for example, African-American students at large city schools score substantially worse than their national counterparts.

Does giving City Hall the authority to select school board members, give city residents a clearer target at which direct their hopes and frustrations and break the reactionary hold of an educational bureaucracy that has acted as a “public-school
cartel” (Rich, 1996) or is it better understood as a power grab by corporate leaders and state legislators with their own visions of urban revitalization. Do they believe that they can pursue those visions more effectively if power is moved into venues in which their access and influence is more assured? (Henig and Rich, 2004).

Informants expressed concern with the notion of a power grab by corporate leaders:

In public schools today, little is safe from commercialization and privatization. A wide variety of companies and corporations are attempting to take over virtually all of the work traditionally performed by school district employees, from teaching to providing student transportation to cooking meals to cleaning and maintaining school buildings and grounds, and more. The attempted corporate takeover of our system of education has its roots in support services - it is in this area that private contractors have been around the longest, and that contracting out is the most widely practiced.
City takeover of public school systems has gained prominence as a school reform strategy. Twenty-four states allow takeovers of local school districts, permitting state officials or city hall to exert authority over a district in the case of "academic bankruptcy" or woefully low-performing schools. To date, school district takeovers have occurred in 18 states and the District of Columbia. The Federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 also identifies takeover as a strategy to turn around schools with years of low performance. In light of the growing interest in takeover reform, it is important to know whether school district takeover can work (Wong & Shen, 2002).

An informant explained:

The model is that you have a chief executive officer as the chancellor. Well, in this particular case the mayor has really become the quasi chancellor and you need further proof. Any time something hits the headlines in the school you don't have the chancellor standing on the front steps with the microphone talking about it. You have the mayor standing on the front steps. The chancellor has become nothing more than a delivery boy standing behind him.

Another informant agreed:
I think that the actions taken by Bloomberg not too long ago reflect what their role is. The role is not to provide for original ideas or diversity or different thoughts on how things might work or to provide the input from different segments of the population or different interest groups. Their role is to do whatever the mayor said, do it when he says it and basically they are a rubber stamp for whatever the mayor wants and whenever he wants it, and those who do not agree with what he wants are removed without any -- without much fanfare.

The notion that changing the formal structure of governance can lead to better schools has deep roots in American political and intellectual history. When reformers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century created the bureaucratic organizations that are the basis for today’s schools, they had many laudable goals in mind. To replace a set of badly funded one-room schoolhouses that haphazardly educated children with untrained teachers and ad hoc materials, they hoped to build a system that would provide equal and uniform treatment by standardizing services and decisions based on predetermined rules (Darling-Hammond, 1997).

The current shape of public education governance owes much to the Progressive Era reformers who, early in the
20th century, slow to improve public education by buffering it from political interference. Establishing school districts as relatively autonomous governments, with dedicated revenue streams and nonpartisan modes of selecting school boards, was seen as a way to grasp authority out of the hands of urban machines (Tyack, 1974).

More specifically, the current school takeovers by big-city mayors represent the melding of school and municipal politics. Public acquiescence to this fundamental change in the way schools are governed may be testimony to widespread frustration with poor performance on achievement tests, fiscal mismanagement, or violence in the public schools. An alternative explanation is that this may be yet another state-Legislature-driven reform aimed at undermining minority control of big city schools. In any case, the changes will tell us much about public demands to do something are translated into a political action. This may be the reason why the public has lost confidence in elected boards, superintendents, and other traditional school decision makers.

There is now a new trend towards mayoral appointed boards, chief executive offices (CEOs), and the hiring of "nontraditional" superintendents from business and the military. Supporters of a mayor-centric approach to school reform argue that it promotes efficiency, comprehensive rationality, accountability, and democratic participation.
Mayoral control, it is asserted, is likely to promote efficiency because it puts decisions about spending in the hands of the same actors who must make decisions about taxation and other forms of revenue, a linkage that is severed by the formal structures in many cities (Henig and Rich, 2004).

Informant support for mayoral control included comments such as:

New Yorkers should not rush to judgment on the changes made in the school system. With 40 district offices now consolidated into 10 regional centers and with a new curriculum being implemented in most city schools, no one should be surprised to hear of missteps in the first weeks and months of school this year. Those inevitable missteps will not be reason to return to the old ways of doing business. The old ways may have served certain interests well, but it routinely failed some 60 percent of the city's students who each year are unable to meet state-set standards.

One informant remarked that:
In any such large-scale turnaround, there can be a tension between enacting swift reform to create urgently needed changes and taking the time needed to smooth the way by seeking the opinions and winning the support of those who will be affected by the changes. With children's futures slipping away with each month of the status quo, Bloomberg and Klein can justify opting to create reform as quickly as possible, even if by fiat. But with minimal effort at fostering community buy-in, they have to expect a lot of resistance.

Another informant corroborated

The reason I support the reforms enacted by Mayor Michael Bloomberg and put into place by Chancellor Joel Klein is that a reallocation of power to a clearly defined and publicly accountable management team is now in place. From a decentralized system to now, what is a more centralized system with a mayor who is in charge of and controls the education of the students of New York City.
Mayor Bloomberg was elected in large part to an emphasis on education. Because his crusade to take over the New York City school system was championed by his predecessor, it was made somewhat easier. The New York State Legislature turned over this responsibility under the New York City School Reform Act of 1996. His emphasis on schools appealed to his electoral constituency. It is important to point out that an electoral coalition plays an important role in determining who will hold public office and what kind of concerns are likely to become priority on a mayoral agenda. However, this is not the same as a governing coalition. For example, the business community is very likely to become a significant player in a governing coalition.

During Mayor Bloomberg's first term, New York City's corporate community promoted economic development and was rewarded by the Mayor with increased tax breaks and corporate support. The Corporate Community has been left in control of an area that they believe and consider to be extremely important.

One example of the Mayor's close ties to the Corporate community was evident when the Mayor spearheaded the effort to bring the 2012 Olympics to New York City at all costs. New York State Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver and Joseph Bruno, the Senate leader, abstained from voting at a meeting of the Public...
Authorities Control Board, a state entity that has the decisive say about key public subsidies for the capital projects.

One informant explained:

The stadium proposal would have required as much as $1 billion in total public subsidies. New York was spared from partially underwriting the most expensive sports stadium in America.

On the other hand, not even the Mayor's harshest critics can say that Michael Bloomberg has ignored education. He made gaining control of the system one of his top priorities -- and accomplished the feat. Since then, he has remained active in school issues, selecting the chancellor, eliminating the Board of Education and community school boards, moving education headquarters across from City Hall, instituting policies to end so-called social and promotion, and so on. The mayor is often praised for taking on education and trying to improve city schools. But they fault him on the effects of his reforms and question whether the changes have improved what takes place in tens of thousands of classrooms across the city every day.

In adherence to the governance bill, 32 LISes are now designated as Community School District Superintendents while continuing to serve as LISes. These 32 LISes each oversee a
community school district office and attempted to fulfill the reorganization’s commitment to linking the new management structure with the parent-focused Community District Education Councils that replaced them. The Chancellor’s Senior Staff are now organized into eight senior cabinet departments.

Opposition to the manner in which the new boards were set up was evident when informants indicated:

*It’s the same thing with the parent councils that are being set up. They’re going to have to fight to have a say because from the legislation, they’re already advisory in nature. They don’t have the right to select superintendents, they don’t evaluate things, they don’t do a lot of things that would give them a say, and I say bought off, because they knew they couldn’t just tell community you’re out of the process.*
Another informant explained:

The CEC doesn't have the other constituent group that the leadership team has, but they both have only advisory capacity in an advisory role which I would -- not to change your question, but I would rather the question be what do I see school leadership teams, CECs and school board, and I would say that they are nowhere near each other in terms of possibility for effectiveness, possibility to make -- to bring about true change and possibility to bring about true advocacy for
Children because I think that's being lost in this overall restructur ing.

The school system is now organized into 10 regions across the city - each of which includes approximately 120 schools. Each Region contains 2, 3 or 4 Community School Districts, as well as the high schools located within their geographic boundaries.

TABLE 3:

New York City Department of Education Organization Chart - Regional Staff

Region-based Teaching and Learning (housed in the Learning Support Centers)

Regional Superintendent*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deputy Regional Superintendent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>\ Regional Instructional Superintendents*</td>
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<tr>
<td>\ Local Instructional Superintendents*</td>
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<tr>
<td>\ ELL Instructional Support Specialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\ Special Education Instructional Support Specialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\ Mathematics and Literacy Coordinators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\ School Principals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reports to Deputy Chancellor for Teaching and Learning

*2 Local Instructional Superintendents also serve as Community School District Superintendents, housed in district offices.
One informant expressed concern that the structural changes would affect the system’s ability to retain experienced teachers:

We hope and pray that it will not further devastate the quality of education in the city, but I think if it continues on this pattern we’ll continue to lose experienced teachers. I know we’ve lost a lot of experienced staff members over the years, and in the last two years with this, a lot of people retired rather than to put up with being dictated to by supervisors that don’t know their skills and don’t respect their experience.

Each Region has a Learning Support Center which houses the instructional leadership team for the Region as well as a full-service Parent Support Office.

I’m finding it so hard to believe that once again, parents are being asked to navigate a newly created system of schools, district offices, regional centers and parent resource locations. This restructuring of the restructured system fails to provide the stability our children, parents and schools need. Where will we go to now?
Six of the Learning Support Centers also house Regional Operations Centers which provide operational support to schools.
With respect to the Regional Operating Centers, one informant stated:

Now you have the establishment of these regions, but the first thing that they did was give the regional superintendent part of the
re sponsi bilities and part of the authority and part of the power and give the rest of it to a newly created entity called the regional operational center, known as the ROC, and giving that office a director.

The Regions are led by 10 Regional Superintendents who, together, function as the senior instructional management team for the school system and report directly to the Deputy Chancellor for Teaching and Learning.

Another informant indicated:

*The Regional Superintendent no longer oversees district budgets. Instead, this responsibility is supervised by the Regional Operations Center staff. Interestingly, a district’s instructional priorities are disconnected from its budget management. School principals can no longer request emergency and/or specialized funding [additional] from the superintendent. This request now must go before the ROC staffs that are not in a position to assist schools.*

Within each Region, the Regional Superintendent supervises approximately 10 to 12 Local Instructional Superintendents.
(“LISes”), each of whom has supervisory responsibility for a network of about 10 to 12 schools and principals. The LISes will provide schools in their networks with instructional leadership and will support principals and their teachers in implementing the new instructional approach and improving the quality of teaching and learning in their schools. Principals within each network report directly to the Local Instructional Superintendent assigned to lead that network (Retrieved August 12, 2005 from http://www.nycenet.edu/).

When describing the size of redesigned regional district, one informant exclaimed:

Again, it’s too broad. It’s too big. Like I’ve said in the past we had 26 schools per district, now 130 - 150 per region. Now only one parent is going to be selected per region to represent so many people, it makes no sense. It makes no sense.

Another informant provided a contrasting point of view:

New Yorkers should not rush to judgment on the changes made in the school system. With 40 district offices now consolidated into 10 regional centers and with a new curriculum being implemented in most city schools,
no one should be surprised to hear of missteps in the first weeks and months of school this year. Those inevitable missteps will not be reason to return to the old ways of doing business. The old ways may have served certain interests well, but it routinely failed some 60 percent of the city's students who each year are unable to meet state-set standards.

Again, two informants agreed with the restructuring, indicating that:

The reason I support the reforms enacted by Mayor Michael Bloomberg and put into place by Chancellor Joel Klein is that a reallocation of power to a clearly defined and publicly accountable management team is now in place.

From a decentralized system to now, what is a more centralized system with a mayor who is in charge of and controls the education of the students of New York City.

Since the 1980’s, school boards have experienced an erosion of power. State regulations have eaten into school board authority from above, while teacher unions and school-based
I'm really concerned about what is going to happen now, but my personal experience is that it's now what the chancellor and the mayor want to say. I believe that now looking at the format that they are presenting for the formation of the new committees, [parent advisory committees], these parent committees where they're asking for business people and elected officials are supposed to be involved is going to be more of a bureaucracy.

Without hesitation, another informant retorted:

According to what I have read, the information [on community citywide councils] given by Department of Education would be a community citywide council where it's going to be composed of nine parents, people from business in the community and a student. I don't believe there's going to be a good way of substituting school boards where in the past school boards were assigned to only taking care of a small group of schools.
Another informant explained:

The problem is that the new law that the mayor rammed through the legislation provides incomplete definitions and explanations of the new board and the panel’s power.

Instead of viewing recent city/state involvement as usurping school board authority it is seen as an opportunity for schools to focus their attention on issues of internal coordination and quality control (Conley, 1993). School district takeover, especially in struggling urban districts, is clearly an issue that will significantly impact state and local policy in the coming years.

This informant’s comments exemplify this feeling:

We are being asked to have trust in new paradigms, new programs and new approaches. Decisions are now further removed than ever before. Regional superintendents have placed unfair burdens on their Local Instructional Superintendents (LIS). The role of the LIS is still not greatly understood. I’m just going to rely on what I know, but it all boils down to quality learning in the classroom.
The experiences of big city mayors in school affairs, reminds us that politics must be considered at two levels. First, mayors must be concerned with winning elections. Secondly, governing is characterized by an accommodation between public power and private resources. Proponents of lodging more authority over urban school systems into the Mayor’s office have tactically avoided a downplayed central political reality: mayors must be concerned with building and sustaining an electoral coalition.

An exhaustive campaign was launched to the “Children First” campaign. The Chancellor has continuously asserted that the reform agenda focuses on the individual school -- where education takes place. The school is what parents care about. Parents do not send their children to a school district or a school system; they send their children to a school.

After receiving legislative approval to enact the governance changes, the Chancellor indicated:

Now we can focus even more sharply on the business of creating 1,400 great schools. This agreement completely resolves the concerns raised by Assemblyman Sanders, Senator Kruger and the other plaintiffs while fully preserving the integrity of the Children First reforms. Today’s
agreement demonstrates that people can effectively resolve their differences if they stay focused on doing what is right for New York City’s school children.

The Principal’s Union leader, Jill Levy responded to the Mayor’s State of The City Address with the following:

When there is no real dialogue, involvement, trust and respect, reality becomes what politicians sell and the public is willing to buy platitudes, slogans and partial truths. Consistent with our Chancellor’s public pronouncements is the belief that if you say something often and consistently, it will be perceived as the truth.

When discussing her concerns about school safety and security, Ms. Levy retorted:

The Mayor needs to be reminded that principals do not have a “new mandate” and “a new responsibility”; it has always been our mandate and responsibility. But, this administration has been remiss in its responsibility and mandate to provide timely, adequate, appropriate and legal services to principals, assistant principals,
Data collected revealed that members of the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators (CSA) support change in the school system. The development and promotion of collaborative relationships between the NYC Department of Education and the CSA appears to be lacking. Informants repeatedly were concerned that the implementation phase of the reorganization of the city's school system be done in a logical and effective manner.

One informant provided further explanation:

When these changes were first proposed I was definitely against the changes and now that I've seen where it has taken us I am still against the changes. I am a strong believer in community control and in having communities control their own destiny even though there may be needs for some type of oversight by the state and to have...
some oversight by some city agencies. I still think that New York City unfortunately is treated differently than the rest of the state in that communities are not allowed to control their own educational processes.

An authority on the history of the NYC school system, Diane Ravitch, professor at Columbia University, recently indicated the following:

I refer to this as a revolution because the public schools of this city are now embarked on the most radical change in their history and I speak of that advisedly. And we are not just experiencing reform, we are experiencing revolution and I want to speak today about some of the major issues and the problems associated with this revolution.

Informant’s interviewed overwhelmingly indicated that they were being forced to implement programs, initiatives and approaches without the benefit of an appropriate “phase-in” period. Also without much needed staff development.

To this one informant said:

Although the names will change you now have a chancellor and you have regional superintendents.
who work directly under a chancellor and then local -- but everything is coming out on a centralized -- there's a Centralized reading program, there's a centralized math program, there's very little encouragement or space for [inaudible] in terms of individual districts doing what they wanted to do which was mainly the premise of decentralization that we knew best what was for our kids and we didn't want to have to listen to on 110 Livingston Street. We in Bed-Stuy knew what was best and we would have the freedom to do it and we'd be held accountable.

A contributing factor related to principals and their political strength. This perceived rush, resulted in classroom teachers feeling pressured to institute instructional strategies that they were not fully trained to do.

To this respect one informant said:

It has great potential because it has adapted some instructional methods or instructional ideas and concepts that are consistent with research and good educational and sound educational base. However, the hysterical urgency at which the changes are being tried or tried to be implemented make it so that it will fail. There
is no way that you can do overnight -- this is what they're trying to do, is to implement the types of changes that they want and expect the result that they think they can get from it.

Another informant acknowledged the lack of political power that principals have.

Now we've gone back and said no, we at city hall, we have the best knowledge and you'll do it the way we want and there is no choice at all. So we've gone full circle. You can call it anything you want but simply stated we've gone from a centralized, de-centralized, and back to centralized. As a matter of fact, although it just may be that I'm more sophisticated than I was as a young teacher in 1963, I believe that we are more centralized today and more rigid today in this centralized approach than we ever were in the centralized approach of '63 because thinking back to '63 I remember that my school and any school had some flexibility to do what they wanted within the confines of the curriculum and the mandates of the city. Now I think someone would wind up being hung if they tried to do what they wanted to do. There is no -- so we are super centralized if anything. The pendulum
swung not only the other way but past the other way.

Even within their own union, principals are in the minority. Most of the CSA’s membership of 4,500 is made up of assistant principals, district officials, and supervisors of special education programs; there are only 1,100 principals in the system. Their union is dwarfed by the UFT, whose 70,000 members present a formidable political power in Albany (Ravitch and Viteritti, 2000).

The evolution of the political leader began innocently enough with the birth of the national search for a New York City Schools Chancellor. After the 1960’s, big city school systems no longer took it for granted that they would hire insiders to run the schools. Now there was a deliberate search for outsiders (Ravitch, 1974).

This informant explained that:

Schools have always been political. You cannot remove politics from the education agenda. Political bosses, churches, and unions have always used schools as political bases. They have always served as spheres of influence and patronage.

Community Control
In the city school system there has been much discussion of school-based management and school-based decision-making, but the reality is that the system is more centralized now than it has been in at least three decades. The New York State legislature passed a governance law in 1996 that amended the city’s decentralization statute. The 1969 law created thirty-two community districts, some of which were notoriously corrupt. The new law granted the Chancellor authority to approve and remove district superintendents appointed by local school boards, and to transfer principals from their schools for “persistent educational failure”.

The net effect of the 1996 law was to decentralize power in the hands of the Chancellor, while leaving in place the community school boards, stripped of power but nonetheless a costly and cumbersome administrative structure. Because of this legislation, the school system’s Chancellor holds a remarkable degree of power over the city’s 1,100 schools and the system’s massive central machinery. His singular authority to fire personnel at will in unprecedented in the history of the city. Centralizing this much control in the hands of a single public official is unlikely to be the last word on governance in public education. No private-sector organization, no matter how large, functions without significant delegation of authority to
operating units. In the case of public education, this means individuals schools, net local school boards. Those who are on the front lines of education, and most especially school leaders, must have both authority and responsibility over the organizations that they manage.

Immigration’s resurgence half a century later, set in motion by a now revised set of political priorities, has, expectably, had the opposite effect. While the earlier period of mass immigration was dominated by whites (overwhelmingly from Europe) today’s mass immigration is much more differentiated; in New York’s case, it involves Latinos, blacks, Asians, and whites more or less in that order of significance.

Summary

Across the nation, big-city mayors are being given new authority to exert control over their school districts. There are particular times and certain circumstances in the history of a city where a governance change can shake up an organization that’s in decline and unable to move forward. The mayor can do that, and there’s no other force that can do that. No other civic capacity can do that. Electing school board members isn’t going to do that (Kirst, 2002).
Recent studies of mayoral involvement in school districts have shown mixed results. In some cases, there have been gains in student achievement, primarily in elementary schools. In others, improvements have occurred in maintaining buildings or recruiting and retaining administrators.

The argument for an appointed body, even as a hybrid, has always been that you as a board member are more willing to deal with collective interests rather than what your ward or district or constituency wants you to do. With elected boards, the individual members always go back to their own community first (Gomp, 2004).

Now in its fourth year in New York City, mayoral control has fostered numerous partnerships. But there are also tensions over micromanagement, as well as confusion about who makes decisions. It is hardly surprising that officials at City Hall and in the Education Department are struggling with this new relationship. Not since 1871, in the era of Boss Tweed himself, has the mayor had direct, unilateral control of the city’s schools.

Mayoral control has made dealing with education issues more complicated. I often find myself dialing the labor relations department of the city, one or two of the deputy mayors and at...
least the Chancellor or one or two of his deputies to get
information on an issue or talk about an issue. Previously, the
president of the teachers' union indicated that she could call
either the Chancellor or the Board of Education president.

Under the new system, the mayor now retains the ability to
appoint the schools chancellor, who will report to him, and
serve at his pleasure. In addition the mayor will appoint eight
of the members of the revamped Board of Education, including the
chancellor, who will serve as Chairman of the board. In addition
to the eight board members named by the mayor, each borough
president will name one borough representative to the board; to
qualify, the representative must be the parent of a public
school student. In a change from the previous system, all board
members will serve at the pleasure of the official who appointed
them, and not under a fixed four-year term. For the first time
we will have a central board that will have a specific number of
members, who are parents of children in the public schools.

In the area of school finance, the new legislation also
sets a base budget for the school system – one that requires the
mayor to maintain this budget from one year to the next. Under
state law, Bloomberg and his successors will be prohibited from
going below the base budget each year. In addition, the City
cannot reduce its contribution to public education from one year
to the next, unless the City’s overall revenue drops, in which case the cut must be equal to the percentage drop in revenue.

U.S. communities have some of the best schools in the world, but they also have some of the worst. Teachers in struggling schools tend to be more autocratic in the ways they manage their classrooms, less skilled at managing complex forms of instruction, less capable of identifying children’s learning styles and needs, and less likely to see it as their job to do so, blaming students when their teaching is not successful. Then, because the competence of the teaching force is so uneven, more legions of supervision and specialists are hired to develop systems to guide and inspect the work of teachers who are not trusted to make competent decisions. And so the cycle that favors bureaucracy over teaching repeats itself.

Is Reform Really Needed

Unless choice plans are accompanied by policies that build the overall supply of excellent teachers and well-designed schools, they will not help the large majority of students who cannot get into the limited slots available in the schools they want to choose, nor will they improve schools that are dysfunctional and desperately need help.

Berliner and Biddle (1995) suggest that the current press for reform is based in part on a “manufactured crisis”. They
are absolutely correct that the problem is not that US schools are doing worse than they were in the "good old days". In fact, schools are doing as well as they ever did for a greater number of student graduation rates have risen dramatically throughout the century, basic literacy rates have risen, and more students are participating in a greater range of educational opportunities at the secondary and postsecondary levels.

Furthermore, public schools are much more inclusive and diverse places than they were in 1950, when nearly all half of all seventeen-year-olds had dropped out. Most of the students who are the focus of special programs in today's schools were not in school. Handicapped students were largely excluded from schooling. Large numbers of African, American, Latino and Native American students were relegated to miserably funded segregated systems or denied access entirely. Students who did not speak English coped on their own or dropped out.

Furthermore, US educators work in a less supportive social environment than do their peers in industrialized countries that have much lower rates of child poverty, mortality, and abuse and much greater support for child health, welfare, and pre-school education. A growing share of US children (nearly one in four) now live in poverty; many arrive at school hungry, unvaccinated and frightened by the violence that surrounds their lives. Most
live in a single parent home at some time while they are growing up. Children who encounter a wide variety of stresses in their families and communities are present in virtually every classroom. Defenders of today's schools are right to point out that school bashing does not solve the substantial problems of unequal wealth, inadequate supports for child welfare, social violence, and prejudice that plague our society.

Berliner and Biddle (1995) argue that US students achieve as much as students elsewhere once you control for the fact that other countries have less unequal education and social systems and offer more of their students greater opportunities to learn. US students provided with high-level coursework in mathematics and science, for example do as well as average students in countries where these opportunities are provided for most students (Westbury, 1992). However, US students take such courses later and in small numbers. Moreover, the quality of teaching matters. For example, US performance in reading is better than in mathematics when compared to other countries. This is especially true in the early grades (Elly, 1992), a probable result of recent strides in knowledge about literacy development and more extensive preparation of elementary school teachers to teach reading. In contrast over 30 percent of secondary mathematics teachers lack training in the field they
In some states more than 60 percent of mathematics teachers are out of field (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 1996).

Interestingly, the high scoring states regulate education very little and none has a statewide testing system, but all three have professional standards boards for teachers that have enacted rigorous requirements for teacher education and licensing and that refuse to allow districts to hire unlicensed teachers. The lowest scoring states regulate schools heavily and test students frequently, but they have low standards for teacher education and hire large numbers of unqualified teachers each year (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 1996).

These disparities are the crux of the issue. If all US schools could function as well as the most advantaged do, there would be no need for systematic change. If is not that US teachers and students cannot succeed when they are well supported, it is that the system fails to support so many of them. This is the real crisis of American education. As Sizer (1984) concludes: It is astonishing that so few critics challenge the system. In an absolute sense, the learning exhibited by even a “successful” student after over twelve thousand hours in classrooms is strikingly limited. When one
considers the energy, commitment, and quality of so many of the people working in the schools, one must place the blame elsewhere. The people are better than the structure. Therefore, the structure must be at fault”.

If we care about all students and about the fate of the society as a whole, we cannot ignore real problems or merely seek to “get around” the present system. We must re-create it so that it, in turn, reshapes the possibilities for the great majority of schools.

Political Considerations

Finn (2003) described school boards as “major bulwarks of the status quo” that have increasingly become an anachronism. He compared school boards to “dysfunctional families” and said board elections, notable for their low voter turnouts, are disproportionately influenced by teachers unions. School boards become instantly obsolete if you don’t believe in a centralized system of education.

Though the trend began in the late 1960’s it has gathered speed in the last decade, along with a shift to mayoral control of school systems. Chicago selected a city budget director to run the schools; Seattle turned to a general; San Diego hired a federal prosecutor with experience in drugs and immigration. New York hired its second lawyer within three years, Joel I.
Klein, to serve as schools chancellor. As a former deputy White House counsel and prosecutor in the Clinton administration, Mr. Klein knows politics first-hand (Hartocollis, A., 2002).

Prior to the restructuring, support for this position was expressed in this informant’s comments:

If this governance reform becomes reality, the takeover of the system by the mayor will hold schools and students accountable to system wide standards.

To restore public trust, takeover reform maintains a strong focus on low-performing schools and students, including allocating additional resources to those schools. Takeover reform also recruits nontraditional leaders to top management positions in order to change existing organizational practices and culture. (Wong & Shen, 2001).

This informant’s comment further exemplifies the sentiments of those who were supportive:

One of the reasons I think he [Mayor Bloomberg], was able to gain this where others had not was that he was seen as above partisanship because he really didn't have any party affiliations. And being a very successful businessman, and well known as a billionaire, he was seen as

178
incorruptible. The assumption was that if he ran
this huge business so successfully, maybe he
could run the schools too. So people were willing
to trust him with this immense power.

In his campaign he had promised, among other things,
to install a back to basics curriculum, and to abolish bi-
lingual education, and the mayor said in effect, “Give me
control of education and if it doesn’t get better hold me
accountable by not voting for me” (Ravitch, D., 2000).

There was very quickly a massive reorganization launched
with complete centralization of control. So we had in this new
revolutionary phase mayoral control with no central board, and
no local boards. There was instead a pretend central board with
no powers, called the Panel on Education Policy, and pretend
local boards, called community education councils. Even mock
community superintendents of nonexistent districts.

One informant exclaimed:

The history of politics being involved in
education is not new. However, the strong
emphasis on testing and the involvement of
politicians of which really started in 1983 with
the -A Nation at Risk which was chaired by George
Bush, Sr. under the Reagan Administration has

179
really polarized the two parties or different educational interested groups into putting the focus of the success of a nation, the success of individuals solely on education when this is not literally the case since there are a lot more factors that get involved into someone’s success or the nation’s success than just the educational system that’s in place.

Another indicated:

They don’t have the right to select superintendents, they don’t evaluate things, they don’t do a lot of things that would give them a say, and I say bought off, because they knew they couldn’t just tell community you’re out of the process.

In the new arrangement, the mayor appoints a chancellor, and the chancellor appoints everyone else. What was put in place is a corporate model of tightly centralized hierarchical top down control with all decisions made at Tweed. Unlike a typical corporation however, the DOE not have an outside board of trustees or an audit committee. That glorious building, the Tweed courthouse, the most lavish municipal building of its era, which became famous as a symbol of Boss Tweed’s corruption is now the symbol that has replaced 110 Livingston Street.
The Impact of Racial and Ethnic Change.

There have also been questions raised about the role of race in determining the takeover of districts.

One informants’ perception vividly demonstrates:

The 1967 strike even though the strike had been settled, there were still bad feelings between teachers and administrators and community still existed. There was a really major racial overtone because if you remember the 1968 strike it had to do with strictly a racial type of situation where some people interpreted the decentralization process as being whatever the ethnicity of a group continue to be is, whatever the color of a group might be and that meant that that group was going to control and [inaudible] controlling was to get rid of anybody that wasn’t looking like that group or thinking like that group. So that was all going on.

As the racial composition of the city’s adult population shifted from white to black and Latino the transformation has been even more extensive in the racial and ethnic composition of the city’s school-age population.

Whites accounted for 96 percent of all 5-to-17 year olds in New York City in 1930. Since then, their share has fallen
persistently and dramatically. By 1996 it was down 26 percent of the total. The leading school reform policy — New York State revolves around strong accountability of schools with consequences for poor performance. Analysis of state achievement growth as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress has not led to the narrowing of the black–white achievement gap.

However, the black–white gap appears to have been adversely impacted over the decade by measuring minority concentrations in the schools.

As a result of the interview process several overarching themes have been identified upon analysis of interview questions pertaining to question# 1.

Responses from the majority of school leaders concerning the changes that the New York City governance reform act has brought to community level involvement has consistently focused on the lack of "true" parent and community involvement.

At the school level, parents often alienated and now welcomed into schools. The fact of the matter is that if schools really wanted an increase parental involvement, they would find ways to attract parents to school events and meetings. With respect to school governance, very few parents are involved in assisting...
with the development of school policy and procedures. Few opportunities are provided for parents to be involved in school-based decision-making. Outside of their involvement in the school leadership team (which in most cases only allows for the participation of 5-6 parents), parents are very few opportunities for any real involvement.

The addition of parent coordinators and all city schools can help to address the need for increase parental involvement in school governance and policy. A full-time staff person is now available to work with school leadership on finding ways to increase parental participation in the day-to-day functions of the school. Informants generally agreed that a well-trained parent coordinator can assist greatly in this endeavor.

Research Questions Explored

Research Question #1

What changes did the NYC School Governance Reform Act bring about at the community level of involvement in school governance and policy?

It is true that the 32-year-old and 32-district NYC educational system suffered from a host of scandals and chronic failings. What should not be forgotten is the fact that very little credit is given to the 1969 decentralization law that
that the New York City school system changed from "the nation's reconstructed school systems" to one integrated.

\[ \text{In other words, the community feels that the system has been improved.} \]

However, urban superintendents and teaching staff to one integrated.

\[ \text{support for a reconstructed community} \]

resulted in increased communication and a feeling of belonging.

\[ \text{Communities need a system of support to help communities} \]

Hence, the need for a reconstructed community.
Mayor’s Children First Initiative, Community Education Councils (CEC’s) have been established. These councils are the local committees established to replace the school boards. It appears as though very few parents are aware of the role, responsibilities and function of the CEC’s.

It is important to note that a central element of the Children First reforms is increasing parent and community involvement in children’s education. Among the education department’s key initiatives were placing Parent Coordinators in schools and creating Community and Citywide Education Councils that are parent dominated.

The research evidence is overwhelming that when parents and communities are involved in their children’s public schools, student achievement increases and school morale improves. Indeed, when many other reforms have failed to make a dent in the performance of public schools, parent and community engagement strategies have consistently produced results for students, teachers, parents and communities.

Another consideration is the establishment of school leadership teams in every school in New York City. In December 1996, as part of an historic change in governance, the New York
State Legislature mandated that the Chancellor of the New York City Board of Education develop a plan for ensuring that every New York City public school had an effective school leadership team in place by October 1, 1999.

The Chancellor envisioned a school system in which every school provides a high-quality education to every child under its care. At its core, such a system is to be based on constant attention to improving student performance.

This can only happen when the efforts of all members of the school community -- parents, teachers, administrators, and others at all levels of the organization -- focus their efforts relentlessly and effectively on enabling all students to meet high standards. Every member of the school community must truly believe that all children can meet high expectations and constantly communicate and reinforce that belief to children and one another.

Research Question #2
How did changes in the NYC School Governance Reform Act affect the selection process for School District and Local Instructional Superintendents?
Within each Region, the Regional Superintendent supervises approximately 10 to 12 Local Instructional Superintendents ("LISes"), each of whom has supervisory responsibility for a network of about 10 to 12 schools and principals. The LISes will provide schools in their networks with instructional leadership and will support principals and their teachers in implementing the new instructional approach and improving the quality of teaching and learning in their schools.

In addition, 32 LISes are designated as Community School District Superintendents while continuing to serve as LISes. These 32 LISes each oversee a community school district office and fulfill the reorganization’s commitment to linking the new management structure with the Community School Boards and the parent-focused Community District Education Councils that are replacing them.

Another consistent theme that emerged from interview question #2 was that of the role of Superintendent in the restructured system. One informant indicated that the emphasis on instruction is lacking — "Local Instructional Superintendents (LISes) now function as superintendents previously did. They are required to handle a myriad of responsibilities, most of them administrative in
nature. It is easy see that they can not be involved in school improvement efforts if they are constantly putting out fires in their network schools. There is tremendous talent that the LISes possess; unfortunately, they have very little time to do what they were hired to do. I would even say that improvement of instruction is probably one of the areas they dedicate the least amount of time to.

The responses of most informants consistently demonstrated concern for colleagues who were under enormous pressure to raise standardized test scores, improve attendance rates and low incident rates, without consideration of the need for targeted funds to address high risk and high need students. Community and societal concerns affecting student achievement were expressed in many powerful ways. The following excerpt from an informant interview supports this emerging theme:

Young people in the neighborhood also have little hope. Some have no legal source of income and, as a result, get involved in theft, prostitution, violence, and drug pushing. Since their parents have little dignity, family ties are weak, and these young people often turn to gangs for social support. And since sport and recreational
facilities are rarely available, they lead boring lives and are attracted to illegal activities. Also, their school is miserably funded, most of their academic records are mediocre, and few care about finishing high school – never mind going on to college. Most youths in the neighborhood also believe, correctly, that the cost of a college education is beyond their means and that scholarships for needy students are very rare. The everyday activities of their lives provide no vision of a better life for these young people, and they find it difficult to think of paths by which they might “make it” in the mainstream of American society. So they become angry, embittered, alienated – and too often they end up in prison or the morgue.

Under amendments to the Decentralization Law passed in June 2002, the Chancellor is authorized to appoint community superintendents. The NYCDOE Chancellor’s Regulation continues to set forth the educational, managerial and administrative qualifications, and performance record criteria for the position of community school district superintendent. It also provides
for a consultative process in the appointment of a community superintendent.

A number of changes have occurred in the selection process for the position of superintendent.

The school system is now organized into 10 regions across the city - each of which includes approximately 120 schools. Each Region contains 2, 3 or 4 Community School Districts, as well as the high schools located within their geographic boundaries.

There are now 10 Regional superintendents - one for each region and approximately 100-120 Local Instructional Superintendents (LISes), each of whom has supervisory responsibility for a network of about 10 to 12 schools and principals. The LISes provide schools in their networks with instructional leadership and support principals and their teachers in implementing the new instructional approach and improving the quality of teaching and learning in their schools.

The Regions are led by 10 Regional Superintendents who, together, function as the senior instructional management team for the school system and report directly to the Deputy Chancellor for Teaching and Learning.

Principals within each network report directly to the Local Instructional Superintendent assigned to lead that network. Under the new structure, each school was expected to receive greater individualized support and supervision.

Research Question #3

How did the NYC School Governance Reform law strengthen the Chancellor's authority?

When Mayor Michael Bloomberg exercised his hard-won right to appoint the city schools chancellor and selected Joel I. Klein, a former Justice Department antitrust attorney, Klein...
took over the school system with unprecedented powers and protection from public scrutiny. He reports only to the mayor. The seven-member Board of Education, which formerly had the power to remove the chancellor and oversaw many aspects of the school system, was eliminated, and an advisory group, the Panel for Educational Policy, installed in its place.

This panel, chaired by the chancellor, is made up of five public-school parents appointed by the borough presidents, and seven other members appointed by the mayor. Chancellor Klein was also granted exclusive authority to hire and fire the city's district superintendents.

There is no doubt that the reform legislation places accountability squarely on the shoulders of the Chancellor and the Mayor of New York City. While giving a speech at New York University, Chancellor Klein indicated:

And so this mayor came in and the first thing he did was to seek mayoral control in Albany. And I want to say that is not a small accomplishment and it reflects enormous, enormous courage. Let’s be candid with each other. There is no city in the United States, no major urban area, that you can look to and say, “There’s the model. They have succeeded in public education.” And nobody thinks that you can do this in a couple, three, or even four years. You need to think about transformation, even in businesses, over much, much longer time frames. You are trying to change a system like ours with 135,000 professionals and employees and with 1.1 million kids, so you have to have a very different time horizon. This mayor
knows that, but this mayor understood that if we did not get started, it would not happen. And I believe that at its core what Michael Bloomberg has done is step up, assert the importance of this issue, take on leadership, and ask the city to hold him accountable. In the vocabulary of my new environment, this is some of the best modelling I have seen. I think it is absolutely critical to understand the significance of what he has done. And I believe that, based on that understanding, he has a vision for a transformation of our school system that is a continuing work in progress. All of us should be impatient about it while simultaneously understanding that we didn’t get into this situation overnight and we will not get out of it overnight.


Research Question #3a

How did the NYC School Governance Reform Act make school officials accountable for student achievement and school performance?

Well, as you may already know, the Mayor announced that he would mandate a standardized curriculum as part of his Children First initiative. The goal of “Children First” is to improve achievement across all schools and to address persistently low performing schools by moving innovation and effective school change throughout the system. The Chancellor’s team stated that they will examine best practices in instruction, management and budget analysis, supporting the core purpose of instruction. Concrete action items will address the challenge of spreading the effective practices of successful schools. Leveraging
internal expertise, Children First was to consult with teachers, principals and superintendents to identify best practices that will inform system wide change.

School officials continue to work under tremendous pressure to improve student test scores and performance. Schools that consistently fail to meet academic performance targets, such as city and state standardized test results have had principals and assistant principals removed for incompetence. The new governance legislation provides the Chancellor and his Superintendent’s unprecedented authority and latitude to remove school staff.

Research Question #4

What is the respondents' personal experience with the governance changes in the NYC decentralization Law?

So why did the governance change occur, and why did too many of us sit back and essentially allow this to happen, without fervent or organized protest? Honestly, many of us were sick and tired of petty squabbling between the Mayor, the Chancellor and the Board of Education, with each of them blaming the others when things didn’t improve. At least, we figured, if one person was responsible for the schools, he couldn’t try to displace responsibility onto someone else.
Unfortunately, this hasn't worked. Instead, the Mayor and the Chancellor continue to shift blame for every problem that occurs, onto incompetent administrators, lazy teachers, uninvolved parents, and the "culture of complacency" that we are all supposedly instilled with. Indeed, one of Joel Klein's favorite mantras is that anyone who criticizes the changes he's made is a defender of the status quo, despite the fact that many of us, parents, educators and advocates alike, have been fighting for real reforms and fundamental improvements to be made in our schools long before he moved to New York City.

The other reason many favored the change in governance was that since the Mayor controlled the budget for schools anyway, he already had much of the power. Perhaps he would more adequately fund the system if he knew he was going to be judged on the results.

One informant activist indicated that:

Certainly, the Board of Education was flawed, as were many of the community school boards. Their decision-making was too often political and unresponsive to parental concerns. But at least their existence and procedures allowed for the
possibility of public engagement. Now, there is a real danger that the system will become even more arbitrary, secret and political than before.

Well, two years later, I think we can answer that question with some certainty.

The reorganization of our entire public education system was embarked upon with such rapidity, secrecy, and a lack of public input that it was breathtaking. Ten working groups were formed to address all aspects of the school system, from curriculum to staffing and organizational structure, whose members whose identities were kept secret until freedom of information suits were filed. These committees operated without formal charge, and although DOE officials repeatedly said there were parents and classroom teachers on them, they refused to say who they were. Sure enough, when the FOIL requests were finally answered, there were none.

The committees produced no reports, held no hearings, and the when the "Children's First" changes were announced, there was nothing
formally written that could provide rationales or explanations for any of them.

With respect to securing equity in funding, our mayor and chancellor have done a terrible job. It was not until recently, that the Mayor was out front on this issue. To his credit, although I believe his actions were quite delayed, he challenged the Governor and state legislature on the issue of adequate funding for city schools, consistent with the Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit. If I were to call myself a cynic, I might question why this bold and courageous effort had to wait until the mayor was reelected. It also took place when the "Education Mayor’s” student achievement proclamations were not much to boast about.

This is certainly an interesting question. When I was hired over 11 years ago, I was assigned to a middle school as a Spanish teacher. I was interviewed at the local school by the school principal, sent to the local district office to be processed and that was sent to the central Board of Education,
where I submitted application forms, college transcripts and a license evaluation form. What’s also very interesting is that I was referred by a school board member, who thought that I might work well with children.

I enjoyed attending school board meetings, where my children were recognized for their academic achievement.

We no longer have monthly school board meetings; I am told that there are community education councils that are held monthly. I would not know where to go, the meetings are not well-publicized and we don’t know who the representatives are. This is quite different than what we had before.

Secondly, our principal is part of a network, made up of about 10 principals and a local instructional superintendent. The LIS has visited our school on a few occasions and seems to be helpful. Every once in awhile the LIS and other regional staff visit our school for walk-through monitoring sessions. Our principal seems to be under tremendous pressure, whenever there is a visit. I have always wondered why we receive very little support in our instructional program.

Most teachers seem to be very concerned about the adversarial relationship we have with the Chancellor and the central board. Most of my colleagues are not pleased with the new teacher’s contract, its provision for extended day schedules.
and/or the changes in administrative responsibilities under the Circular Six provision.

Teachers find themselves in the middle of the revolution some call it school reform, some call it school restructuring and others say that we simply changed the governance structure. I believe that school system is under attack. Decisions are being made every day that affect the lives of thousands of teachers, and over one million schoolchildren. Our Mayor and School's Chancellor have been given unprecedented power and authority. This top-down governance approach is leading many of us to think that there are no checks and balances that reach drain the power of the system's leadership.

We although once thought I expected to carry out new programs and initiatives. Yet, we are rarely consulted, and changes are being imposed without listening to and collaborating with teachers and school administrators.

The Chancellor has been hiring an army of consultants, which by the way, are highly paid. In some cases, earning more than teachers, assistant principals, and principals. The Chancellor has indicated that he has to pay top dollar in order to recruit the best people. Why does he uses same approach, if he was to recruit the very best people to teaching and retain the best people as principals.
I can speak with a great deal of authority about the changes in the New York City public school system. As a 15-year veteran of the system, I have served as a teacher, education evaluator, assistant principal, and principal. After being removed from my position as principal, I now serve as a regional administrator. I attributed a great deal of my success (until most recently) to the community school District model. I had the privilege of serving for almost my entire career in the same local school district, which is now regionalized.

I was provided with career opportunities through a network of friends and supporters who also worked in the same local school district. Although school boards have come under attack and history has been rewritten as it relates to the successes experience under the old system, I can say first-hand that they were great benefits to what we had in the past. I do not say this in a romanticized manner, but instead I'm simply pointing out that our new structure is disconnected from the day-to-day dealings in our schools. Probationary administrators are not provided with the support, training, and assistance necessary to navigate a very complex system. As a matter of fact, I believe that there is a double standard—one for principals who, the
leadership Academy and another for principals who will hired prior to the restructuring of our educational system.

It remains to be seen whether, the new standardized curriculum will support schools in the way that has been promised. Although I agree with the standardization of Curriculum - there is that he will in a uniform curriculum, but they must be continuity, coherence, and clarity about what children in different grades are expected to learn. I am quite uncomfortable with the pressure to conform to one pedagogy. A uniform curriculum should spell out what is to be taught and not punish teachers (and principals) for failing to follow prescribed approach. Instead of demanding a lockstep adherence to one approach, it is important to give teachers the flexibility and exposure to many other approaches. How in the world do Mayor Bloomberg and Chancellor Klein-a business executive and the lawyer-have the nerve to tell 80,000 teachers, that there is only long way to teach.

Research Question #5
What was the NYC School Governance Reform Act seeking to accomplish? Is it happening, what not? Has it been successful?

The general focus of this legislation that was to provide an elected official, who has to answer to voters, in this case the Mayor, with the means necessary the provision of the New York
City in governance reform take responsibility for our schools. To that end, the Legislature has largely succeeded. The provisions of this New York City school reform legislation, which was passed by both statehouses and signed by Governor Pataki, indicated that the New York City public school system would be administered by a Chancellor who would be appointed by the Mayor.

The Board of Education was replaced by a 13 member advisory panel for educational policy consisting of the Chancellor, seven members appointed by the Mayor, one additional member appointed by each borough president. Panel members will not be assigned offices, staff or vehicles.

The school construction authority would be comprised of one appointee by the Chancellor and two by the Mayor.

Summary of Major Provisions:

**Selection of the Chancellor:** The Mayor will appoint the Chancellor. However, the Legislature rejected the Mayor Bloomberg’s request to eliminate the requirement that potential appointees lacking certification as a school district administrator obtain a waiver from the State Education Commissioner.

**Composition of the Citywide Board of Education:** The current seven-member central board of education will be replaced with a 13 member board, to be chaired by the Chancellor and comprised with seven other Mayoral appointees and five members appointed by the Borough Presidents. The Borough Presidents’ appointees will be required to be parents of children attending New York City public schools.
Board member can be an employee of the City of New York, any of its subdivisions, or the Board of Education. Members will serve at the pleasure of their appointing authority; they could be removed at any time.

Powers and Duties of the Board of Education: Board members will not have staff, offices, or vehicles, nor will they receive any compensation, other than reimbursement for actual expenses. The bill provides that, "Nothing herein shall be construed to require or authorize the day-to-day supervision or the administration of the operations of any school within the city school district of the city of New York." Many responsibilities of the central Board will be shifted to the Chancellor. The Board will continue to approve the annual budget, five-year capital spending plan, and citywide educational policies and standards. The Board will be authorized to approve contracts and settlements only if they "would significantly impact the provision of educational services or programming within the district."

Selection of Community Superintendents: The position of Community Superintendent will be retained; the Superintendents will be appointed by the Chancellor - Community School Boards will have no role in the process. Current law requiring the Chancellor to establish a "publicly inclusive process" for recruitment, screening and selection would be repealed.

Qualifications, Performance Criteria and Standards for Community Superintendents: The bill does not change the requirement that the Chancellor promulgate regulations, subject to approval by the City Board, establishing qualifications and performance criteria and standards for Superintendents and principals.

Powers and Duties of Community Superintendents: The bill does not change the powers and duties of Community Superintendents as established in the State Education Law (§2590-f).

Maintenance of Effort: The City would be required to maintain its contribution to funding the school system at no less than the contribution of the preceding year, except that, in the event of a year-to-year decline in total City funds, the City would be permitted to reduce its contribution to the school system by an amount equivalent to the percentage reduction in total City funds. City funds would be defined as funds derived from any source, excluding funds within the capital budget and "... funds derived from any federal, state, or private source over which the City has no discretion." The prior "Stavisky-Goodman" maintenance of effort requirement would be repealed.

Expiration: The bill includes a "sunset" provision absent agreement to extend the law by the Governor and Legislature, most of its provisions would expire on June 30, 2009 and school governance would revert to the structures and processes now in place.

Research Question #6

Is the school system generally better off under mayoral control?

Supporters of mayoral control indicate that the school system is better off now that the Chancellor who serves as the chief executive is now working in lockstep with the Mayor who is ultimately responsible and accountable.

An informant indicated:

Improvement in classroom instruction is what it is all about in the end. Mayor Bloomberg and Chancellor Klein
have laid out groundwork worked on changing classroom instruction. They have made some progress, if you look at numbers like I do. More progress was made than in some of the other cities. But if you ask "Are you better off now than you were before?" my answer is "Yes." Schools in New York are in better repair, teachers are hired earlier, budgets are more balanced, there are some after-school programs that are running better, there's more consistency to the curriculum program.

A great deal of patience is asked for, given the reality that a school system the size of New York's cannot be turned around in four years. Changes have been noteworthy, though not dramatic.

In 2004, the overall four-year graduation rate reached 54 percent, up from 50.8 percent in 2002, and the 2004 dropout rate declined to 16.3 percent from 20.3 percent in 2002. Also, under Bloomberg, the district negotiated a contract with the teachers union that made it less daunting for principals to discipline underperforming personnel.
Table 6: New York City Department of Education Four Year School Completion Outcomes - Class of 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Latino</th>
<th>African Amer.</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>6,462</td>
<td>6,690</td>
<td>10,310</td>
<td>46,049</td>
<td>54,339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates: %</td>
<td>66.9%</td>
<td>70.1%</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
<td>71.9%</td>
<td>69.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still Enrolled</td>
<td>2,284</td>
<td>873</td>
<td>7,491</td>
<td>3,340</td>
<td>12,501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still Enrolled: %</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The data shows the number of graduates and those still enrolled for the class of 2004.

Source: New York City Department of Education

Supporters indicate that NYC Public Schools now have a teaching force that is fully certified, while 15 percent were still no certified four years ago. Blacks and Latinos are narrowing the achievement gap with whites; a single curriculum was implemented citywide; and a mentoring program was launched for all incoming teachers.

Opponents of mayoral control indicate that the current New York City school system fails to guarantee basic human rights standards. Children are denied the skills and knowledge they need to succeed.
need as a result of inadequate resources in the classroom, overcrowded and crumbling schools, the pressure and narrow focus of testing, inadequate counseling, and the criminalization of schools. Disparities in resources and outcomes based on race and class violate the human rights principle of non-discrimination.

Of additional concern is the focus on test prep instruction. Although there is no denying that this concentration on curriculum is at least partly responsible for recent gains our students have made on standardized tests, there is also concern that a well-rounded approach to education is being sacrificed as more and more of the school day is devoted to test prep exercises. Indeed, with the emphasis on student achievement on reading and math tests, it often seems that other areas are being sacrificed.

The system's top-down bureaucracy prevents flexibility in reform efforts, and keeps the power to change the system away from parents, students, educators and communities. These problems run too deep for any one change in policy or shift in governance to solve. A whole system change in education is needed.

Research Question #7

What is your assessment of the school systems' graduation rate?
The percentage of New York City high school students graduating on time actually dropped last year to 53.4 percent in 2005 from 54.3 percent in 2004. The rates for 2003 and 2002 were 53.4% and 50.8% respectively.

The figures, released as part of a preliminary version of the Mayor's Management Report, which provides statistics on government performance, rose anew what was an important topic of contention during Mayor Bloomberg's re-election campaign last fall. Mayor Bloomberg has indicated that it would take years before many of his changes, like grade retention policies that hold back elementary and middle school children largely on the basis of test scores were reflected in improved graduation rates. The report also showed that the city's seven-year graduation rate was down slightly, to 67.6 percent in 2005 from 68 percent in 2004.

According to a longitudinal study released by the New York City Department of Education, overall, more than one-half (54.3 percent) of students in the Class of 2004 graduated, and less than one-fifth (16.3 percent) of the class dropped out at the end of the four years. The remaining 29.4 percent were enrolled for a fifth-year of high school. The graduation rate is slightly higher than in the last eight previous classes and the dropout rate decreased by 4 percentage points compared with the last
three classes. The percentage of graduates awarded Regents-Endorsed Diplomas and Regents-Endorsed Diplomas with Honors, which had been increasing for graduating cohorts since 1996, declined slightly for the Class of 2004 compared with the previous two years (2002, 35.4 percent; 2003, 34.0 percent; and 2004, 33.2 percent). If all students in the cohort are considered, the percent of students graduating with a Regents-Endorsed Diploma after four years is 18.0 percent for the Class of 2004, approximately the same as the Class of 2003 (18.2 percent).

Table 7: New York City Department of Education Four Year School Completion Outcomes - Class of 2004 by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Still Enrolled</th>
<th>Dropout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>N = 32,749</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>N = 34,198</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Data do not include students who were dissolved from the school system.

Source: New York City Department of Education
While the overall number of students receiving Regents diplomas is troubling, the small percentage of African American and Latino students receiving Regents diplomas is especially disturbing. In the class of 2001, only 8.5% of Latinos and 9.1% of African Americans earned a Regents diploma. The class of 2004 fared only slightly better: 9.8% of Latinos and 9.4% of African Americans graduated with Regents diplomas, compared to 37.5% of Asians and 36% of whites in the same cohort. Although African Americans and Latinos made up more than two-thirds of the student body, they received dramatically fewer Regents diplomas than other groups (New York City Council, 2005).

Table 8
New York City Regents' Graduation Rate - Class of 2004
Class of 2004, by Race/Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Dropouts</th>
<th>Still Enrolled</th>
<th>GED</th>
<th>Local Diploma</th>
<th>Regents Diploma</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>37.50</td>
<td>36.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

209
The most commonly reported measures of instruction are standardized tests and graduation rates, as the State uses these numbers to decide whether schools are failing. Good news was often offset by bad news. More than half the children in grades 3, 5, 6, and 7 passed the City's English and math tests. Sadly, the failure rate for the grade 8 social studies test rose—from 62% in 2001-02, to 76% in 2002-03, to 81% in 2003-04.

The citywide graduation rate of 54.3% in 2004 was the highest recorded since 1986, and 16 City schools came off the State's failing school list. However, the share of students receiving the college preparatory Regents diploma has not budged from a shameful 18%. Fewer than 1 in 10 African American and Latino students leave high school with a Regents diploma.

This data indicates that vast numbers of African American and Latino students are leaving school unprepared to support themselves. Among adults aged 25 and over in 2004, just 40% of those without high school diplomas had jobs. In contrast, 60% of those with high school diplomas, and 76% of those with bachelor's degrees were employed. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics says college degrees are essential for the most lucrative jobs: In fact, for all but 1 of the 50 highest paying
occupations, a college degree or higher is the most significant source of education or training (New York City Council, 2005).

Broken down by race, the graduation rates highlight a stark gap between black and Latino students and white students. About 80% of white students statewide graduated in four years, roughly twice the percentage of black and Latino students. For the most part their effect on graduation rates will not be known for a decade, when schools chancellor Joel Klein and Mayor Bloomberg are long gone (New York City Council, 2005).

Research Question #8
What is your opinion of the New York City Department of Education's Principals Academy training program?

In January 2003, the NYC Leadership Academy was created as a separate non-profit organization to recruit, train, and support a new generation of outstanding principals. According to the New York City Department of Education, "The Academy is the centerpiece of the NYC Department of Education's transformational strategy. The approach the Academy has taken to leadership development is unprecedented in the public sector. The Academy was modeled after successful private sector initiatives such as General Electric’s John F. Welch Leadership Center and the Ameritech Institute. The Academy is actively working on building a team of 1,400 great principals who are
true instructional leaders, who can inspire and lead teachers, students and parents in their school community”.

The NYC Leadership Academy is an independent 501(c) (3) non-profit corporation funded by corporate and philanthropic giving. The NYC Leadership Academy has received support from the Partnership for New York City, leading foundations, including The Wallace Foundation, The Broad Foundation, The Annenberg Foundation, and The Carroll and Milton Petrie Foundation, and prominent companies and individuals in the business community.

At a NYU Education Policy Breakfast Chancellor Klein remarked:

And yet, we were totally underinvested in leadership, so one of the things that we did was go out and raise in the private sector close to $75 million. Let’s not kid ourselves, people do not make that investment unless they believe what we believe, that leadership is transforming. And we have created the Leadership Academy, and we are now graduating people after a 15-month program that includes an intensive residency working with, following around, and studying with one of the great principals in our system. Last year we graduated 75 out of approximately 90, which seems...
Can I prove after three months that this is a success? Of course not. That will require a period of years, but I am absolutely convinced that if we don’t get the leadership piece right, we won’t transform education. People ask me if there were one thing that I wish I could do better than anybody else in the world, what would it be? Up until quite recently it was to hit a jump shot from 25 feet. Today if there is one thing I could do better than anybody in the world, I would be the best principal-picker. That’s what I would do, because if I can get a great leader at every school, then I think we are well on the road to what we need to do.

The NYC Leadership Academy was launched in July 2003, and uses problem-based, experiential learning and providing candidates with strong leadership training. In addition to the Aspiring Principals Program, the NYC Leadership Academy provides leadership development programs for new and existing principals. The Principal Leadership Development Program, which began in October 2003, focuses on developing incumbent principals to lead their schools effectively and provides them with leadership.
development during the summer and throughout the academic year. Over the past year, the NYC Leadership Academy provided all of the principals in the City’s public school system with professional development programs.

One informant provided a contrasting viewpoint:

I can tell you first-hand, as an experienced school administrator, I have worked with a New York City leadership Academy graduate, who was given a very difficult assignment. It always seems that the least experienced school administrators are given the most difficult assignments. In the case that I’m describing, the newly assigned principal was given the unfortunate task of taking over a school that had four principals in eight years. Staff turnover was high and an audit of the school finances demonstrated a number of irregularities uncovered from some previous administrations.

As a matter of fact, over $300,000 was misspent, and had to be repaid using current year funds. It is difficult enough to open up the school year with a limited budget— to find that you are
working with an unforeseen deficit only complicates all of the budgetary plans that a principal must prepare. This new assignment also require leadership Academy graduate to help her school get past a terrible public relations incident that was reported in a number of city newspapers.

I believe that if you ask most Academy graduates that did not have intermediate supervisory experience (as an assistant principal), you’ll find that the training that one receives from this intermediate position helps tremendously to make the transition into the role of principal and school leader. With as much funding as this program is received, Academy graduates, should receive the very best training that the school system has to offer. I don’t see this as the case. I am hopeful the our new school leaders, are provided with the necessary support, and this includes support from the regions in which they are located, in order to accomplish and succeed at what is one of the most difficult jobs one can have.
An analysis of Chapter IV led to a number of important questions to consider as we move forward. Among the most important questions that remain to be answered are:

- **Who’s better off in this reform?** Student Performance — inconclusive — time factor NAEP results (sampling vs. Actual)
- **School Principal’s:** Much promised autonomy — little delivered
- Recentralized System is it working — morphed themselves into old districts worst practices LISes are supposed to be solely focused on instruction but instead are overwhelmed by the administrative demands of the job. Leaving little time for their stated purpose.
- **School Community/Leadership Teams** — shared decision making paid lip service; was the real intent with regard to community involvement to literally expunge/loud the community in its involvement w/ school reform effort at the local level. Stated purpose of empowering parents only a paper tiger.
- **Curriculum — Pedagogy — Standardized exams** —
- **Has NYC School reform equitably dealt with the continuing changes in student demographics?**

**Summary**

Perhaps the most fundamental indicator of how successful a school system is doing in educating its students is the number youngsters who actually earn a high school diploma. Judging by this measure, it is clear that our school system still falls very short: according to the most current statistics only approximately 53% of New York City public high school students
graduate within four years. After recalculating the rates, the NYC Department of Education reported an increase to 58%. New York State Department of Education (NYSED) figures show a graduation rate of 44%. The NYSED does not include GED or August graduates in its calculation.

Moreover, only 20% of our graduating high school seniors receive Regents diploma. Compounding these troubling statistics are estimates that nearly one in six young people in New York City between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four are neither in school nor employed.

While an impressive capital plan has been developed to address many of the capital issues plaguing our schools, the fact remains that over half of the projects in the plan can be completed only if a substantial amount of additional state funding is made available. In the absence of any settlement in the Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit, which found that New York City schools are financially shortchanged by the state, it is unlikely that the state funding necessary to build many new schools and address long-standing infrastructural problems in existing school buildings will be provided to New York City.

In recent years there has been a new focus on instruction and professional development for teachers. Although there is no
With the emphasis on student achievement on reading and math tests, it often seems that areas such as social studies, arts and music, health education, and sports fall by the wayside. Also of concern is the fact that despite refocused efforts on professional development and other supports for teachers, low morale and high turnover among this group of professionals continue to be significant problems.

Public engagement - especially the engagement of parents - continues to be another area of concern in our public education system. Despite the placement of a parent coordinator in every school who is responsible for addressing the needs of parents and the creation of parent dominated councils that are charged with the responsibility of providing advice on capital and instructional matters, there continues to be widespread sentiment on the part of the informants interviewed that the parental and public involvement is not a priority of the current Mayoral administration.
Summary, Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

Summary

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions, implications and recommendations based on the qualitative analysis of the interview data. This chapter also provides recommendations for future study. This focus of the study is represented by a small sample of school and community leaders that have had extensive experience in the New York City Public School System. A summary of the purpose of the study, summaries of the procedures and findings as well as a discussion of the significance of the findings are presented.

The central purpose of this research is to study leadership and school reform legislation in the New York City Public School System. This study will examine how mayoral leadership has transformed the New York City Public School System.

The data from this study is being used to (1) study the influences of mayoral control and mayoral leadership on the NYC Public School system, (2) compare opinions of stakeholders, community leaders and school administrators, and (3) make recommendations for further reform of the New York City Public School system.
In summary, I determined that a review of the experience and ensuing opinions of advocates, educators, community leaders and school administrators would be meaningful because of the lack of field based data that is currently available.

New York City’s public school system has seen some significant improvements in recent years: in certain grades student achievement on standardized reading and math tests has posted notable gains; there is an ambitious capital plan that seeks to address issues of overcrowding and facility deterioration in our schools; the number of gifted and talented and bilingual programs has increased; and additional accountability measures have been put in place for our schools. A great deal of credit is to be given to the leadership of the NYC Mayor and Chancellor.

Mayor Bloomberg continues to talk about the importance of the governance change that has enabled him to embark on a bold reform effort. He has indicated that we all share a common goal, “Ensuring that every New York City child receives a high-quality education that prepares him or her for a successful future.” Over the past few years, he takes credit for making progress toward the ultimate goal of creating a system of outstanding schools in which effective teaching and learning is a reality for every child. Mayor Bloomberg in laying out his vision for
education reform, challenged all New Yorkers to "rethink the way that we have educated our children and to work together to turn the vision of a system of 1400 great schools into a reality".

Despite this progress, however, it remains clear that far too many of our students continue to lack the most basic skills in reading and math, as evidenced by the fact that in the 2004-2005 school year almost 50% of students in grades three through eight did not meet DOE standards in these subjects. Particularly troubling are the standardized reading and math scores of eighth graders, which actually fell slightly in the 2004-2005 school year: of the more than 72,000 eighth graders who took standardized tests, 59% and 67% did not meet standards in reading and math respectively (New York City Council Education Committee, June, 2005).

While it is still too early to know whether the mayoral takeover of the New York City Public School will ultimately prevail, the preliminary evidence fails to support mayoral takeovers as the sole reform effort that can lead to the improvement of failing school districts.

The changes in New York represent yet another turn in the cycle of centralizing and decentralizing that has churned the city's school system for 150 years. In the mid-1800s, 17 elected local boards and a weak central board ran the schools. But by
the 1890s, those bodies were under attack for corruption and inefficiency, so the state legislature centralized school authority under one mayoral appointed board (Ravitch, 1987).

Berliner and Biddle (1995) note that some Americans like to pretend that public education in this country is of one piece and that it provides equal opportunities for all. Moreover, among the hundreds of works published recently that criticize schools in the United States, compare American schools with those in other countries, or suggest ways to improve American education, it is difficult to find more than a half dozen that ever raise questions about unequal support for schools. And yet, huge differences persist in the levels of support given to public schools in their country differences that are far greater than those found in other advanced countries.

Funding levels are also closely tied to community affluence, which means that America's wealthy suburbs have some of the world's best schools, while appallingly bad schools appear in our urban ghettos. Thus, instead of funding an educational system that provides equal opportunity, America operates a system of public education that discriminates against poor students because the schools that they attend are poorly funded (Berliner and Biddle, 1995).
Conclusions

Like other major educational reforms, mayoral takeover of a school district suggests both promises and limitations. On the one hand, the takeover strategy has the potential to turn around low-performing schools and districts. Takeover reform looks different in each school district where it has been implemented, but all takeover reforms focus on district-level capacity to reduce institutional fragmentation and raise academic accountability. This kind of system-wide restructuring is based on several organizational principles which:

- recognize that the existing political structures are not easily alterable - this includes the influence and power of teacher unions;
- empower the district and state level administration to intervene in failing schools; integrate political accountability and educational performance standards at the system wide level; and
- enable the state or city to manage conflicting interests and reduce fragmentary rules (Wong, 1999).

If these principles become reality, mayoral takeover initiatives can hold schools and students accountable to system wide standards. To restore public trust, takeover reform
maintains a strong focus on low-performing schools and students, including allocating additional resources to those schools.

It is clear that the difficulties faced by many of our schools are closely tied to problems in their local communities - problems that are, in turn, a reflection of unwise social policies in the nation. Widespread poverty, inadequate job prospects, and lack of social services all contribute to the loss of dignity in many families in the country, and, therefore, to loss of hope among children.

This is especially so for the most vulnerable of our citizens, those who must endure the additional burdens of prejudice. Given these facts, "school improvement" often really requires improvement in the overall quality of life of the members of the community.

It will be fair to judge the Bloomberg-Klein leadership reforms at that point. Is there a misunderstanding of "mayoral management vs. mayoral leadership"? Investments must be targeted and phased in.

Investments have to be targeted and phased in at a large enough scale so that they are significant enough to make a difference; ultimately, however, the success of this targeting hinges on the availability of in-time research to evaluate choices and make new decisions on how to spend money.
effectively. If we can pull all those things together, we can actually control how five billion dollars a year in new money in New York City gets framed, gets targeted, gets phased-in, gets spent, gets researched, gets corrected and gets spent again. And hopefully, from that kind of a process, we will get investments that actually produce significant improvement in the achievements of New York City school children (Citizens Budget Commission, 2006).

At that time, the public should be prepared to look not just at test scores but beyond to other important indicators of school-level and system-wide improvement.

- Are teachers and principals getting ongoing training and support?
- Is the quality of the professionals in the schools improving?
- Will mayoral control in the New York City public school system guarantee basic human rights standards for children?
- Will school children be provided with the skills and knowledge they need as a result of adequate resources in the classroom, less crowded and well built schools, movement away from the pressure and narrow focus of testing?
- Can a transparent system of accountability be designed to assess whether education funding is being used to improve educational outcomes?
- Will consideration be given to the associated conditions of poverty and limited opportunities?
Will mayoral control contribute towards fighting disparities in resources?

Are qualified faculty staying put, especially in the schools that need them most?

Is a plan underway for systematic class-size reduction?

Are there more pre-kindergarten seats?

Has a capital plan been adopted to create sufficient additional safe, healthy, up-to-date facilities?

Are schools more responsive and inclusive of parents?

Is accurate, timely information about the school policies and practices readily available?

Are struggling students receiving more support? Are more kids staying in school?

Is the graduation rate rising?

Since the mid-1980s, the school system has been tracking high school students and reporting on their graduation success. In all that time, the high school graduation rate, arguably the bottom line indicator of success has remained at just about 50 percent (Ravitch and Viteritti, 2000).

High school graduation rates released by the New York State Education Department for the 2004-05 school year contradict the rates released by the city. While 64% of students who started ninth grade in 2001 across the state graduated in four years, that number reached just 44% in New York City. Just 37% of New
York City boys graduated in four years, while 50% of all girls did.

The state figures are lower because they do not include students who passed the high school equivalency test known as the GED or who graduated in August as opposed to June. The state also includes a group of severely disabled students that the city excludes from its calculation, which brings down the state's calculation of the city's graduation rate, according to city and state officials.

The graduation rates measuring students who finish in five years or less are better, with 71% of students statewide obtaining a degree compared to 52.7% in the city. Improvements need to be made. Whenever you say that fewer than half of the students graduate, that can only be considered disturbing. Most of the "Children First" reforms focused on elementary and middle school in order to prepare students for high school. During the last mayoral race, Democratic candidate Fernando Ferrer insisted that Mayor Bloomberg was inflating the graduation numbers.

The school system is still drastically under funded, overcrowded, and, subject to policies, like teacher transfers, that put the needs of adults over the needs of children. City and school officials must tackle these. State lawmakers must
make good on the Campaign for Fiscal Equity school-funding decision and ensure that the city schools have adequate resources with which to accomplish their goals (Ravitch and Viteritti, 2000).

The Alliance for Quality Education (AQE) and the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) recently announced their strong endorsement of the historic four year funding levels, accountability, and formula reform provisions included in Governor Spitzer’s 2007 education budget and called upon the legislature to adopt these measures.

Governor Spitzer has proposed a $7 billion budget increase in state education aid over four years tied to a “fair, transparent formula based on need not politics, investment in strategies that work and accountability for results”. Speaker Silver has led the Assembly in supporting full education funding and formula reform. Senate Majority Leader Bruno has called for new investment with accountability, but has expressed reservations regarding formula reform. The Governor’s budget represents a commitment to full and fair funding for the schools of each and every child. The Alliance for Quality Education are encouraged that Speaker Silver has consistently supported this type of reform. However, in the past Majority Leader Bruno has opposed this type of reform even though it greatly benefits
The new budget proposal includes a $3.2 billion increased investment in New York City schools and a $3.8 billion increase for schools in suburban and upstate New York. New York City will also invest an additional $2.2 billion in the New York City school system bringing the total new investment in education to $9.2 billion statewide including $5.4 billion for New York City.

Implications

In 2006, no one—not even his harshest critics—can say that Mayor Michael Bloomberg has ignored education. He made gaining control of the system one of his top priorities—and accomplished the feat. Since then, he has remained active in school issues, selecting the chancellor, eliminating the Board of Education and community school boards, moving education headquarters across from City Hall, instituting policies to end so-called social promotion, and so on.

Success in education can be difficult to measure, particularly over the short term. When he won control of the city’s schools, Mayor Bloomberg was quoted saying “If reading and math scores aren’t significantly better, I will look in the mirror and say I’ve failed. And I’ve never failed at anything in my life.” Although most standardized test scores have risen over...
the past year, the mayor’s rivals argue tests scores may not accurately reflect what goes on in the schools.

City Council Education Committee hearings held in June 2005 questioned the reasons for the increase in test scores. They note that, while New York City had seen a sharp rise in scores on the fourth grade state-wide English test, scores had gone up even more sharply in Rochester, Syracuse and Yonkers — school systems that had not had the benefit of Bloomberg’s leadership.

Additional concerns expressed about the Mayor’s claim to success include:

- The focus on test scores in the early grades and the rise in the test scores in the early grades is a very narrow measure
- Attendance rates have decreased
- Teachers are leaving the system in large numbers
- Violence is an increasing problem in our schools
- Parents feel more disconnected than ever; and
- The right measure for the success of our school system is how many kids who graduate on time have the tools they need to go on to higher education and get a steady job

In September, 2004, the City Council Education Committee proposed a set of goals for the Department of Education (DOE) for the 2004-05 school year. While there has always been a need to evaluate our school system’s central offices, now that Mayor
Michael Bloomberg has overhauled and centralized the school system, it is more essential than ever to see what value the bureaucracy adds to our children's education. The "Report Card" evaluated 16 different categories, the following chart summarizes their findings:

Table 9: Report Card for the Department of Education, 2004-05 School Year.

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Comments on Page</th>
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<td>Instruction</td>
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<td>School Safety</td>
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<td>Teacher Preparation and Professional Development</td>
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<td>High School Admissions</td>
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<td>Competition and Choice</td>
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<td>Food and Nutrition</td>
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<td>Transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer Homework</td>
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<td>Students Returning from Custody</td>
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The most commonly reported measures of instruction are standardized tests and graduation rates, as the State uses these...
numbers to decide whether schools are failing. This year’s results were mixed. An unprecedented share of our 4th graders, 59.5%, passed the State’s English test, but the statewide score increase was even higher in some other cities, and some of our 10-percentage point gain may have occurred because English language learners did not take the test.

Good news was often offset by bad news. More than half the children in grades 3, 5, 6, and 7 passed the City’s English and math tests. Sadly, the failure rate for the grade 8 social studies test rose - from 62% in 2001-02, to 76% in 2002-03, to 81% in 2003-04.

The citywide graduation rate of 54.3% in 2004 was the highest recorded since 1986, and 16 City schools came off the State’s failing school list. However, the share of students receiving the college preparatory Regents diploma has not budged from a shameful 18%. Fewer than 1 in 10 African American and Latino students leave high school with a Regents diploma.

To gauge how well the DOE performed this school year, we gathered information from many sources. We directly solicited responses from the DOE at more than 25 public hearings, and in one written request dedicated to this evaluation. We examined the Mayor’s Management Report, school report cards, and DOE reports on graduation rates and test scores. We directly sought
the views of principals, teachers, parents and children, visited
dozens of schools, and held two hearings devoted solely to
student testimony. Surveys completed by 689 parents and 30
teachers informed us, as did many informal discussions with
principals, teachers, and other staff at schools in all 5
boroughs. We also considered reports by the Independent Budget
Office, the Public Advocate, the United Federation of Teachers,
and organizations such as Advocates for Children (New York City
Council Education Committee, 2005).

New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg's political opponents
and leaders of the education unions have complained that when
the mayor won control of the public school system, he
politicized education. Opponents claim that the restructured
system offers top-down administration, public relations spin
which allows no dissent from the ranks and patronizes both
parents and teachers.

Opponents also claim that the mayor's deserves to be
criticized because he operates with no meaningful public
oversight; micromanages schools so strongly; functions with
overly concentrated power and has developed academic programs
that fall short of being a true curriculum and lack a solid
research base. Opponents of the mayor's leadership style go on
to state that unbridled control can be counterproductive and harmful to children.

School boards—whether elected or appointed—as a key part of good governance, offer community involvement, transparency in their business, and continuity of leadership when mayors leave office.

The Role of the Teachers Union (UFT) in NYC School Reform

Supporters of Mayor Bloomberg’s Children First initiative are careful to point out the restrictions encountered when trying to reform the NYC Public Schools. Anyone who wants to improve our city’s schools should consider a basic fact: teachers unions have more influence on the public schools than any other groups in American society. The unions shape the schools from the bottom up, through collective bargaining. These activities are so broad in scope, and lead to contract rules so numerous and restrictive, that virtually everything about the organization of schools is affected (Moe, 2005).

Eva Moskowitz, former Chairperson of the New York City Council’s Education Committee lamented on the monopolistic structures in which management and labor have colluded for the better part of four decades to protect the interests of adults over those of children. The labor agreements signed by both
public officials and labor leaders, governing every aspect of New York City public schools, profoundly inhibit our ability to improve public education. The complicity between management and labor must end if we are to improve learning and teaching and have a chance at competing in the global economy (Moskowitz, 2006).

Moskowitz came to these conclusions about the school system and the negative effects on it of the labor agreements after spending months reading and rereading the long and complex union contracts for teachers, principals, and custodians in preparation for five days of public hearings.

The problem is not that the unions are somehow bad or ill-intentioned. They aren’t. The problem is that when they simply do what all organizations do—pursue their own interests—they are inevitably led to do things that are not in the best interests of children. Numerous contractual restrictions impact the way that administrators’ efforts to improve the educational environment for students are frustrated by provisions in the agreement (Moe, 2005).

The unions also shape the schools from the top down, through political action. Their massive memberships and awesome resources give them unrivaled power in the politics of
education, allowing them to affect which policies are imposed on the schools by government—and to block reforms they don’t like.

This is an unfortunate state of affairs. It is especially troubling because union interests are often in conflict with the public interest. The unions are fundamentally concerned with promoting the job security and material well-being of their members, and with increasing the size, financial strength, and power of their own organizations—and these interests can lead them to exercise power in ways that are not good for kids and schools (Ballou, 1999).

The unions push for rules that make it impossible to get rid of bad or mediocre teachers. They push for salary, promotion, and transfer policies that rely heavily on seniority, and have nothing to do with teacher quality. They resist efforts to evaluate teacher performance, and even oppose testing current teachers to see if they are competent enough to be in the classroom.

Teachers unions have to be understood in much the same way. Their behavior is driven by fundamental interests too, except that their interests have to do with the jobs, working conditions, and material well-being of teachers. When unions negotiate with school boards, these are the interests they
pursue, not those of the children who are supposed to be getting educated.

Schools cannot be significantly improved without improving the quality of teaching. Teacher unions significantly influence how teachers view their work. Not all teachers belong to teacher unions, but more than 90 percent of the 2.6 million public school teachers belong to either the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) or the larger National Education Association (NEA). While teachers do not blindly follow union leaders, it seems unlikely that substantial school improvement can occur without the support and resources of teacher unions.

In mid-January, 2007, Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Schools Chancellor Joel Klein announced their latest assault on teachers and public education here through a series of “reforms” that amount to a declaration of war on both new and veteran teachers.

Bloomberg’s “Children First” initiative includes another complete reorganization of New York City’s public schools; changes in school funding, which will make it difficult for schools to hire or retain experienced teachers; and obstacles for new teachers to obtaining tenure.

In addition to the mandatory three-year wait for tenure, Bloomberg and Klein are demanding a more difficult review
Inadequate Funding

While the Campaign for Fiscal Equity ruling called for an additional $14 billion for schools over the next four years, it did not dictate how much of the money should come from the City and how much from Albany. Opponents fault Mayor Bloomberg for not getting more operational funds for the schools - for not stopping fellow Republican George Pataki from stonewalling on the CFE ruling by filing appeals and refusing to budget money for the settlement.

Given Governor Pataki's unyieldingness - and Bloomberg's apparent failure to change it - the crucial vote on education in New York did not come in the September primary or even on Election Day but on November 7, 2006, when New Yorkers selected their next governor - Governor Eliot Spitzer. The school reform legislation is scheduled to expire on June 30, 2009 if it is not renewed by the state legislature.

In addition to constant politics, the job of managing New York's school system is overwhelming for no other reason than the district's size: 114,000 employees, 80,000 teachers, and a $13 billion budget. The school district has more buses than the
Metropolitan Transit Authority and serves more lunches than the Defense Department.

Opponents of the Mayor believe that it's a political power grab rather than a commitment to improving the schools. The basic flaw in all of this is that people think the mayor is first and foremost interested in turning around student achievement, raising standards, and raising performance. The consensus of this study's informants is that the same could have been accomplished under the old system. The district's size is one reason it is believed that politics -- not student achievement -- is the reason behind the takeover.

In order to ultimately succeed in improving the quality of education offered, the unromantic mantra of working diligently and tirelessly will have to be practiced. School leaders will have to pay daily attention to hard work, eliminate distractions and politics, and concentrate on the instructional needs of all students.

Racism Creates Ineffective Schools

If asked if increased power through mayoral control has been beneficial to the improvement of education in New York City, we should look at a number of vivid examples. Kozal, points out that "the consequences of apartheid education are not always easily discerned." He goes on to cite the example of
Morris High, "to which most of the children in this neighborhood [Mott Haven- Bronx, NY] have been routinely steered, enrolled about 1,200 children in its ninth-grade class four years ago; but only about 90 of them made it to 12th grade, and only about 65 received diplomas. If these statistics 65 survivors from a student population of 1,200 -- were reported for a school that served white children in New York, we can be sure there would have been demands that the school be closed and that the tracking patterns that permit a high school of this nature to exist be closely scrutinized and radically transformed. It is doubtful that any school with failure rates as high as this would have been tolerated even 40 years ago in Mississippi (Kozol., 2005).

Morris High School is, however, serving a convenient function for an economically and racially divided city: it offers adolescent storage space for children of the people whom society most deeply scorns. It is cheaper than prison. It is less offensive to the sensibilities of culture than reform school. It is, moreover, relatively easy to ignore. Unless a suicide, or rape, or act of homicide takes place there, most outsiders never hear of schools like this at all.

Another example regarding inequity in access to the "specialized high schools" in New York City involves Stuyvesant...
New York City schools are in many ways unaffected by the Brown decision of 1954. Stuyvesant High School is one of the most vivid symbols of the consequences of decades of systematic racism in the United States. Black and Hispanic children make up about 72 percent of the citywide enrollment in the New York City public schools. At Stuyvesant - the most prestigious public school in the city - they make up less than six percent of enrollment. In fact, the percentage of black kids who go to Stuyvesant has decreased dramatically in the last quarter century. Twenty-six years ago, black students represented almost 13 percent of the student body at Stuyvesant; today they represent 2.7 percent (Kozol, 2005).

A contrasting perspective is provided by supporters of mayoral control that contend that the switch away from locally elected boards is among several sweeping changes Mayor Bloomberg has championed since taking office six years ago. Bloomberg wrested control of the schools from the now-defunct Board of Education and hired former federal prosecutor Joel Klein as chancellor. The two have established a uniform curriculum for all but the highest-performing schools, created a Leadership Academy to train principals, and put measures in place to end "social promotions" - graduating underachieving students. Some
New Yorkers welcome the change as an overdue reform of a patronage-plagued system. Most recently the Partnership for New York City, which claims to have a long history of mobilizing the business community to assist individual schools and to support system-wide initiatives aimed at improving overall student performance, commissioned a study entitled Progress Report on New York City School Reform. The partnership highlighted a number of reform agendas accomplishments, which included:

- A greater share of school resources are spent on instruction.
- School construction costs dropped.
- The new high school choice process succeeded in placing more students into their most preferred schools.
- There are more certified teachers in the city’s classrooms.
- The percentage of students in overcrowded schools has been reduced.
- The retention rate among brani teaches has begun to increase.

Most importantly, the Progress Report researchers found some key indicators of improve student performance:

- The number of New York City schools designated as “low performing” by the state or the federal government decreased.
- Test scores improved in both reading and math.
- Graduation rates rose.

Among the areas identified as needing particular attention on the following:

- Despite a decrease in reported criminal incidents and gains made in Impact Schools, school discipline remains an area of concern in all urban districts, requiring
Conducive to learning.

- Experts consider high levels of parent engagement essential to improve student performance. There is evidence that parent outreach is a priority of the administration, but additional measures of parental involvement are needed, along with continuing efforts to improve communication with and opportunities for feedback from parents.

- Despite a slight increase in graduation rates, significant numbers of students still do not finish high school, and there is reason for optimism about their future employability. The administration has created new small secondary schools to increase high-quality options for students and improve graduation rates.

The United Federation of Teachers (NYC Teachers Union) and the Council of School Administrators and Supervisors NYC Supervisors Union) have publicly opposed the implementation of the mayor's reform effort, Children First.

The UFT warned the administration that they saw problems ahead, and were willing to help solve them. "We extended our hands - and they were pushed away. We offered our expertise - and it was disregarded. We gave our advice - and it fell on deaf ears. We tried cooperation --and got Confrontation instead."

Data also revealed that teachers overwhelmingly continue to have concerns about their role in the reorganization. Teacher union leaders continue to complain about city hall and the mayor being out of touch with teachers and parents. The New York City Teachers' Union has officially withdrawn their support of Mayor
Michael R. Bloomberg’s sweeping plan to overhaul the city’s schools.

A mayor and chancellor more committed to real change than any predecessor in decades must find a way to separate constructive stakeholder critics from shakedown powerbrokers, and must open their ears to the voices down below who care. If this revolution is to take root and last, it will have to find a constituency in classrooms and communities, a challenge that has no corporate parallel (Barrett, 2003).

Failures in public education jeopardize our future. Underperforming city schools are incubating a permanent underclass that has higher rates of unemployment, crime, poverty and illness than the rest of society. People want a mayor who is accountable for the quality of city schools. This was made clear in the last mayoral election in New York City where voters and all of the major candidates embraced the theme of mayoral leadership of the public schools.

Mayoral control of school districts empowers the city leader, held accountable by the people to reform a failing education system. Putting the mayor in charge of the schools and municipal government has created a whole new political dynamic where there is one person responsible who is actually capable of creating significant change. School board members, for all their
good will, have little power to improve the delivery of services to our schools. The mayor does have that power.

A big city mayor has the unique clout and higher public profile to bring in new sources of revenue by lobbying the state legislature and marshaling support from the businesses and foundations. In New York, Mayor Bloomberg launched a fundraising effort that brought in $270 million to reduce class size, hire coordinators to get parents involved in the schools, and to create an academy to train principals.

Mayoral empowerment can bring urban schools improved student performance, enhanced infrastructure, better community integration, and increased resources. In New York, one of Mayor Bloomberg’s first initiatives was to cut bureaucracy in the school system; this freed up over $200 million. The mayor addressed the issue of school safety by increasing the police presence at schools plagued with crime and violence.

A great deal of time and energy has been spent on school reform efforts that focus on all the wrong issues. We have wasted too much time in the last 20 years fiddling around with governance arrangements. The fact is that whether the school systems I visit are governed directly by the mayor independently, or through an appointed school board or an elected one, virtually all cities face the same calamity: a
Recommendations - Strategic Plan for School Reform - An Agenda for Action

The primary organizational structure for a city's schools is the district. For the vast majority of schools across the country, the district continues in traditional ways to control the money, classify the students, assign the teachers, and set the work rules. As local mechanisms for democratic policy on education, districts can create a climate that builds community ownership and support for schools -- or shuts it out. School districts also have the responsibility to implement, integrate, and monitor an often contradictory array of national, state, and local education reforms. Despite the central role of districts in our education system, nearly two decades of school reform have virtually ignored the part districts can play in promoting or hindering school change.

Although districts successfully serve some societal functions (such as employment for adults, contracts with businesses and service industries, and vehicles for local democratic participation), most large urban districts are no longer adequate educational institutions, especially for poor and minority students. They have failed to provide effective...
support for schools, leaving many schools without critical resources needed to improve their curriculum and the knowledge and skills of their teachers and school leaders. Because so many districts are failing in their paramount function -- education -- they are easy targets for critics who contend that their isolation from schools and communities and their outdated and ineffective structure impede, rather than enable, improvement.

The tasks facing New York City school leaders, differs greatly from those of other school districts. Moreover, the web of fiction surrounding urban school reform in New York City mires ongoing reform efforts to improve schooling. The following is an initial agenda for action, which will focus on the importance of the stronger collaborations between civic, business, and education leaders committed to school improvement (Cuban, 2001). A unified effort must take place that includes the performance of the following essential functions to promote results and equity for the 1.1 million students attending New York City public schools:

1. Insure that adequate resources are provided to all New York City schools.

There is simply no way around the fact that New York City schools require sufficient funds. If they are going to achieve the mission of tax supported of public schooling in a democracy, educating children will cost far more than is currently being spent. The Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit calls for an additional $4 billion to be spent on
A contributing factor to the inequities in opportunities for children and youth is that the NYCDOE often works in isolation from its various communities. This not only limits opportunities for parents, students, and community members to influence educational policies; it also leaves local districts out of the distribution of other community resources that might support education. These resources -- parks, youth-serving organizations, after-school homework clubs, internships, and many other non-school activities -- are often distributed just as inequitably as district funds and human resources.

Informants overwhelmingly indicated the need to ensure that "all schools receive equity in funding and program services." To ensure equivalent results for all children, local education support systems need to allocate resources to schools in an equitable manner, provide schools with the flexibility to use the resources the way they see fit, and facilitate school connections to other supportive resources. This means not only changing budgeting and human resource functions, but also working in partnership with community members to help distribute and utilize existing supports more effectively.

2. Develop a Comprehensive Learning Support System. Develop a support system that would provide or broker the following services to schools: assistance in curriculum development and mapping against standards; support in selecting curriculum materials that reflect these standards and high expectations; assistance in analyzing student work and the lessons teachers assign; structural and substantive supports to involve all teachers in content-based coaching, collaborative teaching, and other effective forms of intensive professional development; opportunities to receive mentoring for all new teachers; and assistance in scheduling, budgeting, and expanding the school day and year to capitalize on these supports. The exact combination of these supports would, of course, depend on the needs and circumstances of each school. One informant exclaimed that "underperforming Schools continue to attract the least prepared teacher, often having to settle for uncertified teachers that were recruited through an alternate licensing
3. Concentrate on recruiting and retaining large numbers of teachers, principals and assistant principals. Provide support for the training of new school leaders throughout the year in supervised internships at intensive summer programs. These programs should not be limited to, aspiring administrators in the New York City principals Academy. Pay premium salaries for those teachers and principals who complete the program and stay at least five years in the district.

4. Improve Human Resource Administration Systems. The situation is exacerbated by the human resources systems -- or, perhaps more accurately, the lack of human resources systems. To be sure, NYCDOE has offices that manage recruitment and hiring, but these practices are seldom managed strategically to match strengths to needs. NYCDOE engages the labor market in a limited way and adheres to a single set of conditions for employment -- teachers get paid the same regardless of where and what they teach, for example. Moreover, there is usually no connection between recruitment and teacher evaluation, compensation, and professional development; compensation and career advancement are automatic, not related to demonstrable skill in improving outcomes for children. An informant complained that "it is little wonder that students' learning opportunities are distributed so inequitably."

5. Equitable Allocation to Schools
One reason for these inequitable patterns is the way districts allocate resources to schools. Most districts typically allocate a certain base number of staff positions to every school -- for example, every elementary school might get one principal, librarian, and physical education teacher, regardless of how many students attend the school. Once schools hit a certain threshold size, they might receive additional personnel, such as an assistant principal. The result is that the smaller schools tend to have proportionately more staff.

In addition, districts allocate more staff to support special programs and needs identified by the school or district. In some urban districts, to cite a common case, magnet schools receive additional staff, on top of the
standard allocation, to support their specific programs, so these schools possess greater resources than other schools in the same district.

Other resource allocation practices also mask inequities. For example, school budgets are determined using the district's average teacher salary, rather than the actual salaries of the staff in that school. Thus, in the budgeting process, schools with many experienced teachers -- and these tend to be schools serving relatively affluent students -- appear to have the same level of resources as schools with the same number of teachers but who have less experience. In reality, the total dollar amount allocated in salaries to the school with many experienced teachers is much higher. In addition to the inequity between schools, this practice also masks real differences in instructional skill and experience within schools. When all teachers are considered "the same," the incentive to deploy teachers in different ways to support instructional needs such as concentrating the use of experienced teachers in critical subject areas -- is virtually eliminated.

6. Ensure That Schools Have The Power And Resources To Make Good Decisions.

Helping all students reach academic performance standards demands some fundamental level of adequate resources, since everything that a school district does for children costs money. The disparities in funding between urban and suburban schools are well known, and urban districts in many states have taken the lead in trying to secure adequate resources, often through legal and constitutional challenges.

Yet resources within districts are often highly inequitable as well. Some schools receive richer resources -- more funding, better and more experienced teachers, and greater access to resources in the community -- than others. The better-resourced schools tend to be those serving students from relatively affluent families.

7. Provision of Appropriate Support

Schools have the right to demand support to assist their efforts to improve performance, and districts and communities should be held accountable for making such support available. This does not mean that the district's central office (or its equivalent) must provide all the
support schools need; indeed, most central offices would be ill equipped to do so. Much of the support could come from schools themselves, through a redeployment of teaching staffs; some could come from universities or cultural institutions; and some from community-based organizations or private contractors. The central office's role, where it does not provide services directly, would be that of a broker, making sure the appropriate support goes to the schools that need it.

8. Develop special programs. Schools experiencing low percentages of low-performing poor and minority students need to re-examine and develop unique in-school and out-of-school strategies that address the complexities of teaching and learning. New paradigms call for a review of the outdated school calendar and schedule. Today's student should not be confined to a typical 180 - 190 day calendar, Monday to Friday school week, nor an eight period day, which typically runs from 8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Parent leaders interviewed indicated a need to examine the "hundred-year old structure. Why are we still required to follow a school calendar that was designed for an agricultural society?"

9. Reframe New York City School Reform as a Civic Project. A comprehensive effort must be launched to incorporate a range state, city, community and locally provided social, medical, library, cultural, and recreational services in and out of school. The services should be rooted in principals of youth development that seeks broader goals for youth. An informant indicated that service providers should be identified and recruited to provide on-site and off-site services and programs.

10. Broaden the urban agenda to encompass the community-based strategy school improvement. There is a great need to mobilize civic and corporate elites and educate these opinion setters to the plain fact that raising academic achievement in big city schools involves far more than threatening teachers and principals, or with holding diplomas for students who failed to graduation test.
Suggestions for Future Research

While research within single school districts has been extensive, research across takeover sites has lagged behind the pace of policy and practice (Ziebarth, 2001). Most studies have been fairly focused in scope, but they do suggest that it is far easier to fix district-level finances and management practices than it is to make a dent in student achievement (Seder, 2000). One study of state takeovers emphasized that successful districts should "align the local curriculum with state standards and tests" (Bushweller, 1998).

There is a need for more research that synthesizes findings from across takeover districts and identifies the circumstances in which takeover succeeds or fails. One emerging strand of more systematic research is Wong and Shen's (2001) examination of 14 school districts where comprehensive takeovers are currently in place. The districts fall into two categories: eight city (mayoral) takeovers in Chicago, Boston, Cleveland, Baltimore, Detroit, Washington, DC, Oakland, and Harrisburg; and six state takeovers in Compton, California; Hartford, Connecticut; Lawrence, Massachusetts; and Newark, Jersey City, and Paterson, New Jersey.
While it is still too early to know where takeovers will lead—whether to sustained improvement or falling back—the components for success include: clear and attainable goals; working together with the existing administration for a smooth transition; and making the system wide leadership (i.e., mayor, superintendent) accountable for performance-based standards and restructuring incentives and sanctions for principals, teachers, and students. The research offers preliminary evidence supporting mayoral takeovers as a reform that can improve failing school districts when these building blocks are in place. Where the state appoints an administrator to control the district, there is a greater chance of political or administrative turmoil. The New York City Mayoral Control experience has not yet revealed that this method of school governance will effectively serve the needs of over 1 million children.

Reforms must first concentrate on low-performing schools and students because they are in need of the most resources. The use of best practices shared by “lab schools” and then scaled up carefully and deliberately to “lab districts” for further evaluation and modification before implementing system-wide reform can yield greater results. An independent institute for research and accountability should be instituted to evaluate
results, provide the link connecting research and practice and allow for ongoing analysis of the effectiveness of reforms implemented. On the reform agenda should be ensuring teacher quality, followed by reducing class size, setting up a transparent system of accountability (Citizens Budget Commission, 2007).

From a research perspective, the emergence of school district takeover within the integrated governance framework calls for more systematic studies that link district level reform to the school and classroom (Wong & Anagnostopoulos, 1998). There is a great deal more to know about mayoral control and city takeover reform movements. What arrangement of integrated governance (i.e., mayoral, state, or some combination) takeover is most effective in improving learning opportunities in the most disadvantaged, inner-city schools? Will the new vision of accountability improve teaching practices? Can the mayor sustain a personal commitment to education in a system of competing constituencies? As school district takeover becomes more frequent, these are the sorts of questions that policy analysts must continue to address.

Though the pace of governance reforms has quickened, the latest reforms, by themselves, will not help schools or districts improve student achievement. Past reforms, as well as
the current governance change, have altered structures, but have not provided the incentive or support for improving the core relationships of effective schooling—the relationships between schools, parents, and communities. Neither the past governance reforms, nor the parent or parent teacher associations upon which much of our current governance structures rest, have increased school accountability to parents, students, and communities for improved educational outcomes (Kirst, 2002).

This was never more evident than when the mayor announced in January, 2007 another reorganization plan. He announced yet another round of reform and reorganization for the city’s public schools. In a sense, reorganizing the reorganized school system.

When Mayor Bloomberg took control of the city’s school system he virtually closed down the community school districts, doing away with the community school boards and stripping the offices of most of their power. They remained in existence largely to satisfy state law. In their stead, the mayor created 10 education regions.

In the mayor’s “State of the City address he stated “With this reform, the regional offices that we established four years ago to stabilize a failing system will be eliminated now that their job is done.” “But now, only four years later, the regions
are going the way of neighborhood high schools, the Board of Education and typing classes” (Robinson, 2007).

The DOE will dismantle the 10 regions created by the first phase of Children First and will retain the 32 community school districts, whose superintendents will report directly to the Chancellor. In addition, starting in the 2007-2008 school year, principals, in consultation with teachers, parents and other members of their school communities, will be allowed to select a method of school support from among three different types of school support organizations (New York City Council, 2007).

Many questions remain as to how the reorganized system will serve the direct needs of parents and children. Where will parents go to when they have questions? Parents will again be asked to navigate a system that is once again undertaking a major overhaul. No one could have ever thought that the ten distinct regions would be set up on a temporary basis. Parent Leaders complained:

“Parents, however, are -- they're not a tightly knit group. They're certainly not a UFT. They're not a CSA. They don't have paid individuals who will lobby for them, who will organize them, who will bring their ideas to the public or put it to
paper or put it in writing. They're loosely knit, a loosely knit group. However, probably the most
important group in this formula”.

The mayor’s omissions [of new classroom programs] seem particularly striking when contrasted with Governor Eliot
Spitzer’s State of the State speech delivered earlier this
month. In his address, Spitzer called for smaller class size, a longer school day and year, more after school programs, better technology in school libraries, and universal pre-kindergarten programs for four-year-olds. Agree or disagree with these ideas but they are a lot easier to understand than creating “school support organizations” to build “system-wide empowerment.” The whole concept of mayoral control was to bring some stability and order to the system. The more they continue to jimmie around with stability and order during a time when academic achievement has not been soaring, the more difficult it is for people to accept” (Robinson, 2007).

A number of key issues have arisen as a result of the mayor’s proposed reorganization plan. School leaders are once again concerned about reporting structures, narrowly focused accountability systems, budgets, and rating officers. A report produced by the Educational Priorities Panel (2007) helps to shed light on the strengths and shortcomings of the mayor’s
reorganization plan. Four years ago, civic groups did not
understand that the change in governance would be accompanied by
a corporate style of governance, with its pluses and minuses:

A plus is that the New York City school district is change oriented. Initiatives are plentiful. There is an explosion of new schools. The bureaucracy keeps being re-structured. High-priced consultants are brought in to analyze long-standing problem areas. The larger business community is partnering with the school system in myriad ways, and there is a new optimism about improving student outcomes and educational opportunities.

A minus is that a corporate style of governance, we have learned, often results in communication that is really a form of marketing. All top school officials say the same two or three slogans. There is little interest in an exchange of points of view. Input is solicited through focus groups or through the formal designation of a "partnership" relationship.

Some of EPP’s coalition members are critics of this marketing style of communication while other members of EPP have, in fact, been designated partners and are pleased to be participating directly in the creation of new initiatives.

There are only two points of consensus among our coalition [EPP] members as to the downside of the new corporate style of school governance in New York City, and this pertains to our function as a monitor of the education budget and its impact on school children: 1) budget data is now treated as proprietary information and 2) accountability is so narrowly focused on
student test outcomes that principals are not held to other standards, including standards set by state lawmakers in budget agreements or, more importantly, long-held standards set by an overwhelming consensus of educators about best practices. Simply put, there is a lack of transparency as to the use of taxpayer funding and education decision making (Educational Priorities Panel, 2007).

The Citizens Budget Commission (2006) has pursued an active research agenda that includes expert panel discussions focusing on key issues in education finance reform. The recommendations of the panel were summarized in a brief that highlights a number of key points that I believe would benefit the New York City Department of Education.

- A good system of accountability will require strategic plans, goals, data reporting, assessments and audits that will be communicated to the public in an accessible and clear manner.
- New funding entering the system should be targeted to low-performing, high-need schools.
- Targeting new funds to schools should be part of a larger phase-in plan for comprehensive and strategic school reform.
- New funds should be tracked carefully, and should be used on methods proven effective.
- In-time research is a vital component of an effective accountability system, particularly as a decision-making tool in the classroom.
A public, independent institution to provide transparent research and data analysis should be established in New York.

Wong and Shen (2001) examine the potential of takeover reform to impact three distinct aspects of the school district: (1) higher quality teacher and student performance, especially in the lowest performing schools; (2) more effective financial and administrative management; and (3) increased accountability in order to improve public perception of the school district.

**Interpretations**

Over the past 5 1/2 years, NYC’s Mayor, Michael Bloomberg, and his hand picked School’s Chancellor, Joel Klein, have brought dramatic changes to a school system that resisted change for over 60 years. They have dismantled the dysfunctional “110 Livingston Street Bureaucracy”, put the Teachers’ and Principals’ Unions on the defensive and have sought to provide increased funding to classrooms in over 1400 schools. They have accomplished a great deal in a relatively short period of time.

However, they continue to alienate parents with only symbolic responses to the need for parent involvement. Also the mistakes made in improving student academic performances have limited their ability to take advantage of the momentum generated by their school reform effort.
The United Federation of Teachers (UFT) initially one of the Mayor’s reform effort supporters now stands in opposition to the current changes taking place. As a result, the UFT no longer enjoys instant access to top administrators at the New York City Department of Education. Although one of the most powerful unions in New York City; the UFT no longer receives automatic support and access. Often the UFT President, in her own words, complains that she is “the last, person to find out what is going on inside Tweed Headquarters”. As previously indicated, Teacher Unions are responsible for fighting for improved member benefits and wages. The UFT has been extremely successfully over the six year period of the Children’s First reform effort. Since the Mayor took office, the starting teacher salary increased by 43%, making it easier to attract and retain high-quality educators. With the United Federation of Teachers, the NYCDOE ended the practice of “bumping,” and “force-placing,” which previously required principals to hire teachers even if they weren’t qualified or a good fit for their school. The NYCDOE also created a $15,000 housing bonus to help recruit teachers in shortage areas such as math, science and special education. And they created a Lead Teacher program, which rewards teachers with an additional $10,000 a year to mentor and coach other teachers while also teaching students.
Taking on Unions that represent over 100,000 school employees, is a monumental task. The Mayor has to be credited with having the courage and conviction for taking on this daunting challenge. Unfortunately, the Mayor’s approaches have been myopic and ill-conceived. At times the Mayor’s failures to involve stakeholders, administrators, teachers, parents and students in important policy decisions has resulted in a top-down autocratic decision making approach that has alienated the very same people that he most depended on to operate the reform apparatus.

Teacher’s Union President recently testified before the City Council - “Why would we engage in the most radical restructuring of the best urban school system in America without any real evidence that what is being proposed works any better than what is being replaced? The only other school system in America that dismantled its central structure in this way is New Orleans. I am not arguing that what we have now works for all children; I am simply asking what is the evidence that the new structure or funding formula will be better?”

The micro-management of ill-suited academic programs that were forced upon the school system disregarded the scientific evidence against those programs. This, once again, was a
concern that served to illustrate the administration need for rapid change without regard to research proven methods.

If we are ever going to effectively address the challenges confronted by urban school systems, then we must reframe the debate on what is meant by "urban education." Bill Moyers provides the following description - "We are talking about the poorest and most vulnerable children in America - kids for whom "at risk" has come to describe their fate and not simply their circumstances.

Their education should be the centerpiece of a great and diverse America made stronger by equality and shared prosperity. It has instead become the epitome of public neglect, perpetuated by a class divide so permeated by race that it mocks the bedrock principles of the American Promise." I could not agree more. We need to take the initiative to create proactive policies and ideas that articulate our vision for urban education, our shared values and common vision. There is an enormous need to resurrect the progressive effort, in order to once again treat school children, parents, teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders like they matter and put these constituencies back in the center of why government really exists. We must have equitable access to public resources. We can no longer continue to keep retreating from our social contract. We must continue to...
advocate for the needs of children. If there was ever a need to rally around a movement, this is it. The effort must be well thought out, consistent and filled with enormous and unbridled energy.
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269


270


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278


279
Dear Mr. /Ms. 

I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Education and Human Services at Seton Hall University, working under the mentorship of Juan Cobarrubias, Ph.D. I am conducting a study to assess the impact of school reform legislation upon New York City leaders and school administrators.

I am inviting you to consider participating in this study. If you agree, I will conduct a series of three, tape recorded interviews lasting approximately 45 minutes each. The interviews will be around your availability. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may refuse to participate, or may discontinue participation at any time without any penalty or consequences. If you have any questions, I can be reached at 718-387-0228.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review of Human subjects Research (IRB). The IRB believes that agreed that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject’s privacy, welfare, civil liberties and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The telephone number is (973)275-2974.

The interviews will be conducted under the strictest guidelines to protect the identity of the participants and the confidential nature of the research data. The responses of all the participants will be combined in the presentation of the data.

All informant transcripts and interview notes will be securely stored in a locked cabinet to maintain confidentiality. Upon completion of the research all notes and any other information with the possibility of identifying the participants will be completely destroyed.

I will contact you within the next few days to confirm your participation in the study. Thank you in advance for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

William C. Jusino -Gomez

Please mail the signed consent form in the attached self-addressed envelope. A copy of the signed consent will be mailed to you.

280
Appendix B
Sample Letter to Principals
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Dear Mr. /Ms.

I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Education and Human Services at Seton Hall University, working under the mentorship of Juan Cobarrubias, Ph.D. I am conducting a study to assess the impact of school reform legislation - NYC School Governance Reform Act upon New York City leaders and school administrators.

I am inviting you to consider participating in this study. If you agree, I will conduct a series of three, tape recorded interviews lasting approximately 60 minutes each. If you choose to participate in this study, your participation will include involvement in an open-ended interview. The questions will focus on the NYC School Governance Reform Act and its impact on school leaders. Sample questions include the following:

- “What is the respondents' personal experience with the governance changes in the NYC decentralization Law?”
- “Is the school system generally better off under mayoral control?”
- “What changes did the NYC School Governance Reform Act bring about at the community level of involvement in school governance and policy?”
- “How did the NYC School Governance Reform Act make school officials accountable for student achievement and school performance?”

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Researcher
Seton Hall University

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Appendix C
Sample Letter to Community Leaders
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This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review of Human subjects Research (IRB). The IRB believes that agreed that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject’s privacy, welfare, civil liberties and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The telephone number is (973)275-2974.
The interviews will be conducted under the strictest guidelines to protect the identity of the participants and the confidential nature of the research data. The responses of all the participants will be combined in the presentation of the data.

All informant transcripts and interview notes will be securely stored in a locked cabinet to maintain confidentiality. Upon completion of the research all notes and any other information with the possibility of identifying the participants will be completely destroyed.

I will contact you within the next few days to confirm your participation in the study. Thank you in advance for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

William C. Jusino-Gomez, Researcher
Seton Hall University

Please mail the signed consent form in the attached self-addressed envelope. A copy of the signed consent will be mailed to you.
TRANSCRIPT #1

Schools Chancellor Joel I. Klein announced that as part of a comprehensive accountability initiative each school in New York City will receive a Progress Report with an A, B, C, D, or F letter grade beginning in the 2007-08 school year, as well as a Quality Score of + (well developed), √ (proficient), and Ø (undeveloped) based on an individual onsite Quality Review. This continuation of the Children First school reforms will help educators harness information to drive high-quality teaching and learning, and it will give parents the information they need to evaluate schools and assess their children's progress.

We hold our children accountable every day. Starting now, we are holding our schools and ourselves more accountable as well, using sophisticated measures. Our accountability initiative, including the Progress Report, will help the Department of Education and all New Yorkers identify which schools are succeeding and which schools are failing our students. We can't afford to make excuses for the status quo; we
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must constantly strive to improve. The accountability we are infusing into our schools is a crucial step in that direction.

A pilot Quality Review program is currently underway in dozens of schools. As many as 100 schools will participate in the pilot during the spring, 2006. Quality Reviews will continue during the 2006-07 school year, and by next spring all schools will have participated in a review. The Progress Reports will be piloted during the 2006-07 school year in the City’s 200 autonomy zone schools. These schools will receive letter grades starting in spring 2007. Beginning in the 2007-2008 school year, all New York City public schools will receive letter grades. Progress Reports will be available online and made available to parents.

Schools that receive chronically low grades and Quality Scores will face serious consequences, including targeted improvement efforts, changes in leadership (consistent with contractual obligations), and restructuring or closure. High-scoring schools will be rewarded.
Children First began three years ago with a focus on stabilizing and building capacity in the school system. The next step in this effort is empowering school leaders—giving them more control over curriculum, budgeting, and personnel decisions—while holding them accountable for their students’ results. The accountability initiative is a continuation of the Children First reforms and builds on the Department’s commitment to school leadership, empowerment, and accountability.

TRANSCRIPT #2

Approximately 350,000 Students Served in Small Instructional Settings at Schools Throughout City

The New York City Department of Education (DOE) began the new 37 ½-minute extended-time sessions for students, with approximately 350,000 public school children throughout the City receiving unprecedented additional academic support and intervention in small instructional settings. Of the 350,000 students benefiting from the extended-time sessions, approximately 305,000 children are mandated to participate, as a result of being in danger of not meeting standards, and approximately 45,000 children are participating voluntarily. Deputy Mayor Dennis M. Walcott and Deputy Chancellor Carmen Farina visited P.S. 84 in Manhattan and observed various extended-time sessions at the school.
The changes beginning in schools today will significantly improve our children's chances of academic success. Being able to provide our struggling learners with 150 minutes each week of intensive academic support is an historic opportunity that is well worth any challenges. I know it will make a positive and significant difference in the lives of our students.

Deputy Mayor Walcott was in attendance and indicated that today marks a milestone in our Children First reforms, Our City's children need and deserve every opportunity to achieve and succeed, and the additional support and intervention will benefit our students significantly. For far too long, an excuse-based system failed too many of our students - today is yet another signal that those days are over.

Deputy Chancellor Farina stated:
What we are seeing here is a very powerful and significant transformation in the way we help our
children achieve, especially those who need our assistance most, said. "I am so moved and impressed by what is happening today at P.S. 84 and at our schools across the City, because I know that individual children’s lives are being improved at this very moment, and I thank and commend the principals, teachers, staff, and parents who are enabling our students to succeed as a result.

Schools will use 150 minutes (37.5 minutes per day, Monday through Thursday, after a 6 hour and 20 minute schedule) each week for small-group instruction, tutoring, and test preparation for struggling students in settings of no more than ten students per teacher, or five students per teacher for students in self-contained special education classes. Principals, in consultation with teachers and staff, have identified those students, including English Language Learners and special education students, who are in danger of failing to meet standards and are therefore mandated to participate in the extended-time sessions. These small-group sessions will provide struggling students with critical academic support and intervention that will help them gain the skills and knowledge that they need to succeed.
Busing will be provided to all students who are mandated to attend the extended-time sessions. Also, an additional 45,000 students are participating in the extended-time sessions on a voluntary basis for academic enrichment and other programs.

The extended-time sessions follow the implementation last week in schools throughout the City of new rules governing professional-activity periods, which previously were unassigned. As a result, teachers are engaging in a variety of additional services for the City's children, including providing extra tutoring for students, advising student clubs, helping students on and off buses, and monitoring hallways, cafeterias, and schoolyards— as well as receiving professional development.

**TRANSCRIPT #3**

**New Secondary Schools Set to Open Include Brooklyn Latin, the First of Seven Selective Schools for Academically Gifted Students; The Community High School, a Transfer School for Over-Age and Under-Credited Students in Brooklyn; and the High School for Construction Trades, Engineering and Architecture, a Career and Technical Education High School**

Date: 02/01/2006
Last Modified: 2/1/2006 4:37:38 PM
Press ID: No. 35

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Schools Chancellor Joel I. Klein today announced the opening of 36 new small
secondary schools. These schools, as promised in the Mayor’s State of the City Address, are designed to provide students with high-quality educational options. Mayor Bloomberg encouraged parents and students to learn more about these new schools by attending the upcoming New School Information Fairs. The announcement was made at JHS 50 in Brooklyn, which will house one of the new small secondary schools opening in September – the Academy for Young Writers, a school that will emphasize both creative and essay writing throughout the curriculum.

The Mayor and the Chancellor again highlighted Brooklyn Latin, a school modeled on the Boston Latin School in Boston, Massachusetts. Brooklyn Latin will be the first of seven academically selective schools the Mayor committed to opening over the next four years.

Mayor Bloomberg indicated:

> Last week in the State of the City Address, I promised that we’d develop new schools and create new programs to offer our students innovative routes to graduation, jobs, and post-secondary education. Today, we’re delivering on that pledge, we’re committed to ensuring that students at every level have more paths to success and these schools will help provide them with opportunities they need and deserve.

These schools will continue to have a big impact on the lives of New York City’s children. The efforts of the innovative principals who are leading the small schools, the talented teachers who are giving students personalized attention, and the numerous intermediaries and community partners that are providing outstanding opportunities are paying off in strong student results. It’s clear that small schools are making significant progress towards preparing more of our City’s students to graduate.
New Small Citywide
Schools 2004-05 Average

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>New Small Schools</th>
<th>Citywide 2004-05 Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance Rate</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion Rate (9th Grade)</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Demographics (9th Grade)</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(% African-American and Hispanic)</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of students performing below grade level in math and English (9th Grade)</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The new schools announced include 13 high schools with grades 9-12, 13 schools with grades 6-12, and 10 middle schools with grades 6-8. Most of these schools will begin with an average enrollment of 100 students in either the sixth or ninth grade or both. The schools will expand each year with each new class, and final enrollments will range in size from 300 to 600 students. Twenty-two new small secondary schools will be housed in repurposed Department of Education (DOE) space in existing school buildings; four will be housed in newly constructed or leased buildings; six will assist in the continued improvement of some of the City’s lowest-performing high school buildings, where currently, the average graduation rate is around 35%; and four are existing programs that will remain in their current locations and officially convert to school status.

The new schools announced today build on the success of the 149 new small secondary schools opened over the last three years, which offer rigorous and personalized educational opportunities for traditionally underserved students. Students enrolled in these small schools attend school more often and earn promotion to the next grade on time more often.

Source: Data from DOE student statistics
The new schools will significantly increase the number of high-quality educational options for New York City students, particularly in underserved communities. This September, approximately 4,800 students will be enrolled in the new schools announced today, for a total of more than 50,000 students Citywide who will then be enrolled in new secondary schools. That figure will grow significantly as the schools themselves grow to full enrollment.

Many of the new schools were created and developed through partnerships between the DOE and leading non-profit education and community organizations. These organizations include the Asia Society, Center for Youth Development and Education, the City University of New York, the College Board, Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound, Good Shepherd Services, the Internationals Network for Public Schools, the Institute for Student Achievement, National Academy Foundation, National Council of La Raza, New Visions for Public Schools, Replications, Inc., Young Women’s Leadership Foundation, and the Urban Assembly. Local community partners range from Community League of the Heights (CLOTH) to Kingsborough Community College. Many are supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and some are supported by the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, and the Open Society Institute.

The schools were selected through a competitive application process. The DOE reviewed an initial pool of 128 new school concept papers and invited 89 full proposals before narrowing the number of approved schools to 36.

These schools will join the 13 charter schools scheduled to open in September as part of the Mayor’s and Chancellor’s efforts to create new high-quality public school options for the City’s students and families.

The Mayor and Chancellor encouraged eighth graders to apply to the new small secondary schools serving ninth graders by submitting New High School Choice Forms to their school guidance counselors by February 28. They also
reminded parents and students about the New School Information Fairs for eighth grade students and families considering admission to the new small high schools (to be held on Saturday, February 4, Sunday, February 5 and Thursday, February 9) and the new school Community Open Houses (to be held on Saturday, February 11 and Sunday, February 12) building on the extensive student, family and community outreach already occurring.

TRANSCRIPT #5

"Autonomy Zone" To Expand by 150 Schools in September
$200 Million To Be Cut from Central and Regional Budgets
over Several Years and Redirected to City's Schools

Schools Chancellor Joel I. Klein outlined his goals for continued management and organizational transformation, building on Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's call in his 2nd Inaugural Address to "strengthen the three pillars of our school reform" - Leadership, Empowerment, and Accountability - and to put "resources and authority where they belong: in the schools of our City.

In a letter sent to all principals in January 2006, Chancellor Klein described his plans for developing strong school leaders through the New York City Leadership Academy, empowering them to make more decisions at the school level, and holding them accountable for increased student performance under new accountability measures to be implemented in the next school year. The Chancellor also announced plans to expand the
"Autonomy Zone" by 150 schools next September, to cut $200 million from Central and Regional budgets over several years, and to make those resources directly available to schools.

From the beginning, the vision of 'Children First' has been to create a system comprised of great schools. Schools - not districts, regions, or networks - are where kids go to learn. Our Children First reform strategy is premised on the core belief that strong school-level leadership empowered to make instructional and managerial decisions, and held accountable for performance, will result in high-functioning schools. Although our programmatic and classroom initiatives are essential, I am convinced that we will also need to significantly increase our efforts to support and encourage leadership, empowerment, and accountability at the school level.

In his letter to principals, the Chancellor also announced his plan "to cut at least another $200 million from Central and Regional budgets over the next several years and to make those..."
resources directly available to our schools for improving student performance in the classroom.

In keeping with the Mayor’s renewed call to put resources and authority in the City’s schools, this realignment of resources will enable principals and school communities to use these resources in the ways that they determine are best tailored to meet their needs at the school level.

The Chancellor announced that:

The Broad Foundation and The Robertson Foundation, which were both instrumental in providing resources for the initial Children First efforts, have together committed an additional $5 million for the efforts outlined. This private funding, which will go to the Fund for Public Schools, will support a team of outside experts who will work under the direction of the Chancellor and DOE staff to analyze the functions currently being performed at Central and the Regions and to provide recommendations on how to redirect resources to the schools and...
build internal systems to support leadership, empowerment, and accountability at the school level. This team will include the Public-Private Strategy Group, led by Chris Cerf, and Alvarez & Marsal, a nationally known firm that has advised on financial work at the DOE and other school districts.

Chancellor Klein stated:

That he and his team will meet with a wide range of stakeholders, both within and outside the DOE, including the Panel for Educational Policy, the Community and Citywide Education Councils, the unions that represent DOE employees, the Chancellor’s Student Advisory Committee, and other parents, principals, teachers, students, public officials, and community organizations in implementing these important new efforts.

TRANSCRIPT #6

City’s 4th Graders Achieve near Top in Almost All Categories of National Assessment of Educational Progress; City’s Black, Hispanic, and Low-Income Students Outperform Similar Students in Other Large Cities and Nationwide

New York City 4th and 8th grade public school students outperformed their peers in other cities with populations over 301
250,000 on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in both reading and math in 2005, with 4th graders significantly outperforming their counterparts and achieving impressive gains in both reading and math since 2003, when NAEP was last administered and when Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Schools Chancellor Joel I. Klein introduced the Children First reforms. In reading, 57% of New York City 4th graders achieved at or above the Basic level, eight percentage points higher than their peers in other large cities. In math, 73% of New York City 4th graders achieved at or above the Basic level, five percentage points higher than their peers in other large cities. In addition, New York City’s Black, Hispanic, and low-income 4th grade students not only outperformed similar students in other large cities but also outperformed similar students nationwide.

Chancellor Klein stated:

These national test results offer further confirmation that we are on the right path, especially in the 4th grade, where our reforms have been in place for the past two years, our students showed strong progress, and we outperformed comparable cities in almost every
respect. In particular, our Black, Hispanic, and free- and reduced-lunch-eligible students all outperformed similar students in other cities and the nation as a whole.

This is a tribute to the strength of our curriculum, our willingness to end the insidious practice of social promotion for third graders, and our significant investments in school-based coaches and professional development for our teachers. I thank our teachers, principals, their assistants and staffs, and, most of all, our students and their families for all the hard work that is now bearing fruit. We recognize, of course, that we have a long way to go in improving student achievement throughout our school system, but our students' progress is encouraging.

In reading, New York City 4th grade students improved by four percentage points on NAEP since 2003, the highest overall percentage point increase (along with Houston and Atlanta) of participating urban school districts and higher than the
improvement in the nation as a whole. In addition, New York City’s Black, Hispanic, and low-income 4th graders far outperformed similar students in other large cities and in the nation as a whole. Among participating urban school districts, New York City ranked first in the percentage of low-income students (53%) and Black students (49%, along with Charlotte and Houston) and second in the percentage of Hispanic students (51%, along with Austin) achieving at or above the Basic level.

In math, the percentage of New York City 4th grade students achieving at or above the Basic level on NAEP is five percentage points higher than in other large cities. New York City’s 4th graders improved by six percentage points in math since 2003, a higher increase than the nation as a whole. In addition, New York City’s Black (63%), Hispanic (70%), and low-income (70%) 4th graders far outperformed similar students in other large cities and in the nation as a whole on the percentage of students achieving at or above the Basic level.

In 8th grade, while the percentage of students achieving at or above the Basic level declined by one percentage point in reading and remained constant in math, New York City public school students outperformed their peers in large cities in both...
reading and math in 2005. In addition, New York City’s Black, Hispanic, and low-income 8th graders all outperformed similar students in other large cities in both reading and math.

Chancellor Klein indicated:

Strengthening middle schools is a challenge in all large cities, but these results affirm the need for the reforms we’ve recently implemented in our middle schools. Putting an end to social promotion in the 7th grade, coupled with our focus on intervention strategies and extended time, including Saturday Prep Academy, should lead to significant improvements in the future.

NAEP, often referred to as “the nation’s report card,” is the nation’s ongoing representative sample survey of student achievement in core subject areas and reports the educational progress of students in grades 4, 8, and 12. Mandated by Congress, NAEP is administered by the United States Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics. Eleven cities varying in demographic makeup, including New York City, participate in NAEP by allowing their results to be reported publicly. The
Schools Chancellor Joel I. Klein today urged all New York City public schools to apply to become Empowerment Schools.

Starting in September, about 150 schools will join the 48 schools currently in the “autonomy zone” pilot to become “Empowerment Schools.” Under this initiative, a key component of the administration’s continuing Children First school reforms, principals and their staffs will have increased flexibility and authority in exchange for signing Performance Agreements, promising to meet ambitious targets for student achievement and progress.

“Schools will only succeed at the highest levels if school leaders are given greater authority to design their own paths to success,” Mr. Klein told hundreds of principals who gathered this morning to learn about the next key element of the Children First reforms. “Successful organizations take accountability...
Empowerment and accountability are mutually reinforcing.”

Empowerment Schools will be free to spend resources with more discretion. A typical school will receive discretion over an additional $250,000, $150,000 of which is new discretionary funding and $100,000 of which is previously restricted resources. They will also be free to choose professional development programs; buy services from external vendors or the DOE; implement the DOE core curriculum or propose an alternative for approval; choose which schools to affiliate with in a network; hire dedicated support teams; and reduce reporting and paperwork requirements.

In exchange for these new freedoms, Empowerment Schools must sign four-year “Performance Agreements” in which they pledge to meet specified achievement and progress targets. Empowerment Schools will be the first to implement the accountability initiative announced earlier this month. The schools will receive Progress Reports—which grade schools on performance, progress, and school environment—earlier than their peers. They will also be the first to compile information about student achievement using the new Data Management System and to
monitor student achievement and school-wide trends using in-class assessments called Periodic Progress Measures. They will also receive longer and more intensive on-site Quality Reviews by external evaluators.

“Accountability and empowerment go hand-in-hand,” Mr. Klein said. “Together, they have enormous power to help our students receive the high-quality educations they need and deserve.”

Principals who are interested in applying must submit applications by May 17. A selection committee in the Chancellor’s office will assess applications and data on schools’ performance, progress, and environment before selecting a representative mix of schools. Schools will be notified in early June about admissions decisions.

By the start of the 2006-2007 school year, the DOE will set up dedicated service centers to support the Empowerment Schools, and it will establish 10 dedicated support teams to help the 200 schools so that principals can focus on instruction.
Governor Signs Legislation Providing State’s Share of New York City’s 5-Year, $13 Billion School Capital Construction Plan

Twenty-One School Construction Projects Previously Delayed Will Now Move Forward

This Year’s Funding Will Provide for 66,000 New Classroom Seats for New York City Schoolchildren

Date: 04/24/2006

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Governor George E. Pataki today announced an agreement under which the State will provide its 50-percent share of New York City’s $13.1 billion School Capital Construction Plan. Governor Pataki signed the legislation providing $1.8 billion in aid and authorizing an additional $9.4 billion in financing through the New York City Transitional Finance Authority, half of which will be paid for by the State and half of which will be paid for by the City. This combined State and City school construction aid for New York City will be used for the modernization and expansion of City schools as laid out in the Department of Education’s Five-Year Capital Construction Plan. Mayor Bloomberg made securing state capital construction funds the City’s highest priority in Albany this year.

“Parents across the City want new schools in their neighborhoods, but the plain facts were that there just wasn’t enough money for them — until this morning,” said Mayor Bloomberg. “We went to communities in every borough and all
across this city this winter with a very clear and important message: by working together and making our voices heard, we can do the right thing and build the new classrooms, science labs, playgrounds, gyms and libraries this and future generations of our students need. I want to thank Governor Pataki for his leadership in approving this funding and recognizing the importance of school construction aid for New York City. And I want to thank Speaker Silver and Majority Leader Bruno for helping to bring us to this day.”

“I am proud that the budget we enacted will provide vital support for school construction efforts in New York City as a key part of our ongoing efforts to provide record investments in our children’s education,” said Governor Pataki. “This new record State construction aid will allow New York City to modernize and improve our schoolchildren’s learning environment, ensuring that present and future New York City students can receive the first-class education they deserve. I thank the Mayor for identifying school construction funding as the City’s key priority and for working diligently with the Legislature and my Administration to assure that we could develop an appropriate financing plan that recognizes the needs of the parents and schoolchildren of New York City, as well as the fiscal challenges faced by the State.”
"Today, New York's leadership is finally in agreement on how to provide the resources necessary to build the new schools we need and to renovate our existing schools as well as to upgrade the technological capacity of all of our public schools," said Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver. "School children don't care about budgets or elections or legacies. All that these children want is for their leaders, their parents, their teachers to care enough about them to provide the best learning environments possible so that when the time comes, they will be prepared to lead this great City and State of New York."

"The budget adopted by the Legislature delivers a positive result for school children in New York City and throughout the State by making a major investment in new classrooms and state-of-the-art facilities for students to learn and for teachers to educate and inspire," said Senate Majority Leader Joseph L. Bruno.

In February, the Mayor announced that 21 school construction projects would be delayed due to a lack of state funding. The money announced today will ensure that those projects move forward including 15,000 new classroom seats in elementary, middle and high school facilities across the City. This year alone, this funding will also provide for the creation of nearly
In November 2003, Mayor Bloomberg and Schools Chancellor Klein announced $13.1 billion school capital construction plan, half of which is to be paid for by the City and half of which is to be paid for by the state. The $1.8 billion the State provided today, along with the State’s half of the $9.4 billion ($4.7 billion) in financing through the Transitional Finance Authority, represents the State’s full $6.5 billion share of the City’s $13.1 billion capital construction plan.

“This is a great day for the New York City public school system,” said Chancellor Klein. “In building new schools and classrooms and facilities across the city where they are most needed, we are sending a powerful message of commitment to the success of every child in the public schools. I thank the Governor and Legislature for supporting that commitment and the Mayor for his leadership and resolve.”

The Mayor and Governor were joined by Deputy Mayor Dennis Walcott, Schools Chancellor Joel I. Klein, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, State
Senator Martin Golden, State Senator Frank Padavan, Assemblywoman Cathy Nolan, Assemblyman Felix Ortiz, City Council Member Robert Jackson, Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz and United Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten for the announcement in Sunset Park, Brooklyn - the future site of a new high school that will be paid for with these funds.

TRANSCRIPT #10

Schools Chancellor Joel I. Klein Announces Launch of Accountability Initiative

Department of Education to Measure Student Progress Over Time; Each School to Receive Grade, Quality Score, and Powerful Diagnostic Measures; Department Receives Private Funding to Support Spring Pilot

Date: 04/11/2006

Schools Chancellor Joel I. Klein announced today that as part of a comprehensive accountability initiative each school in New York City will receive a Progress Report with an A, B, C, D, or F letter grade beginning in the 2007-08 school year, as well as a Quality Score of + (well developed), ✓ (proficient), and Ø (undeveloped) based on an individual onsite Quality Review. This continuation of the Children First school reforms will help educators harness information to drive high-quality teaching and learning, and it will give parents the information they need to evaluate schools and assess their children’s progress.
“We hold our children accountable every day. Starting now, we are holding our schools and ourselves more accountable as well, using sophisticated measures,” Chancellor Klein said. “Our accountability initiative, including the Progress Report, will help the Department of Education and all New Yorkers identify which schools are succeeding and which schools are failing our students.

“We can’t afford to make excuses for the status quo; we must constantly strive to improve. The accountability we are infusing into our schools is a crucial step in that direction.”

A pilot Quality Review program is currently underway in dozens of schools. As many as 100 schools will participate in the pilot this spring. Quality Reviews will continue during the 2006-07 school year, and by next spring all schools will have participated in a review. The Progress Reports will be piloted during the 2006-07 school year in the City’s 200 autonomy zone schools. These schools will receive letter grades starting in spring 2007. Beginning in the 2007-2008 school year, all New York City public schools will receive letter grades. Progress Reports will be available online and made available to parents.
Quantitative Measures

Schools will be evaluated on three separate quantitative measures, “Progress,” “Performance,” and “School Environment,” which will be combined into an overall letter grade of A, B, C, D, or F.

❖ Progress
Tracks average academic growth of individual students over time. This is a “value-added” measure that evaluates progress made by each student from year to year (a student’s performance in the fourth grade compared to the same student’s performance in the third grade, for example).

❖ Performance
Reports average student achievement on annual State exams (Math and ELA for elementary and middle school students and Regents for high school students).

❖ School Environment
Includes attendance rates and school safety figures, as well as community engagement and satisfaction (based on forthcoming parent, teacher, and student surveys).

Qualitative Measures

This spring, the DOE is performing pilot Quality Reviews in conjunction with Cambridge Education, a firm with decades of experience performing school reviews in the United States and more than 50 other countries worldwide. Cambridge will begin training DOE staff this spring so that eventually this can become a peer-review process. Donors to the Fund for Public Schools, including Jim
Allwin, Raymond G. Chambers, Jim Kelly, and Anthony Scaramucci, have committed $500,000 in philanthropic support for this program.

Reviewers will assess:
- How effectively schools use the information at their disposal to monitor student performance and progress.
- How effectively schools set individualized teaching and learning goals.
- How effectively schools create environments conducive to teaching and learning and adjust teaching to meet student needs.
- Principals’ leadership skills.
- Parent involvement.

Schools that receive chronically low grades and Quality Scores will face serious consequences, including targeted improvement efforts, changes in leadership (consistent with contractual obligations), and restructuring or closure. High-scoring schools will be rewarded.

As schools are held increasingly accountable for quality and progress, the DOE will provide them with a wide variety of Periodic Progress Measures, assessments that teachers and principals will be asked to use to evaluate whether students are learning specific skills during the course of the year. These measures will help educators recognize strengths and weaknesses and make timely mid-course corrections. All teachers—kindergarten through 12th grade—will be able to use these Periodic Progress Measures.

Results from these in-class assessments and results from annual State standardized exams will feed into an advanced data management system, which is under development. The data management system will enable educators and parents to access and interpret information about student achievement and spot trends—even as students advance from grade to grade or move from school to school.

Children First began three years ago with a focus on stabilizing and building capacity in the school system. The next step in this effort is empowering school leaders—giving them more control over curriculum, budgeting, and personnel decisions—while holding them accountable for their students’ results. The accountability initiative is a continuation of the Children First reforms and builds on the Department’s commitment to school leadership, empowerment, and accountability. The Chancellor has set up a special e-mail address
for New Yorkers with questions or comments about this program:

TRANSCRIPT #11

SCHOOLS CHANCELLOR JOEL I. KLEIN OUTLINES GOALS FOR CONTINUED MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATION, BUILDING ON THREE PILLARS OF SCHOOL REFORM - LEADERSHIP, EMPOWERMENT, AND ACCOUNTABILITY - HIGHLIGHTED IN MAYOR BLOOMBERG'S 2ND INAUGURAL ADDRESS

"Autonomy Zone" To Expand by 150 Schools in September

$200 Million To Be Cut from Central and Regional Budgets over Several Years and Redirected to City's Schools

Date: 01/19/2006

Schools Chancellor Joel I. Klein today outlined his goals for continued management and organizational transformation, building on Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's call in his 2nd Inaugural Address to "strengthen the three pillars of our school reform" - Leadership, Empowerment, and Accountability - and to put "resources and authority where they belong: in the schools of our City." In a letter sent to all principals earlier today, Chancellor Klein described his plans for developing strong school leaders through the New York City Leadership Academy, empowering them to make more decisions at the school level, and holding them accountable for increased student performance under new accountability measures to be implemented in the next school year. The Chancellor also announced plans to expand the

317

...
“Autonomy Zone” by 150 schools next September, to cut $200 million from Central and Regional budgets over several years, and to make those resources directly available to schools.

“From the beginning, the vision of ‘Children First’ has been to create a system comprised of great schools,” Chancellor Klein wrote. “Schools – not districts, regions, or networks – are where kids go to learn. Our Children First reform strategy is premised on the core belief that strong school-level leadership empowered to make instructional and managerial decisions, and held accountable for performance, will result in high-functioning schools. Although our programmatic and classroom initiatives are essential, I am convinced that we will also need to significantly increase our efforts to support and encourage leadership, empowerment, and accountability at the school level.”

In his letter, the Chancellor announced plans to expand the “Autonomy Zone,” a successful pilot program launched in September 2004 and currently comprised of 58 schools that are held to specific performance criteria while being given added authority over their budgets and other school-based decisions. Beginning in September, the Autonomy Zone will expand by at
least 150 schools. Schools will be selected based on demonstrated capacity and interest; details will be set forth in the coming months. A few schools in small districts will also be invited to join the Zone.

"The schools in the Zone will have substantial authority over decisions, including what professional development activities they pursue, how and whether they affiliate in networks, who will lead their networks, and how they spend their resources," Chancellor Klein wrote. Zone schools will also receive "redirected resources so that they can 'purchase' key services (such as professional development), either from within the DOE or from outside providers, as they see fit."

In exchange for this increased autonomy, schools in the expanded Zone will be required to enter specific "performance agreements" based on accountability measures that Chancellor Klein outlined several months ago. These consist of "value-added" test scores (measuring year-to-year student improvement in every school) and a new Learning Environment Profile (LEP) that will evaluate the qualitative factors required for school improvement (e.g., school culture, safety, and parent and community engagement), in addition to traditional NCLB
accountability requirements including absolute performance on test scores. Chancellor Klein explained in his letter that schools in the Zone “that meet their agreements will continue to have autonomy — indeed, even more autonomy — over a wide range of school-based decisions. And those that do not will face real consequences — ranging from specific plans for remediation and careful supervision to closing the school altogether.”

The new accountability measures, including value-added test scores and the LEP, will also be used to evaluate the performance of all schools starting in September. Chancellor Klein announced that James Liebman, the Simon H. Rifkind Professor of Law at Columbia Law School, will serve as the new Chief Accountability Officer, reporting directly to the Chancellor and leading the implementation of these new accountability efforts. Liebman has a distinguished career as a public interest lawyer, including many years at the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, and as a law professor, with extensive litigation and teaching experience related to public education.
In his letter to principals, the Chancellor also announced his plan “to cut at least another $200 million from Central and Regional budgets over the next several years and to make those resources directly available to our schools for improving student performance in the classroom.” In keeping with the Mayor’s renewed call to put resources and authority in the City’s schools, this realignment of resources will enable principals and school communities to use these resources in the ways that they determine are best tailored to meet their needs at the school level.

In addition, the Chancellor announced that The Broad Foundation and The Robertson Foundation, which were both instrumental in providing resources for the initial Children First efforts, have together committed an additional $5 million for the efforts outlined today. This private funding, which will go to the Fund for Public Schools, will support a team of outside experts who will work under the direction of the Chancellor and DOE staff to analyze the functions currently being performed at Central and the Regions and to provide recommendations on how to redirect resources to the schools and build internal systems to support leadership, empowerment, and accountability at the school level. This team will include the Public-Private Strategy Group, led by Chris Cerf, and Alvarez &
Marsal, a nationally known firm that has advised on financial work at the DOE and other school districts.

Chancellor Klein also explained that he and his team will meet with a wide range of stakeholders, both within and outside the DOE, including the Panel for Educational Policy, the Community and Citywide Education Councils, the unions that represent DOE employees, the Chancellor’s Student Advisory Committee, and other parents, principals, teachers, students, public officials, and community organizations in implementing these important new efforts.
At the heart of qualitative data analysis is the task of discovering themes. By themes, we mean abstract, often fuzzy, constructs, which researchers identify before, during, and after data collection. Where do these themes come from?

They come from reviewing the literature, of course. Richer literatures produce more themes. They come from the characteristics of the phenomena being studied. And they come from already-agreed-upon professional definitions, from local common-sense constructs, and from researchers' values, theoretical orientation, and personal experience with the subject matter (Bulmer 1979; Strauss 1987; Maxwell 1996).

Mostly, though, researchers who consider themselves part of the qualitative tradition in social science induce themes from texts. This is what grounded theorists call open coding, and what classic content analysts call qualitative analysis (Berleson 1952) or latent coding (Shapiro and Markoff 1997). There are many variations on these methods. Unfortunately, however, they are (a) scattered across journals and books that are read by disparate groups of specialists; and (b) often entangled in the epistemological wars that have divided the
social sciences. Our goal in this paper is to cross these boundaries and lay out a variety of theme-dredging methods so that all researchers who deal with texts can use them to solve common research problems.

I have outlined a few helpful techniques for discovering themes in texts. These techniques are based on: (1) an analysis of words (word repetitions, key-indigenous terms, and key-words-in-contexts); (2) a careful reading of larger blocks of texts (compare and contrast, social science queries, and searching for missing information); (3) an intentional analysis of linguistic features (metaphors, transitions, connectors); and (4) the physical manipulation of texts (unmarked texts, pawing, and cut and sort procedures).

We begin with word-based techniques. Word repetitions, key-indigenous terms, and key-words-in-contexts (KWIC) all draw on a simple observation—if you want to understand what people are talking about, look at the words they use.

Words that occur a lot are often seen as being salient in the minds of respondents. D'Andrade notes, "Perhaps the simplest and most direct indication of schematic organization in naturalistic discourse is the repetition of associative linkages." He observes that "indeed, anyone who has listened to long stretches of talk, whether generated by a friend, spouse, workmate,
informant, or patient, knows how frequently people circle through the same network of ideas.”

Word repetitions can be analyzed formally and informally. In the informal mode, researchers simply read the text and note words or synonyms that people use a lot.

Generating a list of all the unique words in a text and counting the number of times each word occurred utilized a more formal analysis of word frequencies. My computer easily generated word-frequency lists from texts and is a quick and easy way to look for themes. Ryan and Weisner (1996) asked fathers and mothers of adolescents: “Describe your children. In your own words, just tell us about them.” Ryan and Weisner produced a list of all the unique words in the set of responses and the number of times each word was used by mothers and by fathers. Mothers were more likely than fathers to use words like friends, creative, time, and honest; fathers were more likely than mothers to use words like school, good, lack, student, enjoys, independent, and extremely. Ryan and Weisner used this information as clues for themes that they would use later in actually coding the texts.
I used a similar approach by selecting a list of "unique words" in the set of informant responses and the number of times each word was used. Respondents often used words like:

1. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT
2. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT/AWARENESS
3. EDUCATIONAL REFORM/RESTRUCTURE
4. MAYORAL CONTROL
5. SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION
6. POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT/STATE LEGISLATION
7. COMMUNITY SCHOOL BOARDS/DISTRICTS
8. COMMUNITY ADVISORY ROLE
9. FUNDING AND EQUITY
10. CURRICULUM/STANDARDS

Another way to find themes is to look for local terms that may sound unfamiliar or are used in unfamiliar ways. Patton (1990) refers to these as "indigenous categories" and contrasts them with "analyst-constructed typologies." Understanding indigenous categories and how they are organized has long been a goal of cognitive anthropologists. The basic idea in this area of research is that experience and expertise are often marked by specialized vocabulary. The aforementioned listing includes a number of "local terms" that were considered as belonging to "indigenous categories".
I combed through recorded material and notes looking for verbatim statements made by informants about the research topic. On analyzing the statements, I found that most of the statements could fit into subcategories such as kinds of reforms, the various reforms, ways in which the reform affected their lives, kinds of people who are involved with reform, and the process by which the reform was enacted. I then returned to his informants and sought additional information from them on each of the subcategories.

Key-words-in-Context (KWIC) are closely associated with indigenous categories. KWIC is based on a simple observation: if you want to understand a concept, then look at how it is used. In this technique, the researcher identified key words and then systematically searched the corpus of text to find all instances of the word or phrase. Themes were identified by physically sorting the examples into piles of similar meaning.

The following listing of over one hundred and eighty (180) excerpts were obtained by using one or more of these techniques to identify themes in qualitative data.
1. “I have been the PTA president of a public high school for four years and it’s been a very pleasant experience. It was more pleasant in the past, with the past structure but being a part of the PTA and being president is a lot of responsibility because you represent the community where the school is located”.

2. “In the past with the superintendent, we definitely used to have meetings, every other month, meetings where we are able to sit down and discuss concerns about these issues in the school”.

3. “In the past even before I became the PTA president it was very surprising to me at the beginning when I was able to come to a meeting and participate, have a voice”.

4. “I would always look forward to meet with him, to hear that he will definitely give us an update on what’s happening. He was able to discuss budgets and how to do things. He was very informative. It was a pleasure to make the time and come to the meeting”.

328
5. “We were able to give recommendations. We were able to give our opinion. We were able to express our feelings as parents, as the person in the community going to the meetings. I was always respected and listened to. I never had a problem, never had a situation where I was not taken care, at least listened”.

6. “... to serve students who were in need of intervention and help from an outside source to develop as part of our collaborative efforts in school and after school initiatives, working with parents' groups with just them and becoming more involved in their children's education and become more involved in schools per se”.

7. “A local community here and in central and north Brooklyn and then expanded it to a citywide basis, using some of this information and going around and training parent groups and community entities such as the Neighborhood Advisory Boards who oversaw programs at community based organizations and also wanted to do collaborations throughout the City. I worked also with different -- with -- I would say with well over 32 school districts in...
developing our best practice experiences in those neighborhoods and within those school districts”.

8. “I have a wealth of experience in training other school leadership teams in a variety of districts throughout the City of New York on some of the experiences and the collaboration, successful collaboration we've been able to develop in trying to strengthen, particularly parent and community representatives to become part of the school leadership teams in their schools”.

9. “The City has a strong teacher’s union, has a disorganized parent leadership population and has vastly different communities that have a variety of nationalities within the community, melting pots so to speak or a variety of many different language groups”.

10. “Parents, however, are -- they’re not a tightly knit group. They’re certainly not a UFT. They’re not a CSA. They don’t have paid individuals who will lobby for them, who will organize them, who will bring their ideas to the public or put it to paper or put it in writing. They’re
loosely knit, a loosely knit group. However, probably the most important group in this formula".

11. "I don't see parents, even though they're -- there are these Councils, parent, the average parent being much empowered by this reform. Certainly their elements, the issue of school choice, being able to select where their youngsters, if this ever happens, is an important tool. School leadership teams are an important vehicle tool for parents, the individual parent and parent association in terms of governing".

12. "I don't see parents really becoming as strong a partner as the other school community groups. That should have been taken care of at first, and here we are at this late hour, and they still haven't been named. To me that appears to be another contradiction in empowering parents".

13. "Going back to what I said before, about throwing the baby out with the bath water just as we've lost a lot of experienced people who committed their lives and their careers to the school system, we're also now taking an elite group of parents, elite meaning because of their
experience and their past years of dedication, you're saying that they can't be part of this new structure.

14. "I have questioned their ability to really be effective, the school leadership teams and the school reforms, all of the members of the school community constantly indicate that parents are the most important partner in schools and in the success of schools yet, the CECs which are supposed to be the representative group in the school reform says that their most experienced individuals cannot become part of this. What does that mean in the end?"

15. "They become important partners at the table. Department of Education personnel, our regional representatives, superintendents, our local instructional superintendents have a paid individual that has the time and effort to sit at the table and contribute on a daily basis, and now you have this parent group who sit now on this newly created body called CECs, but they don't have the support system and the resources to be true partners at the table."
16. "And it was through parents’ support and union support that he was elected. He was one of the first parents, working parents to receive the endorsement of the United Federation of Teachers which at that time was among the leaders and pushing towards the decentralizing and so it was a very basic election operation, one that focused him on door to door campaign, neighbor to neighbor operation that had also [inaudible] organized in the local churches, in the local Catholic churches throughout the school year”.

17. "They held educational sessions to talk about this new governing structure and to encourage the parents of public school students to actively participate and become part of the chapter”.

18. "What changed in the process that began really to hit home with Mayor Giuliani, who was -- who ran on a campaign of taking control of schools, destroying and blowing up one [inaudible] was refined a bit and because the refinement made by Mayor Bloomberg, it ultimately succeeded. And that refinement and that change was that and Mayor Bloomberg published [inaudible], he added the need for parents".
19. "And so it was a way to say to the community, we want you out of the process, but you are important in the process, and so they pushed the parent piece really to buy off the community, to say to the community we'll put a parent court in, one of you are going to [inaudible] the school, you no longer have a say on hundreds of jobs, but you're going to get one job and then you're going to have an advisory job with the other job".

20. "The same thing with the parent councils that are being set up. They're going to have to fight to have a say because from legislation, they're already advisory in nature. They don't have the right to select superintendents, they don't evaluate things, they don't do a lot of things that would give them a say, and I say bought off, because they knew they couldn't just tell community you're out of the process".

21. "It's a selection process that has some elements of parent/community involvement -- an basically -- I'm sorry, parent involvement, no community involvement, versus a -- an electoral process which had parent and community involvement because in those elections, anyone that was a
voting member of the community could vote, and now in
these, it’s only parents that are part of the president’s
council”.

22. “There’s a second problem with these CECs, and that is
who is eligible to run. You’re saying that parent, no Board
of Ed. employees, no Department of Ed. employees, but you
also eliminate the core group of parents that have
knowledge, have experience and have a history within the
schools and their district and those are the members of the
president’s council”.

23. “Those parents, as far as this state, are not even
eligible, so you’re asking up front for only inexperienced
parents that have not been involved because you eliminate
the whole cadre of people that have had that day to day
involvement in their child’s schooling, and I would think
that those would be the more effective leaders, those that
have experience, those that have a proven track record,
those that have dealt with a system as complex as this is
and unfortunately this process was put into law, declaring
the CECs eliminate that possibility from [inaudible]”.

335
24. "So the high school students are important to stand alone, special ed students are important to stand alone, but children with a background such as my own, a limited language [inaudible] children have no voice and their parents have no say and these are the normally immigrant parents that will not be part of the CECs because they don't have enough history or involvement in the system".

25. "So I think that the question was is there overlap, yeah, it's overlapped because basically what you have is two groups of advocacy and you have parents as the majority of the membership on the [inaudible] team and you have parents and majority membership on the CEC".

26. "The CEC doesn't have the other constituent group that the leadership team has, but they both have only advisory capacity in an advisory role which I would -- not to change your question, but I would rather the question be what do I see school leadership teams, CECs and school board, and I would say that they are nowhere near each other in terms of possibility for effectiveness, possibility to make -- to bring about true change and possibility to bring about true
advocacy for children because I think that's being lost in this overall restructuring”.

27. “In the process of getting involved as a parent, my children at that time, my little girl, my daughter Jennifer was doing very well and I took them to Florida. So I went to Florida with my children, and I found going to Florida, my children were in the, you know, the 4H honor classes”.

28. “I got involved with junior high schools who was [inaudible] 393 and by the time [inaudible] down to 41 at one point. I was trying to push education there and one of the things that we did was, [inaudible] always been involved [inaudible] pushing kids to other schools”.

29. “So I know I'm missing a lot of stuff, but when you get involved in community it's really a lot of stuff you get involved with, somebody might become [inaudible]”.

30. “Like I said earlier, I had the motivation to get involved. I had a principal I really felt was doing damage
to the community and I believe they [inaudible], so I already had been involved with the -- I already had been involved with the PTA [inaudible] and I already had pretty much saw the ideas of the PTA and the members that this could be done”.

31. “I know their personal campaigns helped out at the end very well. But it was -- it was -- the assignment of the you know, I always knew that getting on the school board was not about the title, it was just about the chance to fight, so I was just looking forward -- it's like the guy just trying to play baseball. I just want a bat, and that was my mentality. I just went to bat. I just wanted to get an opportunity, and I knew that it would take me a while before anything got done, but at the beginning it was just to try to get into the system with really the goal and that was it”.

32. “Well, the first time I ran, I think I -- I'm not sure, I collected like 872, so I wasn't sure if it was 800 or 700. But getting those petitions was -- was -- was really labor some because to get it, to get the -- I think
we collected over a thousand, but then they got cleaned out
by my former campaign manager, Roberto and they was -- they
was going like twelve hours a day”.

33. “I would say it was like on Saturday we would meet at
8 o’clock in the morning, it was daylight to daylight most
of the time of May, about eleven hours of daylight, so that
was about the average of the campaign, and that was just
getting the petitions and just going building to building
that was in the district. It wasn’t -- it was very time
consuming. Then preparing the packages was not -- preparing
that package is a little bit -- a little bit [inaudible]
challenged, because most of them are challenged and they
lower you to 250 you obviously not running. So you got to
collect way beyond what you need. But that gave me -- that
gave me a lot of experience. I’ve done it in the past. I
already knew where I was going with that. I knew exactly
what the numbers were. Getting on the -- on the ballet was,
you know, it was just the beginning, like everything you do
goes by stages”.

34. “One stage is the idea -- the idea to run, the idea
that you need to collect signatures ends when you’re
already on the ballot and then from the ballot you go to the next stage which is [inaudible] support. I was very lucky. What happened, my parents, my parents were involved very much in the church, they’re both leaders and they sort of came in as the second and third campaign manager, and my mother began to get -- began to visit church members to their house and strategize -- make them commit to when they're going to come out and vote and that was a big part of my -- my father was in charge of the church adult program, so he also began to do that, so all of a sudden I had parents from the boy scouts, I had my mother working the church, my father also”.

35. "By the time I got out of the school board, you know, like we was [inaudible], we went from a low 2 percent to about fifty percent representation. That's the purpose of the -- you know, I thought that was very important for that board to create that. When a student goes to school and he -- and -- and -- when a student is outside of the school and their assistant principal is shopping Key Food and some of their teachers is walking by, that's something that's priceless in my opinion, it's community organizing.
So we were able to take that around. But that -- but -- but all that took a lot of work.

36. “All that took a lot of collaboration to different school board members, like, you know, some of the strategies that I basically use is simply talk to them, find out what you here for. What do you think about this? Have an open conversation and then when something came that was of interest to them, say look, guys, I think that we could do this and, but at the same time I'm trying to do A, B and C. So it was just learning, just this -- open communication with other board members is really translated to collaboration and to get into strategy was to be honest and to straight forward ask them what they wanted. Some of them at the time were interested only in the personnel department of the personnel department I think [inaudible] because at that time school board members could recommend people and some of them were not interested in that. Some of them were interested in what it could do for your religious friends and in terms of now -- you know, in terms of appointing contracts to -- to different, you know, to different people. So there was a lot of many interests involved so
that gave a lot of leeway to people that were interested in education components. So that was easy."

37. "Parents are a very strong force. And parents are the ones that have the school boards years, so now you get rid of the parents, so now you could do your million dollar budget cuts, because the parent is no longer, you know, in the advocacy position and now you could do now this school board system now, the same benefactors is out there, the same ones with $190,000 jobs, stay there, but now they have a more sense of security cause they don't have to answer to any community."

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT/AWARENESS

38. Like I said earlier, I had the motivation to get involved. I had a principal I really felt was doing damage to the community and I believe they [inaudible], so I already had been involved with the -- I already had been involved with the PTA [inaudible] and I already had pretty much saw the ideas of the PTA and the members that this could be done.
39. We need to keep it small because it has always been said that smaller is better. So I'm not sure how it's going to work out with a community educational council replacing the school board and if that will be in the best, in the best interest of the students and the community.

40. Involvement in the school is the instructional supervisor as well as the superintendent will be involved, actually involved in the process in the school. It's about bringing resources to the school, it is making sure there is incentive programs, things that's motivating not only the students but the parents in the community. It's hard work.

41. A second thing I found very interesting is how the educational council is also going to be responsible for approving zoning lines. You see the region like the one that I am involved in is composed of many communities - Bed Stuy, Williamsburg, Bushwick, Greenpoint, Downtown and a small part of Crown Heights. How are you going to get all these different people to agree and what is the best way to effect the student needs.
42. It's very complicated. All these communities are so far apart. We have French Creole in Crown Heights. We have African-Americans in Bed Stuy. Hispanics in Williamsburg. Hasidic who are Orthodox Jews as well.

43. Only in one district, all these people only in one district, the people in that committee, in the council going to reflect the ethnicity, these different nationalities.

44. When I returned I started becoming involved in community organizations, one of them being the Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation where I became the administrator and the director excuse me, the Center for Education of Hispanic Affairs Director.

45. And there I had my initial involvement with the school system as an outside entity partnering with school officials to be able to operate programs within the school, to serve students who were in need of intervention and help from an outside source to develop as part of our collaborative efforts in school and after school initiatives, working with parents' groups with just them
and becoming more involved in their children’s education and become more involved in schools per se.

46. I then went on to run a citywide organization and expanded this experience and utilizing the best practices from a local community, a local community here and in central and north Brooklyn and then expanded it to a citywide basis, using some of this information and going around and training parent groups and community entities such as the Neighborhood Advisory Boards who oversaw programs at community based organizations and also wanted to do collaborations throughout the City.

47. The school was a -- unfortunately a failing school in our community and it was among the most dangerous of schools in the City of New York, and I was proud to be part of their redesign effort that resulted and now the smallest schools in a campus setting of what was once just one large high school.

48. I currently serve also as the educational services representative who is the founding organization of Progress 345
High School for Professional Careers as a co-founder of the school. I served in this capacity to try to continue to assist and demonstrate that community based organization collaboration with the school can indeed result in a successful school model for young people.

49. I have a wealth of experience in training other school leadership teams in a variety of districts throughout the City of New York on some of the experiences and the collaboration, successful collaboration we've been able to develop in trying to strengthen, particularly parent and community representatives to become part of the school leadership teams in their schools.

50. They become important partners at the table. Department of Education personnel, our regional representatives, superintendents, our local instructional superintendents have a paid individual that has the time and effort to sit at the table and contribute on a daily basis, and now you have this parent group who sit now on this newly created body called CECs, but they don't have the support system and the resources to be true partners at the table. They're volunteers that are disjointed, that are
brought together but for an instant in time compared to the other constituent groups that form part of the school community and are asked and told and lauded as true partners and the most important partners in the process, but they're not given the resources.

51. I think you also want to have an individual who has a heart for the system that they're going to lead that has a true appreciation and identification with teachers and with children and with parents and with community.

52. He was one of the first parents, working parents to receive the endorsement of the United Federation of Teachers which at that time was among the leaders and pushing towards the decentralizing and so it was a very basic election operation, one that focused in on door to door campaign, neighbor to neighbor operation that had also a second component, which was a bit better organized in the local churches, in the local Catholic churches throughout the community itself.

53. They held educational sessions to talk about this new governing structure and to encourage the parents of public
school students to actively participate and become part of the process.

54. For a community was predominantly Hispanic and African-American, and not one that had a tradition of political or educational involvement, this was a new day and a great challenge because it was always in both groups, one thing that those communities had in common was that educators were viewed as the -- almost all inspiring professionals that one really just listened to, not that one would direct, lead or challenge. And so by involving yourself in a school board and talking about things that you want to change via your candidacy and ultimately via your election, you were saying that there were things wrong with the system, and so for those two communities to take that view of education was new and really welcomed.

55. So the fact that he had legitimacy, the fact that he understood the needs, the fact that he was a parent and had children in the public school system, the fact that he was not in awe of authority because he had been in authority, all helped make him a very valuable candidate and
ultimately he won in those first elections. So my family's involvement in the school board started with their birth and so on -- it's something that we strongly believe in, community participation and the community role and that's it.

56. I say we because after he retired, his brother, my uncle ran for the school board and was elected, and he at the time was a department head for the Board of Education. He worked for the central board.

57. And I kind of decided that I had an understanding of what the needs were, having gone through the public school system and the district where I grew up and having come back as a family worker and having come back later as a teacher, I decided that first of all, although I found teaching rewarding I wanted to make a greater impact and reach more children and sitting on the school board you get to represent, at that time, it was 20,000 students, 21,000 versus the 30 that you are able to impact upon as a school teacher. So I decided that I would run, and I ran in a highly contested race with about 16 candidates and nine seats and I was elected and the top vote getter and the
Concerns were legitimate in terms of my family because they were concerned that upon the election I would have to decide whether to continue my employment or not serve as a board member, and I had already made up my mind that I would leave the Board of Education and pursue other career interests, but that I would serve on the school board.

58. We had two very powerful entities within the school board, the representatives of the Hasidic community and the representatives of the Italian community, and on most issues they would work things out among themselves, and then it would become the policy for the decision of the entire board, which had minority members which represented the large -- the largest portion of the students was and still is almost 90 percent African-Americans and Latino school district with the largest portion being Latinos.

59. So to have a say within those communities means that you hold control of a lot of jobs and you don't need a college degree to be a school aide. You don't need a college degree to be a cafeteria worker, but they're important jobs. They're jobs with benefits, they're jobs
...with pensions, they're jobs that local community people would be very appreciative and almost be beholden for life to a person that can insure them that kind of opportunity. Folks that had had the control and the power for many, many... 

60. You had to be able to balance many things, you had to be able to balance first and foremost the needs of the children and secondly the needs of the staff in the district, and third, the needs of the community and when you say community you mean elected officials, you mean not for profit organizations, you mean business leaders because we really have to look at the larger community to see the role played by the school and educators and parents and children.

61. I don't think that it's a coincidence that once that minority began being selected in large numbers on the board and in turn the folks selected by those boards into positions of authority and became more reflective of the community and became in larger numbers minorities, that the folks that had had the control and the power for many, many years before that took a look and said, hey, maybe we need to rethink this, and maybe we need to have this control back in our hands.
62. And so it was a way to say to the community, we want you out of the process, but you are important in the process, and so they pushed the parent piece really to buy off the community, to say to the community we’ll put a parent coordinator in, one of you are going to the school, you no longer have a say on hundreds of jobs, but you’re going to get one job and then you’re going to have an advisory role with the other jobs.

63. They don’t have the right to select superintendents, they don’t evaluate things, they don’t do a lot of things that would give them a say, and I say bought off, because they knew they couldn’t just tell community you’re out of the process.

64. They understood that education was changed, was necessary, was desired to be one and be part of the mix. And as important, you’ll recall in the beginning I said when my uncle ran, the union was very much a part of the process.
65. It's a selection process that has some elements of parent/community involvement -- an basically -- I'm sorry, parent involvement, no community involvement, versus a -- an electoral process which had parent and community involvement because in those elections, anyone that was a voting member of the Community could vote, and now in these, it's only parents that are part of the president's council.

66. And so you have really something that is very disturbing for those of us that truly believe in community empowerment, community input and decision making at the local level.

67. Now in a practical sense, they should be representing all of the stakeholders within a school community and on paper they do. Whether they do that or not is at question. But I would say even more important than its membership, which I said on paper, is pretty solid, is where did they go? Where's the next step?
66. I remember letting the superintendent know that I was running for school board and that I would win and that Mr. Gold would eventually be forced to retire. And he was my inspiration at that time. Because he was very, you know in those times we used to call it [inaudible]. I used to call it racially motivated. And he got me involved.

69. So I know I'm missing a lot of stuff, but when you get involved in community it's really a lot of stuff you get involved with, somebody might become [inaudible].

70. The important thing about school boards is that they oversee policy and procedures, also the distribution of funds that [inaudible]. Being that school boards get elected [inaudible], it gives you an opportunity to work with it to [inaudible] the politics in the community and when you -- any time someone, especially in the area that I was a school board member, other districts only require like 200 votes and District 14 you need 1300 to 1400 votes just to get in the door, which gave you, which gave a sense that you had the ability to organize.
71. Like I said earlier, I had the motivation to get involved. I had a principal I really felt was doing damage to the community and I believe they [inaudible], so I had already been involved with the -- I already had been involved with the PTA [inaudible] and I already had pretty much saw the ideas of the PTA and the members that this could be done.

72. I was involved with the Boy Scouts, and I had at that time around 40 kids in the troop and I was very close to the parents, so I had that going.

EDUCATIONAL REFORM/RESTRUCTURE

73. "These types of changes raise alarms for those who held power in the old system, and so it is clear that there are opponents waiting for this reform to stumble."

74. A lot of issues and is the school's in school restructuring and right now is one of the best schools in
75. A lot of issues and is the school's in school restructuring and right now is one of the best schools in New York City where graduation rates are very high. With that restructure, the new restructure of the Department of Education, we have many changes.

At the beginning of this school year, being that the school was restructuring, to a small school we had a problem where we had overpopulation. We had two hundred more students than what we had in our CEP, more than we planned for. We did not have a word, we didn't have a say we didn't have a say in the decisions made by the Board of Education. They just sent the students and try to we had to accept them, accommodate them as to the best of our capacity.

76. The previous superintendent was always available, accessible to new things, to recommendations, even to the demands of me and other PTA presidents that were meeting at the time.

77. At the recommendation of the sponsor, I was invited to come in. I saw a beautiful structure in the school. I saw
how committed the staff was to the children, to the parents. The sponsor was the biggest reason why I got involved. Being that they were committed, they really cared; they want us as part of the new structure for the school.

78. The Chancellor's office has now acquired the ability through legislation to abolish school boards, legislation that is current and as you know at the end of this school year the school boards will no longer exist. In their place there will be local districts community education councils.

79. I'm really concerned about what is going to happen now, but my personal experience is that it's now what the chancellor and the Mayor want to say. I believe that now looking at the format that they are presenting for the formation of the new committees, parent committees where they're asking for business people and elected officials are supposed to be involved is going to be more of a bureaucracy.

80. According to what I have read, [inaudible] given by Department of Education it would be a community citywide
council where it’s going to be composed of nine parents, people from business in the community and a student. I don’t believe there’s going to be a good way of substituting school boards where in the past school boards were only taking care of a small group of schools.

81. Again, it’s too broad. It’s too big. Like I say in the past, 26 schools per district, now 131 per region now only one parent is going to be selected per region to represent so many people, it makes no sense. It makes no sense.

82. This is very, very new to me. It’s very interesting at the same time. It’s very, very interesting the roles of the members of community education council. The responsibilities that person is going to have in promoting the achievement of the educational standards and objectives relating to the instruction of students, must establish a positive working relationship with the community superintendent and the local instructional superintendent; members will also hold quarterly meetings with PA and PTA officers as well as provide assistance to school leadership teams.
83. A second thing I found very interesting is how the educational council is also going to be responsible for approving zoning lines. You see the region like the one that I am involved in is composed of many communities - Bed Stuy, Williamsburg, Bushwick, Greenpoint, Downtown and a small part of Crown Heights.

84. It's very complicated. All these communities are so far apart. We have French Creole in Crown Heights. We have African-Americans in Bed Stuy. Hispanics in Williamsburg. Hasidic who are orthodox Jews as well. Only in one district, all these people only in one district, the people in that committee, in the council going to reflect the ethnicity, these different nationalities.

85. While I was at the organization called Progress, Inc. there came an opportunity to be able to become involved in writing a proposal, to become involved in the reorganization, the redesign of what was then a school under registration with you by the New York State Education Department. It’s called Eastern District High School.
I was proud to be part of their redesign effort that resulted and now the smallest schools in a campus setting of what was once just one large high school.

Well, I understand that any reform of a system that is larger than New York City's Department of Education School system is in reality a massive undertaking and probably has few comparisons in our country, maybe with the exception of the Los Angeles school district.

I think that whatever reform tries to bring to a school system in a city this size and a system this size, it becomes extremely, extremely complicated.

In addition to that, when you have a reform of this undertaking, you're very hesitant to communicate with the parties involved because you know that you're going to naturally get resistance.

I don't believe that they've done a good job in being able to communicate what and sell the communities on what it is that they're trying to do. I would believe that their communication leaves much to be desired. Part of it is understandable. The other part, which is important is that,
they add to the problem and they exacerbated by their poor communication, some of it intended, and some of it because of their restructuring ideas.

91. We lost a lot of experienced people and with the reorganization effort not being clear, we have a lot of new people and middle management people laden with the responsibility of this tremendous undertaking, but they don't have the expertise to be able to carry it.

92. They said the school districts were supposed to be preserved, the integrity of the school districts were supposed to be preserved, but they didn't say how that was going to happen, and the school system, and how that was going to be inspected, and how they were going to be represented, with the exception of these parent councils.

93. The CBO's I would say have always -- traditionally been and now under this new structure are really the underestimated partners in a -- in a successful school reform effort of the public school system.

94. However, school leadership teams, by and large I have seen, don't begin to do even five or ten percent of what
they can do because other -- you know, there's a whole reasoning behind that in my opinion, but they're not -- even the vehicle they have is not a very strong one for parents.

95. Community based organizations, as I indicated before, are an underestimated partners in this process, I don't believe that they are necessarily happy or ecstatic -- satisfied with this new governing formula and they have not been enlisted by the school system, maybe because this reform is new, but they certainly have been again, underutilized and undervalued as an important element in any school success formula.

96. Why under this new reform would I believe that parent councils or panels would be any stronger? But I have, you know, that's yet to be seen.

97. There are eight members that he named or that [inaudible] and this includes the chancellor. That makes eight of thirteen. What I want to be clear about is that although the Panel for Education Policy appears to be
mostly advisory, it in fact is not. I haven't seen anywhere in the bylaws that this is a purist group where perhaps that the board really is relegated to being advisory.

I mean, will this group be able to walk into school and evaluate them, understanding the school tone and the environment as they walk through hallways and observe particularly since they will not have the support and the classrooms and become involved in committee meetings at the school to become involved as a result. The UFT, for

It's very hard not to draw a conclusion means limited, insignificant participation in this vast undertaking of school reforms in the New York -

With regard to their role of the CEC members, you know that any group of entities are in terms of their work and their success is also very much dependent upon the individuals that become part of it. I established earlier in my comments that this is a novice group since current PTA officers are eliminated from participating.

Well, I'm going to question their effectiveness, particularly since they will not have the support and the resources to become successful as a group. The UFT, for
example, has a leader, it has staff and it has support personnel that do research, that provide support and help to the individuals that they represent. They become important partners at the table.

102. However, the issue is what price do we pay for such dramatic changes in leadership, particularly when you abandon who has worked for many years and has a background for many years in education. Certainly you're going to gain some things, but the question is, do you lose a lot more? I think in order to really assess what is the best, I think that you have to look into and remember what is the profile of what you want as an educational leader.

103. I think that the answer, the cause for the tension appears to lie within the words of your question, swiftly formed is a kind word for speeded up, too fast reform. There's going to be a tremendous price that you're going to pay and I think that we've been experiencing that stakeholders across the board have been complaining about the speed of this reform and the lack of planning and smooth transition in the process, whether it's the principals and the administrators, whether it's the
teachers, the very large teacher union that we have, the parent groups, the school leadership teams, all expressed, have expressed and continue to express concern over the fact that although they all understand the importance and the value of school reform, and that we need to go to higher levels in terms of student achievement, how we implement this reform is important. The fact that it was done, that it's being done too swiftly, that there was very little planning for school transition, the fact that constituent groups, [inaudible] stakeholders have not been properly brought into the process, consulted, and brought in as partners on this important reform [inaudible] has basically alienated the groups.

104. We're now into the third year plus of the administration and now there will be two years or three years in terms of the school reform, and what you have are a lot of dissatisfied groups, and unfortunately I don't see the situation improving a lot cause what we've seen implemented thus far shows that speed, -- quality has been sacrificed by speed.
We lost a lot of experienced teachers. There is a high rate of retirement, far greater than what was expected, as a result of this school, initial school reform efforts for this new school year.

But before there’s an opportunity, to insure that they had the kind of education that he wanted for them, and being an educator, when he spoke of reforms in the native tongue of many of the participants in Hispanic, he also clearly knew education and was knowledgeable about it, how they sound, basic education should be provided to give legitimacy to have been a teacher in his native tongue.

What we're seeing with all the mistakes that are being made by Chancellor Klein, Tweed and company, they think that one size fits all. Do you know what its like to tell a teacher, as a policy that she can't use the chalkboard. People enter we would hope, that most of the people that enter education is because they feel calling.
teacher, as a policy that she can't use the chalkboard. People enter we would hope, that most of the people that enter education is because they feel calling.

Well, as we said, when the Board of Education became the New York City Department of Education, the former Central Board of Ed. which was comprised of seven members, one appointed by each of the borough presidents and two by the mayor that was -- that became the policy for education.

The Justice Department on a ruling in favor of this did say in its findings, in the letter of approval, that this could be grounds for legal challenge, and so it's still not certain that from here to June 30th.

We hope and pray that it will not further devastate the quality of education in the city, but I think if it continues on this pattern we'll continue to lose experienced teachers. I know we've lost a lot of experienced staff members over the years, and in the last two years with this, a lot of people retired rather than to put up with being dictated to by supervisors that don't know their skills and don't respect their experience.
... I know you didn’t mention the word transition, to talk about a transitional profit. I hope you didn’t use it in that manner, because there was none. Basically they put stuff in boxes, shipped it out. Didn’t have any meetings so they could give briefings on where things were and what districts did what and how they did it, and then formulate a strategy out of those meetings, which would be a normal business practice.

113. Now you have the establishment of these regions, but the first thing that they did was give the regional superintendent part of the responsibilities and part of the authority and part of the power and give the rest of it to a newly created entity called the regional operational center, known as the rock, and giving that office a director.
MAYORAL CONTROL

114. "New Yorkers should not rush to judgment on the changes made in the school system. With 40 district offices now consolidated into 10 regional centers and with a new curriculum being implemented in most city schools, no one should be surprised to hear of missteps in the first weeks and months of school this year. Those inevitable missteps will not be reason to return to the old ways of doing business. The old ways may have served certain interests well, but it routinely failed some 60 percent of the city's students who each year are unable to meet state-set standards."

115. "In any such large-scale turnaround, there can be a tension between enacting swift reform to create urgently needed changes and taking the time needed to smooth the way by seeking the opinions and winning the support of those who will be affected by the changes. With children's futures slipping away with each month of the status quo, Bloomberg and Klein can justify opting to create reform as quickly as possible, even if by fiat. But with minimal
effort at fostering community buy-in, they have to expect a lot of resistance.”

116. “The reason I support the reforms enacted by Mayor Michael Bloomberg and put into place by Chancellor Joel Klein is that a reallocation of power to a clearly defined and publicly accountable management team is now in place.”

117. From a decentralized system to now, what is a more centralized system with a mayor who is in charge of and controls the education of the students of New York City.

118. From a decentralized system to now, what is a more centralized system with a mayor who is in charge of and controls the education of the students of New York City.

119. The mayoral system and their reform and the transfer have to me a rather an illogical way of restructuring and creating reason and what they did was in their effort to try to undo school districts, their reorganization and their governing went across a variety of community lines and divided communities that had been in place for well over thirty years in our City, and so their communications.
I think that by and large communities understand that their school reform, that schools have now come under mayoral control, but how the schools are changing and how they're going to improve and what the plans are, are not clear to the average person in the City.

I think that in a rush to wrestle control of the school system, the mayor and the chancellor are playing hardball with the state legislature and trying to take advantage of their recent election and appointment didn't plan well for what they were seeking to do, and the legislator's understanding and understanding the culture of legislation tried to modify the efforts of the mayor and the chancellor and did as best as they could, but the resulting piece of legislation accomplished accountability for the school system under the mayor, but failed to answer a lot of other questions and essentially threw the baby out with the bath water in terms of earlier school reform going back to decentralization, and so they threw out the good with the bad. We lost a lot of educational leaders who
understandably were concerned and worried about what these reforms would mean to them in their latter years, or their twilight years of administration.

If the new legislation called -- also called for a changed in the day to day roles and responsibilities at the Board of Education, the mayor has renamed the board the Panel on Education of Policy, do you envision any differences between the former board and the newly created panel.

I was very concerned, in a country that values the First Amendment and freedom of the press, where a general community can be informed initially when the mayor who appointed these individuals, prior to their appointment, indicated that they were not talk to the Press.

Let me also note that the mayor is now appointing the majority of the Board of Education. There are eight members that he named or that [inaudible] and this includes the chancellor. That makes eight of thirteen. What I want to be clear about is that although the Panel for Education Policy appears to be mostly advisory, it in fact is not. I haven't
seen anywhere that the board really is relegated to being advisory.

This doesn’t bode well for the school reform efforts of the mayor and the chancellor and in the end, I believe and have hope in the fact that New Yorkers will get the opportunity to express them on the overhaul of this school system when the mayoral elections come about in 2005. Hopefully the outcome of the election will be a fair judge to the Bloomberg [inaudible] reforms.

Well, I understand sometimes that you form a school system, the thinking of mayors or elected officials is that you have to basically shake up the system and do something dramatic, and bring in people that maybe have strength that a particular school system may have shown as a weakness, evidenced as a weakness over the years. Whether that could be legal issues or whether that could be business or economic issues.

What changed in the process that began really to hit home with Mayor Giuliani, who was -- who ran on a campaign of taking control of schools, destroying and blowing up one
ten [Livingston Street] was refined a bit and because the refinement made by Mayor Bloomberg, it ultimately succeeded.

128. So, you know, now that the mayor has the power he fought so hard to control and the school system, he cannot say like some of his predecessors previously stated that the school’s governing structure made it impossible to move forward and improve schools.

129. The problem is that the new law that the mayor rammed through the legislation provides incomplete definitions and explanations of the new board and the panel’s power.

130. The bottom line is the mayor is responsible. Some argue that that’s good. Some will say that it should be a mayoral department where the mayorally selected head, and that you will hold him accountable.

131. They serve at the will of the mayor and the first thing the mayor did when he appointed them was said if anybody is caught speaking to the press, I will remove them.
132. And he said he tried because he felt that being part of the system he would be able to make a difference and have impact, but he said the control from the mayor's office is so great and the information given to them was so limited, that there was nothing for them to work on, nothing for them to speak on.

133. There's no longer a conflict of interest board or any other outside entity, now even that decision is made within the control of the mayor and the Department of Education.

134. Then everybody is going to start criticizing the mayor, but for now that's the person that they have to work for. That's why it's so quiet. In terms of at the state level, they can't criticize it too much because they approved it. They put it in place, so you -- you shut up and you shut out any -- any criticism of the system from the state Assembly and State Senate from the beginning because they put them in place.

135. The mayor is only going to defend it and promote it because it's his, and the city council that would be the entity that would criticize it can't because they have to work with the mayor.
City schools vary enormously in their capacity for quality leadership and instruction. Klein and company insist that they are committed to managing these different schools differently. This is wise. Functional schools should run themselves; dysfunctional schools should be managed carefully. Parents and others need to be vigilant here to make sure that autonomy is granted to the schools,
leaders, and school leadership teams who demonstrate that they are accountable to their students."

137. We have lost certain... we have lost our ability to be in close contact with the superintendent and the administration representatives of the Board of Education.

138. Well, the school principal, I have to say has always had good communication. He’s always available as well as the staff of the school. We never have a problem trying to contact him.

139. We get to go through the school issues and most of the time you cannot get to really inform them how or what the Board of Education is doing and the Board of Education doesn’t do it.

140. I have to say that all of the three schools have come out from under SURR designation and it has gone on to be a successful school, having a positive track record and the rejuvenating the reception within the community of the campus where now it is a highly sought after campus, all of the schools that are on the campus for the students in our community, which is significant. This has been indeed a learning experience.
Getting back to the issue of the Community Advisory Council, part of the guidelines for this new group, for these new groups indicate that current PTA leadership cannot be a part of the CECs.

POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT/ STATE LEGISLATION

I decided that it was the right thing to do for the right reasons, because the focus for me was always having an impact and making a difference in the lives of children. So with the reduced power, I thought it was also a new day, a new opportunity for those that would stick around it would have to be because they were serious about their commitment, not because they wanted to control the system, because we no longer could control the system.

And so I then decided that if we were -- if we didn't stand up and we didn't make sure that these boards functioned well within the new system that then we would lose it, lose the say and lose the ability to fight for our children and for our local schools. Ultimately that struggle still goes on.
The union pulled away little by little, because the union ultimately got a seat at the table, and so they first got a seat at the table through the school leadership team where then they had equal numbers and they had a say, and then they ultimately got political say because of their numbers and because of political strength, so they no longer needed to invest themselves in a community school board that they no longer saw as key to their control and their say within the system.

Frankly it was supposed to be done in a non-political manner where the taken within the system would surface and people outside the system were brought in, and it was the same kind of old school, old boards, network, who knows who, gets what?

They thought they were just going to do away with districts, but when they had to compromise and keep districts, I don't think it was a thought-out process of how to do it effectively. It was just -- this what it fell politically, and because of that we have the mess that we have today.

Well, the elected officials [inaudible], the elected officials have not been visible and that's just what the politically prudent thing to do right now if you don't want to take risks, and you have a very powerful man, so any
attacks from the system are really attacks on the man, so you won’t have any elected official wanting to go against the mayor until election season comes and that’s in 2004, so we’re a year away.

So when that happens, a lot of political response surface only because people knew the political reality of that was to make the mayor look good, and his future opponent didn’t want that to happen, so the mayor got pressure and he through the counselor, rolled back that initiative and modified it, so now it will be one of the things considered, the –

147. You involve your family, you involve everyone that you now, and -- but once I went forward, I already knew part of -- you know, I had to get at least [inaudible] knowledge of how our politics, [inaudible] politics, so I knew how things were running. I knew exactly the numbers running in each district. I knew the numbers were not going to be easy, but I knew, I had an idea of where they were going to come from and what it would take to get it done. And running the campaign was more like motivating people to continue forward and selling your ideas, that things could be done.
Well, the first time I ran, I think I -- I'm not sure, I collected like 872, so I wasn't sure if it was 800 or 700. But getting those petitions was -- was -- was really labor some because to get it, to get the I think we collected over a thousand, but then they got cleaned out by my former campaign manager, Roberto and they was -- they was going like twelve hours a day.

Then I had some PTA members and then some PTA members began to invite other members. And all of a sudden I had a group that, you know, three months before I didn't know who they were, but they're there giving me six, seven hours a day, and that was really amazing, and I always took the time to thank them every morning.

COMMUNITY SCHOOL BOARDS/ DISTRICTS

So when we arrived here in New York, my uncles who had come here earlier were already involved in the educational system of the city. It was 1970 and the decentralization
had come into play. My uncle ran and he got elected to the community school board in District 14.

The union pulled away little by little, because the union ultimately got a seat at the table, and so they first got a seat at the table through the school leadership team where then they had equal numbers and they had a say, and then they ultimately got political say because of their numbers and because of political strength, so they no longer needed to invest themselves in a community school board that they no longer saw as key to their control and their say within the system.

-- where are those issues, because these people don't have that power. There's no central board to discuss it, there's no community school board to discuss it and this mayor has a total disconnect with communities in general, so how does that reach the powers that be? It's a very, very difficult situation for those of us that have been lifelong advocates of public education and we're [inaudible].
I worked also with different -- with -- I would I
would say with well over 32 school districts in developing
our best practice experiences in those neighborhoods.

Well, I understand that any reform of a system that is
larger than New York City's Department of Education School
system is in reality a massive undertaking and probably has
few comparisons in our country, maybe with the exception of
the Los Angeles school district.

The mayoral system and their reform and the transfer
have to me a rather an illogical way of restructuring and
creating reason and what they did was in their effort to
try to undo school districts, their reorganization and
their governing went across a variety of community lines
and divided communities that had been in place for well
over thirty years in our City, and so their communications,
even with their best efforts couldn't work well because of
the way that they set it up.

The dissolution of the school district, which has
communities, that has been operating geographically and
configured geographically for over thirty years is also
confused in this process. I think that the legislation
didn't talk about a ridding or getting rid of the
school board and at the last moment compromised the chief -
- the school districts, but did not in the legislation
define what that meant or how that was going to function.

In other words, there were no criteria, there were no
guidelines.

There was no point to the legislation with regards to
the preservation of the school district, which the
legislators felt, was very, very important and it was where
they drew the line in the sand with the mayor. So the
legislation passed.

They said the school districts were supposed to be
preserved, the integrity of the school districts were
supposed to be preserved, but they didn't say how that was
going to happen, and the school system, and how that was
going to be inspected, and how they were going to be
represented, with the exception of these parent councils.

We had two very powerful entities within the school
board, the representatives of the Hasidic community and the
representatives of the Italian community and on most issues they would work things out among themselves and then it would become the policy for the decision of the entire board which had minority members which represented the large -- the largest portion of the students was and still an almost 90 percent African-Americans and Latino school district with the largest portion being Latinos.

I had to work my way into negotiations with the existing block, which as I mentioned were the Hasidic and the Italian Americans. But through good fortune, to skills and to a lot of community support we were able to position ourselves to be in a way that would allow for us to obtain things that we felt were necessary to children, such as extended day programs, such as bilingual program, such as better distribution of dollars in the school district, so that not only the best and the schools viewed as the best were the schools mostly attended by white majority students, would get the most dollars, but to make sure that we spread it out in an equitable manner. So we also got an education into local politics because we found that local politicians also wanted a say with the school board and school district.
So once the UFT pulled away and you had the climate created by the media to vilify all 32 school districts and the members and to demand educational change without really ever doing an analysis of educational needs which was only done by a local school board president, the man who took the issue and made a lawsuit was the school board president, Robert Jackson. He is the campaign for fiscal equity.

The law says and I want to quote this, that the panel members "should advise the chancellor on matters of policy affecting the welfare of the city school district." and that it "shall exercise no executive or administrative function". What does that mean? What does that mean? You're in charge -- you're -- you're you're a board, but you're in charge, you shall have it, so there are no roles for those entities.

There's been meetings held on this, someone will not challenge this, because there's no way that going from that process to a process where the president's council in a local school district, select, because I don't believe there's an election, select candidates that are first
approved and secondly, now the entity that determines whether they have ethics problems or not is a canceled employee because if the board's ethic officer, there's no longer a conflict of interest board or any other outside entity, now even that decision is made within the control of the mayor and the Department of Education, so there's no way you can truly call this an electoral process or an election.

164. There's one positive piece, not to be all negative, and that's the establishment of a citywide council on special ed. That's long overdue and the board, although having 32 school districts which included some parents of special ed, never had a focus entity that solely was responsible for special ed and the needs of special ed children.

COMMUNITY EDUCATIONAL ROLE

165. Getting back to the issue of the Community Advisory Council, part of the guidelines for this new group, for these new groups indicate that current PTA leadership cannot be a part of the CECs. I believe that this is a
significant error on omission, because they have a very, very important charge, which is to evaluate the district of school superintendents.

166. Getting back to the issue of the Community Advisory Council, part of the guidelines for this new group, for these new groups indicate that current PTA leadership cannot be a part of the CECs. I believe that this is a significant error on omission, because they have a very, very important charge, which is to evaluate the district of school superintendents.

167. They also have to evaluate the local instructional superintendent and they have to also advise and consent on educational policy. Although those are three simple statements, they are very, very difficult, vast, far-reaching, complex tasks. The fact that you are at the very outset in the organization of the CEC entities;

168. With regard to their role of the CEC members, you know that any group of entities are in terms of their work and their success is also very much dependent upon the
individuals that become part of it. I established earlier in my comments that this is a novice group since current PTA officers are eliminated from participating. I have questioned their ability to really be effective, the school leadership teams and the school reforms, all of the members of the school community constantly indicate that parents are the most important partner in schools and in the success of schools yet, the CECs which are supposed to be the representative group in the school reform says that their most experienced individuals cannot become part of this. What does that mean in the end?

Our local instructional superintendents have a paid individual that has the time and effort to sit at the table and contribute on a daily basis, and now you have this parent group who sit now on this newly created body called CECs, but they don't have the support system and the resources to be true partners at the table.
There's a second problem with these CECs, and that is who is eligible to run. You're saying that parents, no Board of Ed. employees, no Department of Ed. employees, but you also eliminate the core group of parents that have knowledge, have experience and have a history within the schools and their district and those are the members of the president's council.

Those parents, as far as this state, are not even eligible, so you're asking up front for only inexperienced parents that have not been involved because you eliminate the whole cadre of people that have had that day to day involvement in their child's schooling, and I would think that those would be the more effective leaders, those that have experience, those that have a proven track record, those that have dealt with a system as complex as this is and unfortunately this process was put into law, declaring the CECs eliminate that possibility from [inaudible].

So the high school students are important to stand alone, special ed students are important to stand alone, but children with a background such as my own, a limited
language [inaudible] children have no voice and their parents have no say and these are the normally immigrant parents that will not be part of the CECs because they don’t have enough history or involvement in the system.

174. They were part of the panel, actually on the board. Now you have one CEC with over 300 high schools. I don’t know how one CEC is going to cover that. You have Bronx High School of Science, and you have Bushwick High School. Those have the same needs? They can’t have the same needs.

175. One of the things that I, you know, I look upon as troubling is the fact that here we have this whole new system and there’s no training expected, so if you would have a panel and these CECs would be able to have a voice, they would understand in District 14 there’s a greater need because we have newer teachers, we have to have more staff development...
FUNDING AND EQUITY

176. So that led to this, but now the governor and the state Assembly and Senate are under pressure to redo the education funding formula in the State of New York. And it all started when a school board member fighting for his kids through positions that are now being eliminated. I think that's most ironic and interesting.

CURRICULUM/ STANDARDS

177. “There is greater budget autonomy for principals, and a uniform early-grade curriculum for all but the highest performing schools.”

178. I mean, will this group be able to walk into school and evaluate them, understanding the school tone and the environment as they walk through hallways and observe classrooms and become involved in committee meetings at the school. Will they have an understanding of the curriculum, particularly the new curriculum and instruction within the school building?
So boards had real power when I got elected. They had the ability to hire, they had the ability to set the curriculum, they had the ability to set policy, and you did that under the Central Board of Education, so really the issues only went to the Central Board when there was a dispute within the local board, and so their role was to administer the citywide program and to have oversight, but they had no controls.

So on any instruction curriculum issue a principal has to address all of those levels of supervision which is a problem for most and when you're talking about improving the quality of education, if you have five different people that have to be spoken to just to go about implementing any change, you know that when you start a rumor where it starts out with one person one way, by the time you get to the third person you've already got a new story, well, pretty much that's what happens when people interpret memorandums.
Appendix G
INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

INTERVIEW BETWEEN RESEARCHER AND INFORMANT #1 (SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM CHAIR)
TAPE #1

Q. This interview with an informant interviewee who happens to have vast experience in matters of the New York City Department of Education program.

The informant is also -- is also a founding member of one of the local high schools.

We would like to begin this interview with the informant’s background and experiences in schools.

A. First I had the majority or part of my educational experience within the New York City Public school system as a student in East New York, Brooklyn and then after having moved out of the country for a while I returned back. When I returned I started becoming involved in community organizations, one of them being the Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation where I became the administrator and the director [inaudible] excuse me, the Center for Education of Hispanic Affairs Director. And there I had my initial involvement with the school system as an outside entity partnering with school officials to be able to operate programs within the school, to serve students who
were in need of intervention and help from an outside
source to develop as part of our collaborative efforts in
school and after school initiatives, working with parents’
groups with just them and becoming more involved in their
children’s education and become more involved in schools
per se. I had nearly a decade and a half of experience in
this area, in this arena.

I then went on to run a citywide organization and expanded
this experience and utilizing the best practices from a
local community, a local community here and in central and
north Brooklyn and then expanded it to a citywide basis,
using some of this information and going around and
training parent groups and community entities such as the
Neighborhood Advisory Boards who oversaw programs at
community based organizations and also wanted to do
collaborations throughout the City. I worked also with
different -- with -- I would I would say with well over 32
school districts in developing our best practice
experiences in those neighborhoods and within those school
districts.

While I was at the organization called Progress, Inc. there
came an opportunity to be able to become involved right at
the [inaudible] become involved in the reorganization, the
redesign of what was then a school under registration with you by the New York State Education Department. It’s called Eastern District High School. The school was unfortunately a failing school in our community and it was among the most dangerous of schools in the City of New York, and I was proud to be part of their redesign effort that resulted and now the smallest group in a campus setting of what was once just one large high school.

I have to say that all of the three schools have come out from under [inaudible] youth designation and it has gone on to be a successful school, having a positive track record and the rejuvenating the reception within the community of the campus where now it is a highly sought after campus, all of the schools that are on the campus for the students in our community, which is significant. This has been indeed a learning experience.

I currently serve also as the educational services representative who are the founding organization of Progress High School for Professional Careers as a co-founder of the school. I served in this capacity to try to continue to assist and demonstrate that community based organization collaboration with the school can indeed result in a successful school model for young people.
Among the other hats that I wear is that I serve as a school leader team and a chairperson for the current high school and have had not only the experience of sharing the school leadership team, I'm becoming part of the development of a strong team at the Progress High School, but in addition to that, representing Progress, Inc., I have a wealth in trained other school leadership teams in a variety of districts throughout the City of New York on some of the experiences and the collaboration, successful collaboration we've been able to develop in trying to strengthen, particularly parent and community representatives to become part of the school leadership teams in their schools.

Q. Could you talk a little bit about the current level of communication between the Central Board of Education with respect to the new government's laws and provisions and that of the school, the districts and regions?

A. Well, I understand that any reform of a system that is larger than New York City's Department of Education School system is in reality a massive undertaking and probably has few comparisons in our country, maybe with the exception of the Los Angeles school district. It's certainly a
concentrated city. I think that there are none that even
compare.
I think that whatever reform tries to bring to a school
system in a city this size and a system this size, it
becomes extremely, extremely complicated. Having accepted
that premise, I believe that part of the communication
process has been adversely affected, number one, by the
vastness of the undertaking. However, what I've seen
beyond that, there has to be accountability and I believe
that the -- this reform attempt has had probably a less
than average score with regard to communication by the new
governing structure, vis-à-vis the New York City Department
of Education and their central and regional offices. The
superintendent that supervised an average of 20, 60 or 32
schools now have well over 130 schools where at least 130
schools under their charge. The mayoral system and their
reform and the transfer have to me a rather an illogical
way of restructuring and creating reason and what they did
was in their effort to try to undo school districts, their
reorganization and their governing went across a variety of
community lines and divided communities that had been in
place for well over thirty years in our City, and so their
communications, even with their best efforts couldn't work
well because of the way that they set it up. I believe that's the second reason for having a less than average grade.

In addition to that, when you have a reform of this undertaking, you're very hesitant to communicate with the parties involved because you know that you're going to naturally get resistance. The City has a strong teacher's union, has a disorganized parent leadership population and has vastly different communities that have a variety of nationalities within the community, melting pots so to speak or a variety of many different language groups, immigrant groups that are in communities with many varying needs and interests, and I don't believe that they've done a good job in being able to communicate what and sell the communities on what it is that they're trying to do. I would believe that their communication leaves much to be desired. Part of it is understandable. The other part which is important is that they add to the problem and they exacerbated by their poor communication, some of it intended, and some of it because of their restructuring ideas. I believe it has been a very, very poor one. I think that by and large communities understand that their school reform, that schools have now come under mayoral
control, but how the schools are changing and how they're going to improve and what the plans are, are not clear to the average person in the City.

Q. What was your reaction to the legislation that empowered the chancellor and abolished local school boards?

A. I believe that in the end, often what happens with legislation is that it is an attempt to remedy a situation and often is not what is written, it's what's left unwritten that tends to cause problems. I think that in a rush to wrestle control of the school system, the mayor and the chancellor are playing hardball with the state legislature and trying to take advantage of their recent election and appointment didn't plan well for what they were seeking to do, and the legislator's understanding and understanding the culture of legislation tried to modify the efforts of the mayor and the chancellor and did as best as they could, but the resulting piece of legislation accomplished accountability for the school system under the mayor, but failed to answer a lot of other questions and essentially threw the baby out with the bath water in terms of earlier school reform going back to decentralization, and so they threw out the good with the bad. We lost a lot of educational leaders who understandably were concerned...
and worried about what these reforms would mean to them in their latter years, or their twilight years of administration. We lost a lot of experienced people and with the reorganization effort not being clear, we have a lot of new people and middle management people laden with the responsibility of this tremendous undertaking, but they don't have the expertise to be able to carry it. The dissolution of the school district which was communities that has been operating geographically and configured geographically for over thirty years is also confused in this process. I think that the legislation didn't -- they talked about a ridding or getting rid of the school board and at the last moment compromised the chief -- the school districts, but did not in the legislation define what that meant or how that was going to function. In other words, there were no criteria, there were no guidelines. There was no peak to the legislation with regards to the preservation of the school district which the legislators felt was very, very important and it was where they drew the line in the sand with the mayor. So the legislation passed. They said the school districts were supposed to be preserved, the integrity of the School districts were supposed to be preserved, but they didn't say how that was
going to happen, and the school system, and how that was going to be inspected, and how they were going to be represented, with the exception of these parent councils. So I think it's what they have left out that has caused a lot of problems with this new governor's model.

Q. Do you see or do you envision the parents in community based organizations are going to be resistant to the newly defined roles on these parents or community education councils?

A. Both of these groups are, I believe, especially with my background coming from community based organizations, and are critical parts of the formula for success. The CBO's I would say have always -- traditionally been and now under this new structure are really the underestimated partners in a -- in a successful school reform effort of the public school system. Parents, however, are -- they're not a tightly knit group. They're certainly not a UFT. They're not a CSA. They don't have paid individuals who will lobby for them, who will organize them, who will bring their ideas to the public or put it to paper or put it in writing. They're loosely knit, a loosely knit group. However, probably the most important group in this formula.
I don't see parents, even though they're -- there are these councils, parent, and the average parent being much empowered by this reform. Certainly their elements, the issue of school choice, being able to select where their youngsters, if this ever happens, is an important tool. School leadership teams are an important vehicle tool for parents, the individual parent and parent association in terms of governing. However, school leadership teams, by and large I have seen, don't begin to do even five or ten percent of what they can do because other -- you know, there's a whole reasoning behind that in my opinion, but they're not -- even the vehicle they have is not a very strong one for parents. And so even though there are parent associations and their school leadership teams, I don't see parents really becoming as strong a partner as the other school community groups.

Community based organizations, as I indicated before, are an underestimated partners in this process, I don't believe that they are necessarily happy or ecstatic -- satisfied with this new governing formula and they have not been enlisted by the school system, maybe because this reform is new, but they certainly have been again, under utilized and
undervalued as an important element in any school success formula.

Q. If the new legislation called -- also called for a changed in the day to day roles and responsibilities at the Board of Education, the mayor has renamed the board the Panel on Education of Policy, do you envision any differences between the former board and the newly created panel.

A. Time will define this a little bit better, but what I've seen thus far is that the new panel pales in comparison to its predecessor, the school board. I was very concerned, in a country that values the First Amendment and freedom of the press, where a general community can be informed initially when the mayor, who appointed these individuals, prior to their appointment, indicated that they were not talk to the Press. I think this for me was a significant signal that this group was not going to be a very influential group because we wouldn't be hearing about what they're doing. We wouldn't be really hearing about your opinion. Certainly that meant that they didn't have the most powerful tool that any public servant has, and that is the ability to speak freely through constituents. When that was taken away from the very beginning, well, it was never given to them in the very beginning. I saw that as a
great concern. Of course the parent council groups have yet to be enacted, you know, to be carried out functioning as a group, their -- their -- even their naming has been delayed. What I think should have been one of the first steps. If you were going to take away our school board and their power, one of the first things that should have been done is there should have been a smooth transition from parent and public participation in governing and handed over to parents. That should have been taken care of at first, and here we are at this late hour, and they still haven't been named. To me that appears to be another contradiction in empowering parents.

And then from what I see from the legislation, and what I've seen thus far, I don't really believe with not having paid back or individuals that could work, I'm putting down the ideas and recognizing the ideas of these groups. I don't really see them coming to much because the 1996 legislation by the State was to have school leadership teams, and as I indicated before, even though they have the feet, and the authority school leadership team by and large does not function anywhere they need to function, why would I -- and that's been since 1996. Why under this new reform
would I believe that parent councils or panels will be any stronger. But I have, you know, that's yet to be seen. Let me also note that the mayor is now appointing the majority of the Board of Education. There are eight members that he named or that [inaudible] and this includes the Chancellor. That makes eight of thirteen. What I want to be clear about is that although the Panel for Education Policy appears to be mostly advisory, it in fact is not. I haven't seen anywhere that the board really is relegated to being advisory. I understand that they must continue to conduct business in a real way, but they still have vote on contracts, budgets and policy issues. I'm sure that the apparent contradiction of this relationship will become a point of contention.

Getting back to the issue of the Community Advisory Council, part of the guidelines for this new group, for these new groups indicate that current PTA leadership cannot be a part of the CECs. I believe that this is a significant error on omission, because they have a very, very important charge which is to evaluate the district of school superintendents. They also have to evaluate the local instructional superintendent and they have to also advise and consent on educational policy. Although those
are three simple statements, they are very, very difficult, vast, far reaching, complex tasks. The fact that you are at the very outset in the organization of the CEC entities; you're eliminating the most experienced cadre of individuals, which are the PTA leadership. Going back to what I said before, about throwing the baby out with the bath water just as we've lost a lot of experienced people who committed their lives and their careers to the school system, we're also now taking an elite group of parents, elite meaning because of their experience and their past years of dedication, you're saying that they can't be part of this new structure. In the end, that will result in a rookie group of individuals. Rookie, by that I mean, not by intention or not by importance, but by experience you're putting on them these incredible responsibilities of evaluating the superintendent, the local instructional supervisors as well as commenting and advising on educational policy. I mean, will this group be able to walk into school and evaluate them, understanding the school tone and the environment as they walk through hallways and observe classrooms and become involved in committee meetings at the school. Will they have an understanding of the curriculum, particularly the new
Q. Can you now tell us what your opinion is of the outreach being made to form these new community education councils, and also what your and also what their new roles and responsibilities will entail.

A. Well, the outreach efforts on the part of the Department of Education have been probably average or above, you know, with the new technology, they have the ability to be on their website. I believe that they're making an effort to try to make up for lost time to do a significant outreach effort, so I believe, technically on paper so to speak, they've been making an effort. I have great suspicion about whether they're going to be able to carry it out on a timely basis. As I indicated before, the learning curve with regard to the new individuals that they're seeking to recruit, meaning no one that's an officer of current PTAs will be able to participate. That means that the new group learning curve leaves much to be desired. Training is significant. I have not seen that in training opportunities. [inaudible] to it have been quite lacking
outreach without providing significant information and outreach on a personal level could be far better. With regard to their role of the CEC members, you know that any group of entities is in terms of their work and their success is also very much dependent upon the individuals that become part of it. I established earlier in my comments that this is a novice group since current PTA officers are eliminated from participating. That means that you hamper the entity as it -- as it begins its very, very first step. I have questioned their ability to really be effective, the school leadership teams and the school reforms, all of the members of the school community constantly indicate that parents are the most important partner in schools and in the success of schools yet, the CECs which are supposed to be the representative group in the school reform says that their most experienced individuals cannot become part of this. What does that mean in the end? Well, I'm going to question their effectiveness, particularly since they will not have the support and the resources to become successful as a group. The UFT, for example, has a leader, it has staff and it has support personnel that do research, that provide support and help to the individuals that they represent. They
become important partners at the table. Department of Education personnel, our regional representatives, superintendents, our local instructional superintendents have a paid individual that has the time and effort to sit at the table and contribute on a daily basis, and now you have this parent groups who sit now on this newly created body called CECs, but they don't have the support system and the resources to be true partners at the table. They're volunteers that are disjointed, that are brought together but for an instant in time compared to the other constituent groups that form part of the school community and are asked and told and lauded as true partners and the most important partners in the process, but they're not given the resources. We've taken out the most experienced, we don't give them the resources, we don't give them the training necessary to become successful, meaning full partners in the process. This doesn't bode well for the school reform efforts of the mayor and the chancellor and in the end, I believe and have hope in the fact that New Yorkers will get the opportunity to express themselves on the overhaul of this school system when the mayoral elections come about in 2005. Hopefully the outcome of the
Q. I'd like to ask you what your impression is of the evolution of the leaders, the school leaders now moving away from being or from coming through the educational system to that of school leaders, chancellors, school directors, school district directors now coming from outside of the educational system.

A. Well, I understand sometimes that you form a school system, the thinking of mayors or elected officials is that you have to basically shake up the system and do something dramatic, and bring in people that maybe have strength that a particular school system may have shown as a weakness, evidenced as a weakness over the years. Whether that could be legal issues or whether that could be business or economic issues. I understand that. However, the issue is what price do we pay for such dramatic changes in leadership, particularly when you abandon who has worked for many years and has a background for many years in education. Certainly you're going to gain some things, but the question is, do you lose a lot more? I think in order to really assess what is the best, I think that you have to look into and remember what is the profile of what you want
as an educational leader. Certainly there's value in an individual who understands academia, who understands curriculum, who understands education, who understands the culture of education and the public school system. I think you also want to have an individual who has a heart for the system that they're going to lead, that has a true appreciation and identification with teachers and with children and with parents and with community. And you want an individual that has commitment to this culture and to public education. Whether that can be found in a person that has been a US attorney or a district attorney or whether it can be a business leader, I don't know, because that's not where their heart has been. That's not where their experience has been. Education is not where their day to day commitment has been. They bring a strength to a school system, but are they educational leaders? I believe that the answer is probably sort of obvious. I don't believe that these individuals necessarily fit the profile of leaders of school system. I don't believe that you can understand really the culture of an educational system, nor the constituent groups within that system unless you've been touching them daily for an extensive period of time. So again, I think that you can correct a wrong by bringing
in someone with vast experience in a certain area, let's say business, but I think that you can gain that kind of expertise at a -- for example, deputy chancellor level or bringing in someone as a consultant or having people on the school board that can bring that sort of expertise without losing the value of an experienced educational leader to leave such a system as ours, which is so vast and so complex.

Q. What's your impression of attention that now exists between enacting -- can you talk about the tension that exists between enacting swift school reform in order to create these urgently needed changes and taking the time needed to have a smooth implementation process which seeks to the input, the opinions of the major stakeholders?

A. I think that the answer, the cause for the tension appears to lie within the words of your question, swiftly formed is a kind word for speeded up, too fast reform. There's going to be a tremendous price that you're going to pay and I think that we've been experiencing that stakeholders across the board have been complaining about the speed of this reform and the lack of planning and smooth transition in the process, whether it's the principals and the administrators, whether it's the teachers, the very large
teacher union that we have, the parent groups, the school leadership teams, all expressed, have expressed and continue to express concern over the fact that although they all understand the importance and the value of school reform, and that we need to go to higher levels in terms of student achievement, how we implement this reform is important. The fact that it was done, that it's being done too swiftly, that there was very little planning for school transition, the fact that constituent groups, stakeholders have not been properly brought into the process, consulted, and brought in as partners on this important reform has basically alienated the groups. So the tension continues to exist and continues to grow.

We're now into the third year plus of the administration and now there will be two years or three years in terms of the school reform, and what you have are a lot of dissatisfied groups, and unfortunately I don't see the situation improving a lot cause what we've seen implemented thus far shows that speed, -- quality has been sacrificed by speed. People have been shut out of the process, important stakeholders. We've lost a lot and our school system needs to revamp this reform and do better consultation and team work with the constituent groups.
Q. You referred to the teacher's union; the United Federation of Teachers is now publicly opposing the implementation of the mayor's reform [inaudible]. They're claiming that a lot of the problems that occur [inaudible] were foreseen and that there was little in the way of communication with the mayoral administration. What's your -- what's your opinion of the -- of the teacher's union concerns?

A. Well, this issue of the United Federation of Teachers and the teacher's union public comments has become more and more negative as the school year has gone on. They've initially been stating we told you so. But beyond saying we told you so, when they did complain or express their concerns at the beginning of the school year they weren't complaints, they were concerns, and they had certain recommendations and these were by and large ignored and not implemented. As a result it appears that we're losing our first line of defense in the school system, which is our teacher. We can't afford to lose our educators. Learning is centered in the classroom, and if we lose the leaders of the classroom as individuals and as a group it doesn't look good for our school system, it doesn't look good for our school, our reform.
They talked early on with the other union, the PSA, about the example of high school students being packed in the schools like sardines. They talked about the fact that there were no outreach centers which were places that dealt with suspended children who needed extra attention and needed to be temporarily segregated from the regular school population so that they could get the services that they needed and the support services that would allow them to become successful students and graduate from high school systems. Security was a major and continues to be a major issue in the new school year.

Teachers have gone as far as having to form protests at individual schools to get the attention of the mayor, to get the attention of the chancellor to provide more security. They felt threatened. Again, this is the loss - this is a huge loss of morale amongst the teachers. We lost a lot of experienced teachers. There is a high rate of retirement, far greater than what was expected, as a result of this school, initial school reform efforts for this new school year. We lost paras, paraprofessional professionals, which were important support personnel in the classroom and in the school as the school year began. They're starting to call some back now, but I think it's
too little, too late. New teachers that were hired, and
highly recruited, when they were brought on, they were not
provided with their pay to be able to continue in the
school system. This comes and this points to an overall
tendency via a new school leadership, a system in regions
which promised that their efforts were going to be
concentrated on instruction and which promised that
principals were going to become the true autonomous leaders
of their school building since they were going to be held
accountable, they were only going to only be provided with
the local instructional support needed to become a
successful school. Instead, what they've done is ineptly
revamped the school system as I indicated by the teacher's
comments, teacher's union comments and by experiences in
the loss of personnel, and they've handcuffed the
principals by not concentrating solely on instructional
issues, but on micromanaging their schools.
Is there fair and equitable distribution of resources under the reform system of education?

That presents a concern in the case of the high school that I’m involved with. We served as one of the models of smaller schools of the redesign of the former school that existed in this location. The idea was to create small schools that do not exceed 500 students. And when we have found is that is served as the model for the department of education, the Mayor and the Chancellor have been talking about for the past few years is reconstituting of the larger schools into the smaller school model. The schools would be capped at 500 students. We have seen that this is been done at an expense. The expenses is the previous schools like ours, that succeeded and came out of SURR and had good working models would then have students rerouted to stable, unsuccessful schools, violating the first law, which was the cap on students. We also found the resources that we had been reassigned to these of the schools as well. So we would get larger student populations. Now more than double the number...
of students projected and less resources in which them. The question is answered as posed by our situation.

Additionally there is a great deal of confusion when you talk about resources of the school level. Over the last few years has not been a significant increase in city funding to the Department of Education. As was mentioned before, class size averages are high in some cases, averaging 36 and 37 when the contractual limit is 34. A comparison of the cities adopted budget for FY 2004 and FY 2005 found that they was an $80.3 million decrease in the resources general education, and special-education instruction. The issue of variable corridor method of constructing school budgets on the basis of school size is something that needs to be further examined. This method of funding fails to take into consideration funding for our of classroom positions such as secretaries, assistant principals counselors school aides and librarians. An elementary school with 1200 students will receive only $6,800 more in administrative funding than an elementary school with 600 students. Therefore you do not have enough to fund a second school secretary, or an assistant principal. This raises the issue or the supposition that law schools do not need secretary's assistant principals, librarian's aides as their
student registers increase. It is still very unclear as to why the Department of Education created this method of funding for an out of classroom positions. There appears to be a bias against large schools or an attempt to reduce school level administrators. This variable corridor funding method creates large budget gaps. In order to retain assistant principals and school secretaries, schools will have to reduce the teaching staff, thereby raising class size. This will only have a negative impact on the instructional program. The funding levels for necessary out of classroom positions must be reconsidered. There also implications for school level budgets relating to reducing special Ed services.

Part of the Mayor’s argument in promoting mayoral control of the New York City school system was to provide autonomy to New York City school principals. Has this happened?

In fairness to some notable aspects of this objective or goal that have taken place for example the situation of seniority transfers and of the important aspects of the duties. However, I believe that for the most part. Sadly this is not been the case. The principals have not been given the autonomy promised. Initially when the regions took over the school districts certainly there was a lot of confusion as there is in any reorganization effort. But finally, as things began to shake
out, you basically got a reestablishment of the old school
district model where there are basically inflexible on academic
and curriculum activities. The promise support and assistance to
be given to the principal to allow full concentrating on efforts
on the instructional aspects and becoming the instructional
leader of the building has been hampered. The over management of
principals continues if not has become almost worst. Under what
it was under the district model. We weren’t looking for to be
better; we were looking for what was promised. The principal was
going to be the lead of the building, making decisions that that
assist in moving an academic program within the school. That has
not been the case. It almost seems like taking a step backwards
because it was an expectation of something better. That is sad
to say has not been the situation or the reality. Principals are
as busy responding to bureaucratic issues and second-guessing of
the efforts as ever before.

addition of a should be pointed out that what was formerly 32
school districts, 32 superintendents leading those districts,
have now been transformed into 10 regions, 130 superintendents
known as local instructional superintendents, and a supervisory
bureaucracy. while it is claimed that principals have greater
autonomy, the fact of the matter is that there is a prescribed
Curriculum, there is a prescribed methodology and there is a prescribed budget with the vast majority of it being for establish lines i.e. teacher lines, guidance lines, administrator lines. Therefore there is not a great deal of latitude and discretionary funding to work with or make decisions around. I should also mention that with respect to student admissions and enrollment, principals have little or no authority when it comes to determining how many students with the house in their particular school, whether there is safety and security implications overcrowded schools, whether rooms are renovated or not in order to meet the needs of expanding enrollment. An example of this is when the school is over enrolled and overcrowded. There is no fund that the principal directs that would allow for the renovation of classrooms and offices in order to meet the direct instruction needs of students. while the Chancellor boasts of having graduated 75 out of approximately 90 leadership Academy principals, and also securing private-sector funding to the tune of $75 million, it appears as though this might be one of the most expensive programs of all time. It still remains to be seen how many of these principles will be in their current positions in the course of the next few years. While it is acknowledged by the Mayor and the Chancellor, that school leadership is first and
foremost, and that it is undervalued the principals, assistant principals, school administrators have gone without a contract for 3½ years. In fairness to the reform of the principals have been given the right to select their own assistant principals, and not have all the people select them. Principals have been allowed to select coaches, and there is partial truth to autonomy in school-based budgeting. Again much of the budget is caught up in categorical funding areas. That means the rules for how those funds are spent is quite rigid. We have not reached a point where schools total budget is overseen by the principal. This takes into account, food and nutrition, custodial services, facilities and facility maintenance.

Has the reform legislation led to more effective school system?

If my effective school system, you mean, one of the most highly segregated systems in the entire nation, and that's what we have. The fact of the matter is that although the percentage of students who are minority attending public school now is at approximately 72% they make up less than 6% at specialized high schools. Specialized high schools in New York City, all schools, which enroll the brightest students. At Stuyvesant high school,
for example, 26 years ago black students represented almost 13% of the student enrollment, today they represent less than 3%.

Has the Reform Act effectively lead to a decisive role for parents, community education councils, and community-based organizations?

The Mayor’s newsletter of October 2005 focuses on the children’s first reforms as it relates to parent involvement, and community involvement. The Chancellor indicates in the newsletter that among the key initiatives is the placement of parent coordinators in all 1400 schools, the establishment of community education councils in all districts.

If our students and schools ought to be truly successful, we need the active involvement allow parents. There are a number of important opportunities for parents to get involved in their children’s education and receive valuable information on how they can to support their children’s learning. 30 parent workshops have been held focusing on admissions process and various high school options. Parent-teacher conferences are another way of bringing parents into the schools. Their held twice annually, one in the fall semester one in the spring.
semester. “parent-teacher conferences are one of the best ways parents can connect with their teachers to find out more about their children’s performance.” Public Education Needs Civic Involvement, And Learning (PENCIL) sponsor of the principal for a day program assigned 720 business leaders to schools in the hopes of developing long-term partnerships.

Has the Reform Act effectively led to decisive inaudible parent’s community education councils, and community-based organizations?

The reform legislation indeed has language that increased and strengthened parental participation particularly through the school leadership teams, the CEC’s, which replaced the old community school District school boards. Our experience thus far with the CEC’s show that since it was far less participation in terms of the selection with in given communities - to having been changed from a direct electoral process as small as the turnout was, there is now even less community participation. There is almost no direct involvement in the selection of the members of the CEC panels. When the advisory panel that replaced a central Board of Education was also enacted or carried out they have even less of a role than their predecessors. It
appears as though the CEC’s follow that same pattern, there is no real serious effort on the part of the Mayor or the Chancellor to really have these groups have a voice. The groups are very much intimidated over what they can say and what they can do. It is pretty much a paper tiger. The school leadership change of pretty much gone the way of what the PTA’s and school governance entities that is the way the former school-based management committees used to function. Those that are active and fully engaged in school activities and school governance as a result of extremely sophisticated and active parent groups, and school community leaders or the principal. If the principal doesn’t have the time or the interest to strengthen the school leadership teams they seem to go the way of formal school-based management teams. My experience out there is that the school leadership team, which has the strength by legislation don’t get to play the role that they could be playing the management of their given school.

To review community and citywide education councils, they were created to replace the community school boards in the 32 school districts across the city. Each CEC is composed of nine parent members. Two members appointed by the borough president, one member is expected to be a student representative. Their will
also be a Council on special education which again is comprised of nine members, two members are appointed by the public advocate and there is one student representative. Of these 34 councils, parents have the opportunity to nominate themselves to serve on the Council. The officers of the parent teachers Association's will select the parent members.

It's important to note that the school leadership teams when they were originally enacted by state legislation Reform Act called for their being involved in their signing off on the comprehensive educational plan (CEP) and the school budget. Since then, and more recently in the last two of three years, with a reorganization of the Department of Education, they have no role in the budget process, although the legislation does call for it. They have no role whatsoever on setting the budget and we know that any CEP lives or falls on the resources that it has. Even though they may be involved in the language and development of the comprehensive educational plan, they in fact have little or no voice in the budgetary process. School leadership teams used to be part of the negotiations that was taken away. It seems to have been also taken away from the principal. Therefore local school officials have very little
What level of compliance, has there been regarding the development and participation of school leadership teams?

School leadership teams resources have been reduced from before. They have very little with which to work with. Being taken out of the budget process was in effect, the declawing of the group itself. What has occurred in the last few years was essentially a one-time meeting that was done at the region level to speak of some general issues which constitutes what they call a "training." Very little was accomplished there except to talk about housekeeping pieces such as attendance sheets, and how to submit them. Training was provided so that the individual members could get their stipend allowance for having participated on the school leadership team. There's very little in terms of substantive issues, to help and strengthen school leadership teams. Those in attendance at the trainings seem to have accepted the fact that school leadership teams don't play a significant role.

From the vantage point of the parents Association and the school leadership team in assessing the effectiveness of the recently
implemented academic program at a high school is that there is an appreciation for the fact that there is in place a plan to create a uniform curriculum, that there is uniformity since this is especially helpful as our students transfer to other schools as we can you transferees into our school. Their situation is less exacerbated because there is uniformity. However it seems to full of apart after the first schooling level of development, the most teachers effectively move the model after the ninth grade. We believe that there should be a greater emphasis placed on professional development and assisting teachers and utilization of technology such as multimedia and long-distance learning. Additionally we should have the development include providing teachers with strategies and step-by-step in being able to teach themes across the curriculum. These way students will receive the same message. For example, in our school, this emphasis on professional careers utilizing these careers and models of instruction whether it be in math, science or English classes. We have also experienced at the literacy program does not properly emphasize phonics. This is the level of frustration and dissatisfaction, experienced by the instructional staff. It is important to be able to resolve this, because this is critical, since most of the students entering our school entering a high school are far behind in
their basic skills. A lot of that is due to their poor phonics skills. It is essential that this be addressed and resolved.

Schools Chancellor Joel Klein welcomed the third class of aspiring principals, as part of the New York City leadership Academy. Principal Academy candidates participate in a rigorous, performance-based, 14-month leadership development program to prepare future principals for effective school leadership by utilizing problem-based, experiential learning and providing candidates with strong leadership training. The New York City Department of Education Chancellor Joel Klein has indicated that the results of an eighth-grade public school testing. In both reading and math for the 2005 national assessment of educational progress (NAEP) indicates that there has been great improvement, specifically reading levels for fourth-grade students, at all above the basic level, reached 57%. This is eight percentage points higher than their counterparts in other large cities and a gain of 4% since 2003. They also boast that the fourth-grade gains of the highest of the participating urban school district. This includes Houston and Atlanta and is higher than the gains in the nation as a whole. In mathematics, 73% of New York City fourth-graders achieved that or both, basic level. This is for dissent points higher than their peers from other large cities.
This represents a gain of six percentage points since 2003. This gain is higher than the gain in the nation as a whole. As it relates to lack Hispanic and low-income students, fourth grade students made particular remarkable progress, according to the Chancellor. They not only outperformed students from other large cities in reading and mathematics, but they outperformed students nationwide.

Any statistical presentation of an evaluator for measurement approach that may be used is either, is qualified by the approaches that are used. In this instance, we talk about the fact that 10,000 students that were held back in the third grade were not tested. So you have the bottom percentages of your student population that would normally be assessed are not part of the sample pool. Secondly in this case, the evaluation is based on basic measurement of the students. He should be noted that the NAEP program is not designed to report on the performance of individual students. Instead, groups of the student population, representative national samples are assessed. NAEP reports results for male and female students, black students, white students and students in different regions of the country. Samples are selected using a complex sampling design. Although a number of key findings were indicated in the
Chancellor’s statistics for academic achievement, the report as quoted from the NAEP did not indicate a key finding and that is whites do is continue to score higher on average than Hispanic students. This raises questions of equity which I will talk about later. When you’re in a system, which is majority minority, this is a key finding that was conveniently omitted.
INTERVIEW
BETWEEN RESEARCHER AND INFORMANT #3 (SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER)
TAPE #3
Q. This next interview is with an informant who has an extensive background in the school boards, involvement in school boards and community leadership. He currently is the head of a major citywide, statewide community based organization. We'd like to begin by finding out a bit more about your background and then we'll move into a few other sections.

A. Well, my background begins a long time ago, forty years ago in Cuba. I mention that because [inaudible] local educational issues of the [inaudible]. [inaudible] started at eight, seven or eight coming into New York City. At that time, my parents who had been professionals in Quincy had to redefine their life over and were able to move up and succeed in New York and in the United States by the vehicle they had [inaudible] Cuba with his education. So education has always been very important to my family. Has always been viewed as what allows one to succeed as a major vehicle for success and economic independence and so from very early on in life I was taught that an education was the topic of conversation at family dinners, whether it was them going to college and taking the courses necessary so that they could receive the appropriate licenses to once again teach here as they had done in Cuba or whether it was...
after that shop course [inaudible] conversations around the table usually somehow wound up on the issue of education. So when we arrived here in New York, my uncles who had come here earlier were already involved in the educational system of the city. It was 1970 and [inaudible] had come into play. My uncle and he got elected to the community school board in District 14. And it was through parents' support and union support that he was elected. He was one of the first parents, working parents to receive the endorsement of the United Federation of Teachers which at that time was among the leaders and pushing towards the decentralizing and so it was a very basic election operation, one that focused him on door to door campaign, neighbor to neighbor operation that had also [inaudible] organized in the local churches, in the local Catholic churches throughout the school year. So the priests from different parishes held sessions. They held educational sessions to talk about this new governing structure and to encourage the parents of public school students to actively participate and become part of the chapter. For a community was predominantly Hispanic and African-American, and not [inaudible] involvement, this was a new day and a great challenge because it was always [inaudible], one
thing [inaudible], was that educators were viewed as the almost all inspired professionals that one really just listened to, not that one would direct, lead or challenge. And so by involving yourself in a school board and talking about things that you want to change the [inaudible] and ultimately reelection, you were saying that there were things wrong with the system, and so for those two communities to take that view of education was [inaudible]. And so my uncle, coming from Cuba, that had gone through a -- a revolution, this was not that difficult, into a total country that has gone through a revolution and survived that, and decided that that wasn't where he wanted to be, so he [inaudible] challenged a system that on its face wasn't succeeding, was not that difficult for him to do and he felt it an important thing to do because he wanted to be part of the change that would include the last of his daughters who were now attending the public school system. But before there's an opportunity, to insure that they had the kind of education that he wanted for them, and being an educator, when he spoke of reforms in the native tongue of many of the participants in Hispanic, he also clearly knew education and was knowledgeable about it, how they sound, basic education should be provided to give
[inaudible] legitimacy to have been a teacher in his native tongue.
So the fact that he had legitimacy, the fact that he understood the needs, the fact that he was a parent and had children in the public school system, the fact that he was not in awe of authority because he had been in authority, all helped make him a very valuable candidate and ultimately he won [inaudible]. So my family's involvement in the school board started with their birth and so on it's something that we strongly believe in, community participation and the community role and that's it. I say we because after he retired, his brother, my uncle ran for the school board and was elected, and he at the time was a department head for the Board of Education. He worked for the [inaudible] board. This was before the Savanna Law, it was the known as the Savanna Law which was the law, I believe in '89, which stipulates that a Board of Ed. employee could not be both a Board of Ed employee and a member of the community school board. And so once that became the law of New York State, with -- which was one of I believe the first of the attempts to change the decentralization act, the original decentralization act, he resigned. And I kind of decided that I had an
understanding of what the [inaudible] having gone through
the public school system and the district where I grew up
and having come back as a family worker and having come
back later as a teacher, I decided that first of all,
although I found teaching rewarding I wanted to make a
greater impact and reach more children and sitting on the
school board you get to represent, at that time, it was
20,000 students, 21,000 versus the 30 that you are able to
impact upon as a school teacher. So I decided that I would
run, and I ran in a highly contested race with about 16
candidates and nine seats and I was elected and the top
vote getter and the concerns were legitimate in terms of my
family because they were concerned that upon the election I
would have to decide whether to continue my employment or
not serve as a board member and I had already made up my
mind that I would leave the Board of Education and pursue
other career interests, but that I would serve on the
school board. So there became -- I think I immediately
became the go to person because I had just left the system
as an educator, and so my colleagues who were not educators
would look to me, the other eight members would look to me
for leadership in terms of educational issues of the day
and I would be able to bring a lot of my experience within
the district. I was a teacher in the district, but here I had been a student, here I had been a family worker, a teacher, all within District 14, and now I was a board member responsible for the hiring of supervisory staff and responsible for policy in terms of educational policy and curriculum. So boards had real power when I got elected. They had the ability to hire, they had the ability to [inaudible], they had the ability to [inaudible] policy, and you did that under the Central Board of Education, so really the issues only went to the Central Board when there was a dispute within the local board, and so their role was to administer the citywide program and to have oversight, but they had no controls. The local entity, the local school board had really the power and the authority over the school board district. And the district being 14 [inaudible] you did have a strong say, and -- and -- and a great impact on the lives of the children attending that district. [inaudible] began my service on the board and found out that there was another side to that which was the politics of [inaudible] and within that we quickly learned about our coalition with [inaudible] and the impact, so [inaudible]. We had two very powerful entities within the school board, the representatives of the Hasidic community
and the representatives of the Italian community and on most issues they would work things out among themselves and then it would become the policy for the decision of the entire board which had minority members which represented the large -- the largest portion of the students because we [inaudible], they were almost 90 percent African-Americans and Latino [inaudible] the largest portion [inaudible] the Latino.

So the challenge at the time was to have a say and to insure that the children that were most affected had a voice. And so how to go about that and so you had different vehicles. There were some that thought that the way to go was to -- to challenge in a way of protest and -- and through the legal channels of lawsuits. I thought that what was that and the approach I [inaudible] and we utilized was the [inaudible], saying, you know, I represent the largest portion of children that [inaudible] in the district and I have the ability to mobilize them and so with the threat of that ability with the realization by consecutive wins in the school board as the largest vote getter, it legitimized that role for me. And so although I never had a minor -- a majority in numbers in terms of a solid block of votes, because we didn't operate that way
and we didn’t have [inaudible] control, I had to work my way into negotiations with the existing block, which as I mentioned were the Hasidics and the Italian Americans. But through good fortune, to skills and to a lot of community support we were able to position ourselves to be -- to [inaudible] in a way that would allow for us to obtain things that we felt were necessary to children, such as extended day programs, such as [inaudible] program, such as better [inaudible], that only [inaudible] and the schools [inaudible] the schools mostly attended by white majority students, we get more solid [inaudible] to make sure that we spread it out in an equitable manner. So we also got an education into local politics because we found that local politicians also wanted a say with the school board and school district. If you think about it, the school district for the most part are the members own employer and community. So to have a say within those communities means that you hold control of a lot of jobs and you don’t need a college degree to be a school aide. You don’t need a college degree to be a cafeteria worker, but they’re important jobs. They're jobs with benefits, they're jobs with pensions, they're jobs that local community people would be very appreciative and almost be beholden for life
to a person that can insure them that kind of opportunity. So the local politicians [inaudible], not always in a positive way, sometimes it's concerned about what jobs it can get out of it, but others did have a much [inaudible] approach and really wanted to see that the students got the kind of programs [inaudible] and determine which elected officials were looking for what, and so to see what you really had to be able in it's heyday, in the day of true unity control and education control within the community, you had to be able to [inaudible] first and foremost the needs of the children and secondly the needs of the staff in the districts, and third, the needs of the community and when you say community you mean elected officials, you mean not for profit organizations, you mean business leaders because we really have to look at the larger community to see [inaudible]. So the school board then after -- I don't recall the year of the [inaudible] thinking of it, I believe we mentioned, '96, where after a lot of pressure from [inaudible] authority, but I believe principally the media, a change was brought about in 1996 where boards were removed from the total say of selecting a superintendent. Now that had been the most important functional board, because when you select the educational
leader of the district, that person would then be in charge of all aspects of education [inaudible], the board of directors and the chief executive officer and so the superintendent is the chief executive officer. When you're not -- when you're no longer hiring that chief executive officer, you don't have the same authority, power and control that you did when you were able to go to that [inaudible] and make your independent selection. What they did was they allowed for you to send them candidates for the chancellor to make the final selection. And so that began the process of removing the authority from the local boards. I have to say that it wasn't -- it didn't happen overnight. There were a lot of abuses in a lot of districts. There were people indicted and found guilty of selling jobs. There were people taking things, the most famous was a gentleman who was on national television for months and [inaudible], national I say, because we got that kind of attention, [inaudible], he took a piano. The guy's name was [inaudible]. He took a piano. I met him once and he said that the piano was in no condition, it was being thrown out, but the bottom line is one of the newspapers got a picture of him taking that piano and he took that piano home, and so the symbol of corrupt boards became a
piano and became a district in the Bronx where jobs were sold. I think [inaudible] different persons [inaudible].

And so for the corruption and the deeds of a few, everyone was tainted. So it was like one would have to ask one's self, do I want to continue to be part of an entity that in and of itself is viewed to a great extent, as corrupt. Not that the one that I participated in was corrupt, but that all of them, all 32 were viewed in that way, so that was a decision. I decided to continue with it because I felt that the impact I was making was important and we had made modest success [inaudible] significant, well, you can't say modest and significant, but, we had made significant changes in having those that looked and came from the same background as to the children [inaudible] to be in supervisory positions based on talent, based on skills, based on ability, based on education and merit, and so by being able to push people that represented the children and that sometimes came from within the same community, I think that we added a lot to their self esteem. We added a lot to the educational process within the district, and so that really compelled me to continue to serve and although there were many in my family opposed to it, I decided that it was the right thing to do for the right reasons, because the
focus for me was always having an impact and making a difference in the lives of children. So with the reduced power, I thought it was also a new day, a new opportunity for those that would stick around it would have to be because they were serious about their commitment, not because they wanted to control the system, because we no longer could control the system. It turned out that that was just the beginning of a campaign to take away local say over education, and I think that it's a little bigger than that. I don't think that it's a coincidence that once that minority began being selected in large numbers on the board and in turn the folks selected by those boards into positions of authority and [inaudible] became more reflective of the community and became more minorities, that the folks that had the control and the power for many, many years before that took a look and said, hey, maybe we need to rethink this, and maybe we need to have this control back in our hands. And so I then decided that if we were -- if we didn't stand up and we didn't make sure that these boards functioned well within the new system that then we would lose it, lose the say and lose the ability to fight for our children and for our local schools. Ultimately that [inaudible]. They weren't
satisfied with that and they still made media -- had media frenzy [inaudible] any issues that a board will have. Like anything else, you have precincts, but when there's a corruption in one precinct, all precincts are going to get tainted as corrupt. The media somehow focuses in on the [inaudible]. They don't say that the 79th, the 101st, the 111th, they don't say they're all corrupt, but when you say School Board 8 is corrupt, you say all school boards are corrupt. So I find that interesting because [inaudible] precincts, but [inaudible], they don't get the same treatment from the media and from the powers be, those that control the media control well in the City of New York. I imagine that that goes beyond [inaudible]. Specifically speaking about the issues in the [inaudible]. So in 1996 that really was just the beginning of an [inaudible] on local boards and local decision making. What changed in the process that began really to hit home with Mayor Giuliani, who was -- who ran on a campaign of taking control of schools, destroying and blowing up one [inaudible] was refined a bit and because the refinement made by Mayor Bloomberg, it ultimately succeeded. And that refinement and that change was that and Mayor Bloomberg published [inaudible], he added the need for parents. And
so it was a way to say to the community, we want you out of
the process, but you are important in the process, and so
they pushed the parent piece really to buy off the
community, to say to the community we'll put a parent court
in, one of you are going to [inaudible] the school, you no
longer have a say on hundreds of jobs, but you're going to
get one job and then you're going to have an advisory job
with the other job.

Now I happen to have history on advisory boards and know
what they mean. They mean whatever the power wants it to
be. The New York City Health and hospitals Corporation
works with advisory counsel in every hospital. They have
no authority. They have no power. They have no say on
anything. They are just advocates that meet monthly. And
they're as strong as the support that they create for
themselves or that generated outside of the board to
function and to have a say. So you have to fight to have a
say. The same thing with the parent councils that are
being set up. They're going to have to fight to have a say
because from legislation, they're already advisory in
nature. They don't have the right to select
superintendents, they don't evaluate things, they don't do
a lot of things that would give them a say, and I say
bought off, because they knew they couldn't just tell community you're out of the process. We don't want you controlling dollars, we don't want you controlling policy, we don't want you controlling curriculum, but they're your kids, they can't say that, so Bloomberg, for his policy advisory understood that. He saw the mistake in Giuliani. The reason he was never successful was he said I want you out and I want to be in charge, and people didn't really support that. They understood that education was changed, [inaudible] was necessary, was desired to be one and be part of the mix. And as important, you'll recall in the beginning I said when my uncle ran, the union was very much a part of the [inaudible]. The union pulled away little by little, because the union ultimately got it to that state, and so [inaudible] leadership team where then they had equal numbers and they had a say, and then they ultimately got political say because of their numbers and because of political say, so they no longer needed to invest themselves in a community school board that they no longer saw as key to their control and their say within the system. They were able to, over a twenty year period, over a thirty year period, establish themselves independent of the board. When they started out they needed to support
and involve themselves in the local school board so they could have a greater say because they weren't the type of union that could control education. They really didn't have that. They had gone through -- right after that they went through Shanker and the strike and [inaudible], so you yourself was going through [inaudible] change in gross and getting themselves to the table. So now the union is at the table. They [inaudible] so what is the need for the union for the school board, which is the reason to have DC37 wanted the school board because they're not at the level of [inaudible]. So the UFT no longer has the need for these local entities which they were very involved in, so they pulled away. So once the UFT pulled away and you had the climate created by the media to [inaudible] all 32 school districts and the members and to demand educational change without really ever doing an analysis of educational needs which was only done by a local school board president, the man who took the issue and made a lawsuit was the school board president, Robert Jackson. He is [inaudible] everybody joined him afterwards, but the one that took the case and challenged the State of New York for funding, school board member who understood the process. I probably [inaudible] understanding [inaudible], but that's
lost in the history books. That’s never going to be profiled that here is the biggest case in education in the State of New York’s history, started by a school board member who learned and understood the need through his [inaudible] his children for better education and to see dollars and sense [inaudible] school board. So that led to this, but now the governor and the state Assembly and Senate are under pressure to redo the education [inaudible] State of New York. And it all started when a school board member [inaudible] his kids [inaudible] positions that are now being eliminated. I think that’s most ironic [inaudible].

So the whole focus was made that school boards were [inaudible]. So the whole focus was made again, you know, the media made the school boards the problem and the mayor’s answer was let’s [inaudible] from Mayor Guiliani’s [inaudible]. That didn’t sell, so Mayor Bloomberg came with a more sophisticated approach and it ultimately worked and which is -- what [inaudible] will work. Where we are today where the school board was being phased out, they had to go through Washington to have it modified. Before this last one there was another one in 2002, and then we’ll do that one on the next tape.
And this 2002 role also Mayor Giuliani campaign and the media campaign and the Board of Education became the Department of Education, which is a mayoral entity, just like we now have the Department of Education. So, you know, now that the mayor has the power he fought so hard to control and the school system, he cannot say like some of his predecessors previously stated that the school's governing structure made it impossible to [inaudible]. No longer can he make that claim. So he does have ultimate responsibility by now having selection of the chancellor within his power, by having the selection of the superintendent [inaudible]. The problem is that the new law that the mayor ran through the legislation provides incomplete [inaudible] and [inaudible]. The more definitions and explanations of the new board [inaudible] The law says that the panel members "should advise the chancellor on matters of policy affecting the welfare of the city school district," and that it "shall exercise no [inaudible] assumption." What does that mean? What does that mean? You're in charge -- you're -- you're -- you're a board, but you're in charge, you shall have it, so there is no roles for those entities. The bottom line is the mayor is responsible. Some argue that that's good. Some
will say that it should be a mayoral department where the mayor will [inaudible] selected head, and that you will hold him accountable. Well, I say that education is not as a precinct and fire houses responding to the scene [inaudible]. There's only one way to put out a fire [inaudible], with water, if it's a natural fire [inaudible] chemicals, if it's a chemical. But there's not one way to educate a child. There's different means, there's different learning [inaudible], and educators know that. Administrators, [inaudible], they don't know that. And business heads, CEO's, they don't know [inaudible] What we're seeing with all the mistakes that are being made by Chancellor Klein [inaudible] can't use the blackboard. [inaudible]. People enter we would hope, that most of the people that enter education is because they feel close. This is something that they wanted to do, wanted to try their knowledge to be used [inaudible] sponge, but they can't do that in a restricted environment, which is what we have, which is ultimately the greatest failure of this destruction. It's not even -- it could be seeing whether the impact that no [inaudible] will have, but it is already having an impact on the quality of education through the staffing and through [inaudible], of staffing.
Q. Can you give us your thoughts on current changes in the New York City Board of Education and its newly established informed panel for educational policy?

A. Well, as we said, when the Board of Education became the New York City Department of Education, the former Central Board of Ed, which was comprised of seven members, one appointed by each of the borough presidents and two by the mayor, that became the policy for education. Now the problem with that is that the former Board of Education, each member was assigned a staff person. Each member had an office. This office handled the business of the board. All major decisions had to be approved by this board, meaning contracts, meaning major educational facilities, meaning hiring of the chancellor. All of that was done by the board. Now in today's Panel for Educational Policy, first of all, they're appointed by the mayor. They serve at the will of the mayor and the first thing the mayor did when he appointed them was said if anybody is caught speaking to the press, I will remove...
them. So there was a tension. I mean, you don't even allow people to speak much less have a true say in what's going on in a system as large as the New York City Public School system. So these panels -- this panel is basically a rubber stamp for the mayor. They have no true power, no true voice. It's like a decoration fixture, to make it look good. It has no real value, no real purpose. And this is not something that I'm saying. The member from Brooklyn, a former New York City school teacher, assistant principal, principal and superintendent, Donna Webber, formerly Superintendent District 21 in Brooklyn and a candidate for chancellor himself served on the panel and he resigned. His term wasn't up and he resigned because he said he could no longer continue to serve on an entity that serves no purpose, had no point. And he said he tried because he felt that being part of the system he would be able to make a difference and have impact, but he said the control from the mayor's office is so great and the information given to them was so limited, that there was nothing for them to work on, nothing for them to speak on. Even if they went outside of the mayor's mandate, which was not to speak, even if they went outside, if they chose to go outside of it, there was nothing that they were
receiving that was worth discussing. The biggest thing that happened in terms of vendors was this whole Snapple deal. They had no say and involvement on that. There's then this whole restructuring of the curriculum, they had no say or involvement on that. So here you have the business end, a [inaudible] the education end, the curriculum, and this Panel for Educational Policy has no role. So really, it's in no way, shape or form near what the former Board of Education was to the system, and I think that's a great loss to the City of New York, because no matter what, you had five people appointed by five different borough presidents representing the interests of their boroughs which are unique in and of itself. New York City does not have the same needs in Queens that it does in the Bronx or Brooklyn and Staten Island, and so you had people there advocating for their communities. So it was not a direct community a link as the local school board, but it still had a link to community, at least on a borough wide basis and they had a say and they had authority and they had power, and now that too is lost. So I think it's a substantial loss for the New York City public school system.
Q. Can you share with us your thoughts on the replacement of Community School Boards by a soon to be elected Community Education Councils.

A. Well, the first response I want to give that is, you used the word, "elected." Now, that in and of itself is a question because the former community school board, there was a public electoral process in which there were candidates, they had to present themselves, there were forums, there were watchdog groups which conducted informational sessions on them. There were a whole host of campaign activities that allowed for people to find out about the candidates and then make a selection, and even the way to the election finally saw to it for members to be elected, show a proportional representation though the voting process, which allowed you to vote for as many candidates as you wanted in a preferential manner. One being, you know, most preferred candidate, and nine being the last one that you would elect, because there were only nine members elected. So that now is also gone and the reason that was of great value was it gave an opportunity for communities that were significant in numbers in terms of student base, but not significant in numbers in terms of...
the voting population to have a chance at being elected. And that has now also been eliminated.

The Justice Department on a ruling in favor of this did say in its findings, in the letter of approval, that this could be a grounds for legal challenge, and so it's still not certain that from here to June 30th someone there's been meetings held on this, someone will not challenge this, because there's no way that going from that process to a process where the president's council in a local school district, select, because I don't believe there's an election, select candidates that are first approved and secondly, now the entity that determines whether they have ethics problems or not is a canceled employee because if the board's ethic officer, there's no longer a conflict of interest board or any other outside entity, now even that decision is made within the control of the mayor and the Department of Education, so there's no way you can truly call this an electoral process or an election. It's a selection process that has some elements of parent/community involvement -- and basically -- I'm sorry, parent involvement, no community involvement, versus a -- an electoral process which had parent and community involvement because in those elections, anyone that was a
voting member of the community could vote, and now in these, it's only parents that are part of the president's counsel. So you have a few selecting those that we'll represent an entire community because as I stated before, school issues only school issues from parents, they're very much school issues for communities as well. And so you have really something that is very disturbing for those of us that truly believe in community empowerment, community input and decision making at the local level.

There's a second problem with these CECs, and that is who is eligible to run. You're saying that parent, no Board of Ed. employees, no Department of Ed. employees, but you also eliminate the core group of parents that have knowledge, have experience and have a history within the schools and their district and those are the members of the president's council. Those parents, as far as this state, are not even eligible, so you're asking up front for only inexperienced parents that have not been involved because you eliminate the whole cadre of people that have had that day to day involvement in their child's schooling, and I would think that those would be the more effective leaders, those that have experience, those that have a proven track record, those that have dealt with a system as complex as
this is and unfortunately this process was put into law, declaring the CECs eliminate that possibility from [inaudible]. There's one positive piece, not to be all negative, and that's the establishment of a citywide council on special ed. That's long overdue and the board, although having 32 school districts which included some parents of special ed, never had a focus entity that solely was responsible for special ed and the needs of special ed children. But one could also argue then why isn't there a citywide council on bilingual education? Why just special ed? We have a lot of different populations that need services and now you've taken special education and decided [inaudible] the serving of that, but I would also say I want one for bilingual children. You have one -- you also have one on high schools. So the high school students are important to stand alone, special ed students are important to stand alone, but children with a background such as my own, a limited language [inaudible] children have no voice and their parents have no say and these are the normally immigrant parents that will not be part of the CECs because they don't have enough history or involvement in the system. You know, so that is of great concern to me and shows the -- the flawed thinking in the development of this
entire process. Even though they did something about putting high schools, and remember, the previous Board of Ed. had two high school students represented. They were part of the panel, actually on the board. Now you have one CEC with over 300 high schools. I don't know how one CEC is going to cover that. You have Bronx High School of Science, and you have Bushwick High School. Those have the same needs? They can't have the same needs. They don't have, they don't serve the same community, they're not serving the same level of intellectual children which is determined by tests, and so it's unrealistic to say that one panel is going to cover all of that. So there are a lot of flaws within this structure. We hope and pray that it will not further devastate the quality of education in the city, but I think if it continues on this pattern we'll continue to lose experienced teachers. I know we've lost a lot of experienced staff members over the years and in the last two years with this, a lot of people retired rather than to put up with being dictated to by supervisors that don't know their skills and don't respect their experience. And I hope the trend doesn't continue. I also hope that we're able to motivate those new teachers coming in.
One of the things that I, you know, I look upon as troubling is the fact that here we have this whole new system and there's no training expected, so if you would have a panel and these CECs would be able to have a voice, they would understand in District 14 there's a greater need because we have newer teachers, we have to have more staff development when that may not be a need in District 4 or District 2, so that -- where is that -- where are those issues, because these people don't have that power. There's no central board to discuss it, there's no community school board to discuss it and this mayor has a total disconnect with communities in general, so how does that reach the powers that be? It's a very, very difficult situation for those of us that have been lifelong advocates of public education and we're [inaudible].

Q. Do you see an overlap between some of these -- the work that may be taking place in some of these organizations, the CEC, in particular and that or the work of school leadership teams?

A. It seems interesting that you mentioned school leadership teams, because that's another entity that received great fanfare when it was rolled out by the state and really receives now almost no mention by the chancellor or his
department heads, deputy chancellors and operational people, and it's written in the law. Every school has to have one. Now in a practical sense, they should be representing all of the stakeholders within a school community and on paper they do. Whether they do that or not is at question. But I would say even more important than its membership which I said on paper is pretty solid, is where did they go? Where's the next step? What true solutions can they come up with? What true decisions can they make right now? For example, let's take the budget which is supposed to be something that goes to the process of the school leadership team. The budget really is negotiated and settled on at the region. You sit at the rock with the regional superintendent. Those two superintendents decide after you do a little of tinkering, and you come back to the leadership team, where do they go if they don't agree with that, if they believe there are additional needs, if they believe the money is not spent the way that they want it, what say do they have in that process? So I think that the question was is there overlap, yeah, it's overlapped because basically what you have is two groups of advocacy and you have parents as the majority of the membership on the [inaudible] team and you
have parents and majority membership on the CEC. The CEC doesn't have the other constituent group that the leadership team has, but they both have only advisory capacity in an advisory role which I would -- not to change your question, but I would rather the question be what do I see school leadership teams, CECs and school board, and I would say that they are nowhere near each other in terms of possibility for effectiveness, possibility to make -- to bring about true change and possibility to bring about true advocacy for children because I think that's being lost in this overall restructuring. The role of these entities was and had as a mandate the improvement of the quality of education for New York City public school students. And so if you remove all the powers and authorities from those entities, then how can you go about accomplishing that mandate? I believe you cannot. I believe that both the leadership team mandated by State Law and the CECs created by State Law fall short of that.

Q. Can you tell us how the transition has been from district superintendency to now what we have now, the regionalization of the system, [inaudible] regions, and these regions are being overseen not only by a regional
team, but also by local instruction of superintendents? What are you hearing and what are you experiencing?

A. I know you didn't mention the word transition, to talk about a transitional profit. I hope you didn't use it in that manner, because there was none. Basically they put stuff in boxes, shipped it out. Didn't have any meetings so they could give briefings son where things were and what districts did what and how they did it, and then formulate a strategy out of those meetings which would be a normal business practice. You find out what's in place before you go about implementing a new -- a new system. So with all talk of this being a better system, a more businesslike system, they failed to do basic business practices in the establishment of it, so that I find to have been a great problem. But in terms of how it's been implements, there had been also some -- some, I don't even know what word to use, something incredible, flaws, within the structure. First of all you went from a district which was -- had one superintendent in charge of all aspects of that district, meaning educational, business, curriculum, instructions, [inaudible], extended day activities, partnerships with CEOs, all aspects of education went to one office. Now you have the establishment of these
regions, but the first thing that they did was give the regional superintendent part of the responsibilities and part of the authority and part of the power and give the rest of it to a newly created entity called the regional operational center, known as the rock, and giving that office a director. So now all of the budgetary, staffing, external relationships and other responsibilities fall under the rock. The instructional aspect of it, the curriculum pieces of it fall under the regional superintendent. How does that impact on the local schools? It would impact on them greatly because first of all now you’re asking them to establish two relationships for those that want to be effective within the system.

In the instructional part of it you have too many layers. You start out with a local instruction of superintendents. That’s the direct supervisor of the principal. Now because the legislation mandated that there still be local districts, you also have local district superintendents who are the official rating officer of these principals. So that’s the second level of supervision that they have. Then you have a deputy regional superintendent and then you have the regional superintendent. So on any instruction curriculum issue a principal has to address all of those
levels of supervision which is a problem for most and when you're talking about improving the quality of education, if you have five different people that have to be spoken to just to go about implementing any change, you know that when you start a rumor where it starts out with one person one way, by the time you get to the third person you've already got a new story. Well, pretty much that's what happens when people interpret memorandums. This one gives it that view, that one gives it that view and by the time you get to the principal, it's had three different interpretations. You add to that the new newly created position that's under a principal but works for a regional person at the same time, and that's the parent coordinator, because you have the regional parent coordinator supervisor, so they work for the principal, but every week they go downtown to speak to regional parents coordinator. And so how does that allow that person to function effectively if the principal is telling her A and the regional coordinator is telling her B, and the principal has no say over the parent coordinator supervisor, but the parent coordinator supervisor has no say over the principal and much less have a say over the list, or much less have a say over the local superintendent or the deputy regional
superintendent, so the position that was created to address parent needs (inaudible) building and to do a lot more is out there, but many times is being pulled in different directions, and that causes an effectiveness besides the great stress put on the individual and it probably is going to result in poor performance outcome down the end and it definitely will not allow for the maximum use of the position for its intended purposes was -- which was to insure parents school effective communication and greater opportunities for servicing of parent needs. So that's a problem. I think we're a lot better off when you had, some districts had a parent's office where parents went directly to and then you handled things and the parent office that worked with superintendents consulted with the principal and decisions were made and things were resolved. You now have that person having to go to two different entities to get satisfaction and direction.

I also -- coming back to the split position of the superintendent, I find it very difficult for a regional superintendent who wants to outline a staffing pattern because he believes that that will result in the best outcome for a particular store, but has to convince the regional director of the rock of that and has to justify it
in a budgetary manner to that person's satisfaction when ultimately the ten regional superintendents citywide are the ones that are going to be held accountable for performance. So in hierarchy, they should have had, if they wanted to divide the entities because they felt that the money end should be separated, they should have had the regional superintendent, in terms of hierarchy above the rock director. But they didn't do that, they made it parallel and that makes absolutely no sense because I've been present when regional superintendents have expressed some clear level of outrage, the fact that they can't get for their schools what they believe is needed because a person at the rock, the directions won't sign off on him. So here they're being asked to carry the weight of the system because those terms are really responsible for that, without having the approximate mechanisms to allow them to do that.

And then you have this whole issue with the way that local instruction superintendents were selected. Frankly it was supposed to be done in a non political manner where the taken within the system would surface and people outside the system were brought in, and it was the same kind of old school, old boards, network, who knows who, gets what?
What's how it played out because you have people that couldn't even handle schools which documented; it's not that you want to make up stuff. People that have failing records at this school, poor performance in school, the list, and they're supposed to be the top level supervisors that are right there to reform schools and make sure that schools are within the few [inaudible] that is education in New York today. So that is a major flaw. So it, I think when it was created and when the decision was made to eliminate districts, first of all they didn't anticipate the response and the challenge which legally took place that made them [inaudible] districts. They thought they were just going to do away with districts, but when they had to compromise and keep district's I don't think it was a thought out process of how to do it effectively. It was just -- this what it felt politically, and because of that we have the mess that we have today.

Q. Where are the elected officials on this? We haven't heard much from the elected officials? What's our sense of what's happening?

A. Well, the elected officials [inaudible], the elected officials have not been visible and that's just what the politically prudent thing to do right now if you don't want
to take risks, and you have a very powerful man, so any attacks from the system are really attacks on the man, so you won't have any elected official wanting to go against the mayor until election season comes and that's in 2004, so we're a year away. Then everybody is going to start criticizing the mayor, but for now that's the person that they have to work for. That's why it's so quiet. In terms of at the state level, they can't criticize it too much because they approved it. They put it in place, so you you shut up and you shut out any -- any criticism of the system from the state Assembly and State Senate from the beginning because they put them in place. The Governor signed all appointments, so he has to be quiet on it and all those three have to pray that it works and it looks good. The mayor is only going to defend it and promote it because it's his, and the city council that would be the entity that would criticize it can't because they have to work with the mayor. Outside of that are the [inaudible] people and they're under pressure to bring in additional dollars from the Federal Government and whatever criticisms, the mayor's response is you're not bringing enough back home. So you have a clear, safe attitude which will not last forever, but that's where we're at right now.
with everybody giving the mayor time until election season comes and then it's going to be a key issue and then you'll hear all the criticism of the system and of the mayor's management of the sister, surface, because everybody knows as the legislation says, that this is a mayoral agency, so the success of it becomes the mayor's success and the failure becomes the mayor's failure. Now you know that and you can -- it became clear to everyone about three weeks ago when the department said that it was going to hold back third grade students were going to be held back so that they won't go to fourth grade and they won't have to pass the test, because if you hold back all the students in third grade, by the time those that pass and go to fourth grade, will probably pass the fourth grade, so the results will show significant improvement, but you'll be comparing apples to oranges because of the way you're changing the promotional policy of the system. So when that happens, a lot of political response surface only because people knew the political reality of that was to make the mayor look good, and his future opponent didn't want that to happen, so the mayor got pressure and he through the counselor, rolled back that initiative and modified it, so now it will be one of the things considered.
Question #1

What changes did the NYC School Governance Reform Act bring about at the community level of involvement in school governance and policy?

At the school level, parents often alienated and now welcomed into schools. The fact of the matter is that if schools really wanted an increase parental involvement, they would find ways to attract parents to school events and meetings. With respect to school governance, very few parents are involved in assisting with the development of school policy and procedures.

Few opportunities are provided for parents to be involved in school-based decision-making. Outside of their involvement in the school leadership team (which in most cases only allows for the participation of 5-6 parents), parents are very few opportunities for any real involvement.
They also fail to recognize and acknowledge that the percentage of kids reading at grade level went from 34 to 50 in the decentralization era. Credit should also be given to the role that local school boards, formerly played. Under the current system, parents and the community at large have fewer opportunities to participate in local school improvement efforts.

The community school district offices have been reduced to a local superintendent for each of the 32 school districts and a nonexistent staff. Through the Mayor’s Children First initiative, Community Education Councils (CEC’s) have been established. These councils are the local committee’s established to replace the school boards. It appears as though very few parents are aware of the role, responsibilities and function of the CEC’s.

It is important to note that a central element of the Children First reforms is increasing parent and community involvement in children’s education. Among the education department’s key initiatives were placing Parent Coordinators in schools and creating Community and Citywide Education Councils that are parent dominated.
The research evidence is overwhelming that when parents and communities are involved in their children's public schools, student achievement increases and school morale improves. Indeed, when many other reforms have failed to make a dent in the performance of public schools, parent and community engagement strategies have consistently produced results for students, teachers, parents and communities.

Another consideration is the establishment of school leadership teams in every school in New York City. In December 1996, as part of an historic change in governance, the New York State Legislature mandated that the Chancellor of the New York City Board of Education develop a plan for ensuring that every New York City public school have an effective school leadership team in place by October 1, 1999.

The Chancellor envisioned a school system in which every school provides a high-quality education to every child under its care. At its core, such a system is to be based on constant attention to improving student performance.

This can only happen when the efforts of all members of the school community -- parents, teachers, administrators, and others at all levels of the organization -- focus their efforts relentlessly and effectively on enabling all students
to meet high standards. Every member of the school community must truly believe that all children can meet high expectations and constantly communicate and reinforce that belief to children and one another.

Question #2
How did changes in the NYC School Governance Reform Act affect the selection process for School District Superintendents?

Within each Region, the Regional Superintendent supervises approximately 10 to 12 Local Instructional Superintendents ("LISes"), each of whom has supervisory responsibility for a network of about 10 to 12 schools and principals. The LISes will provide schools in their networks with instructional leadership and will support principals and their teachers in implementing the new instructional approach and improving the quality of teaching and learning in their schools.

In addition, 32 LISes are designated as Community School District Superintendents while continuing to serve as LISes. These 32 LISes each oversee a community school district office and fulfill the reorganization’s commitment to linking the new management structure with the Community School Boards and the parent-focused Community District Education Councils that are replacing them.
Local Instructional Superintendents (LISes) now function as superintendents previously did. They are required to handle a myriad of responsibilities, most of them administrative in nature. It is easy see that they can not be involved in school improvement efforts if they are constantly putting out fires in their network schools. There is tremendous talent that the LISes possess; unfortunately, they have very little time to do what they were hired to do. I would even say that improvement of instruction is probably one of the areas they dedicate the least amount of time to.

Young people in the neighborhood also have little hope. Some have no legal source of income and, as a result, get involved in theft, prostitution, violence, and drug pushing. Since their parents have little dignity, family ties are weak, and these young people often turn to gangs for social support. And since sport and recreational facilities are rarely available, they lead boring lives and are attracted to illegal activities. Also, their school is miserably funded, most of their academic records are mediocre, and few care about finishing high school - never mind going on to college. Most youths in the neighborhood also believe, correctly, that the cost of a college
education is beyond their means and that scholarships for needy students are very rare. The everyday activities of their lives provide no vision of a better life for these young people, and they find it difficult to think of paths by which they might “make it” in the mainstream of American society. So they become angry, embittered, alienated — and too often they end up in prison or the morgue.

Question #3

How did the NYC School Governance Reform law strengthen the Chancellor’s authority?

And so this mayor came in and the first thing he did was to seek mayoral control in Albany. And I want to say that is not a small accomplishment and it reflects enormous, enormous courage. Let’s be candid with each other. There is no city in the United States, no major urban area, that you can look to and say, there’s the model. They have succeeded in public education.” And nobody thinks that you can do this in a couple, three, or even four years. You need to think about transformation, even in businesses, over much, much longer time frames. You are trying to change a system like ours with 135,000 professionals and employees and with 1.1 million kids, so you have to have a very different time horizon. This mayor
knows that, but this mayor understood that if we did not get started, it would not happen. And I believe that at its core what Michael Bloomberg has done is step up, assert the importance of this issue, take on leadership, and ask the city to hold him accountable. In the vocabulary of my new environment, this is some of the best modeling I have seen. I think it is absolutely critical to understand the significance of what he has done. And I believe that, based on that understanding, he has a vision for a transformation of our school system that is a continuing work in progress. All of us should be impatient about it while simultaneously understanding that we didn’t get into this situation overnight and we will not get out of it overnight.

Citation - Chancellor Joel I. Klein Remarks at NYU’s Education Policy Breakfast Series December 10, 2004

Question #3a

How did the NYC School Governance Reform Act make school officials accountable for student achievement and school performance?

Well, as you may already know, the Mayor announced that he would mandate a standardized curriculum as part of his Children First initiative. The goal of Children First is to improve achievement across all schools and to address persistently low
performing schools by moving innovation and effective school change throughout the system. The Chancellor's team stated that they will examine best practices in instruction, management and budget analysis, supporting the core purpose of instruction. Concrete action items will address the challenge of spreading the effective practices of successful schools. Leveraging internal expertise, Children First was to consult with teachers, principals and superintendents to identify best practices that will inform system wide change.

School officials continue to work under tremendous pressure to improve student test scores and performance. Schools that consistently fail to meet academic performance targets, such as city and state standardized tests results have had principals and assistant principals removed for incompetence. The new governance legislation provides the Chancellor and his superintendent's unprecedented authority and latitude to remove school staff.

Question #4
What is the respondents' personal experience with the governance changes in the NYC decentralization law?

So why did the governance change occur, and why did too many of us sit back and essentially allow this to happen,
without fervent or organized protest? Honestly, many of us were sick and tired of petty squabbling between the Mayor, the Chancellor and the Board of Education, with each of them blaming the others when things didn’t improve. At least, we figured, if one person was responsible for the schools, he couldn’t try to displace responsibility onto someone else.

Unfortunately, this hasn’t worked. Instead, the Mayor and the Chancellor continue to shift blame for every problem that occurs, onto incompetent administrators, lazy teachers, uninvolved parents, and the “culture of complacency” that we are all supposedly instilled with. Indeed, one of Joel Klein’s favorite mantras is that anyone who criticizes the changes he’s made is a defender of the status quo, despite the fact that many of us, parents, educators and advocates alike, have been fighting for real reforms and fundamental improvements to be made in our schools long before he moved to New York City.

The other reason many favored the change in governance was that since the Mayor controlled the budget for schools anyway, he already had much of the power. Perhaps he would more adequately fund the system if he knew he was going to be judged on the results.

Certainly, the Board of Education was flawed, as were many of the community school boards. Their decision-making
was too often political and unresponsive to parental concerns. But at least their existence and procedures allowed for the possibility of public engagement. Now, there is a real danger that the system will become even more arbitrary, secret and political than before.

Well, two years later, I think we can answer that question with some certainty.

The reorganization of our entire public education system was embarked upon with such rapidity, secrecy, and a lack of public input that it was breathtaking. Ten working groups were formed to address all aspects of the school system, from curriculum to staffing and organizational structure, whose members whose identities were kept secret until freedom of information suits were filed. These committees operated without formal charge, and although DOE officials repeatedly said there were parents and classroom teachers on them, they refused to say who they were. Sure enough, when the FOIL requests were finally answered, there were none.

The committees produced no reports, held no hearings, and the when the “Children’s First” changes were announced, there was nothing formally written that could provide rationales or explanations for any of them.
With respect to securing equity in funding, our mayor and chancellor have done a terrible job. It was not until recently, that the Mayor was out front on this issue. To his credit, although I believe his actions were quite delayed, he challenged the Governor and state legislature on the issue of adequate funding for city schools, consistent with the Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit. If I were to call myself a cynic, I might question why this bold and courageous effort had to wait until the mayor was reelected. It also took place when the “Education Mayor’s” student achievement proclamations were not much to boast about.

This is certainly an interesting question. When I was hired over 11 years ago, I was assigned to a middle school as a Spanish teacher. I was interviewed at the local school by the school principal, sent to the local district office to be processed and that was sent to the central Board of Education, where I submitted application forms, college transcripts and a license evaluation form. What’s also very interesting is that I was referred by a school board member, who thought that I might work well with children.
I enjoyed attending school board meetings, where my children were recognized for their academic achievement. We no longer have monthly school board meetings; I am told that there are community education councils that are held monthly. I would not know where to go, the meetings are not well-publicized and we don't know who the representatives are. This is quite different than what we had before.

Secondly, our principal is part of a network, made up of about 10 principals and a local instructional superintendent. The LIS has visited our school on a few occasions and seems to be helpful. Every once in a while the LIS and other regional staff visit our school for walk-through monitoring sessions. Our principal seems to be under tremendous pressure, whenever there is a visit. I have always wondered why we receive very little support in our instructional program.

Most teachers seem to be very concerned about the adversarial relationship we have with the Chancellor and the central board. Most of my colleagues are not pleased with the new teacher’s contract, its provision for extended day schedules and/or the changes in administrative responsibilities under the Circular Six provision.

Teachers find themselves in the middle of the revolution some call it school reform, some call it school restructuring...
and others say that we simply changed the governance structure. I believe that school system is under attack. Decisions are being made every day that affect the lives of thousands of teachers, and over one million schoolchildren. Our Mayor and School’s Chancellor have been given unprecedented power and authority. This top-down governance approach is leading many of us to think that there are no checks and balances on the power of the system’s leadership.

We although once thought I expected to carry out new programs and initiatives. Yet, we are rarely consulted, and changes are being imposed without listening to and collaborating with teachers and school administrators.

The Chancellor has been hiring an army of consultants, which by the way, are highly paid. In most cases, they earn more than teachers, assistant principals, and principals. The Chancellor has indicated that he has to pay top dollar in order to recruit the best people. Why does he use same approach, if he was to recruit the very best people to teaching and retain the best people as principals.

I can speak with a great deal of authority about the changes in the New York City public school system. As a 15 year veteran of the system, I have served as a teacher, education
evaluator, assistant principal, and principal. After being removed from my position as principal, I now serve as a regional administrator. I attributed great deal of my success (until most recently) to the community school District model. I had the privilege of serving for almost my entire career in the same local school district, which is now regionalized.

I was provided with career opportunities through a network of friends and supporters who also worked in the same local school district. Although school boards have come under attack and history has been rewritten as it relates to the successes experience under the old system, I can say first-hand that they were great benefits to what we had in the past. I do not say this in a romanticized manner, but instead I'm simply pointing out that our new structure is disconnected from the day-to-day dealings in our schools. Probationary administrators are not provided with the support, training and assistance necessary to navigate a very complex system. As a matter of fact, I believe that there is a double standard- one for principals who, the leadership Academy and another for principals who will be hired prior to the restructuring of our educational system.

It remains to be seen whether, the new standardized curriculum will support schools in the way that has been
promised. Although I agree with the standardization of curriculum - there is that in a uniform curriculum, but they must be continuity, coherence, and clarity about what children in different grades are expected to learn. I am quite uncomfortable with the pressure to conform to one pedagogy. A uniform curriculum should spell out what is to be taught and not punish teachers (and principals) for failing to follow prescribed approach. Instead of demanding a lockstep adherence to one approach, it is important to give teachers the flexibility and exposure to many other approaches. How in the world do Mayor Bloomberg and Chancellor Klein-a business executive and the lawyer-have the nerve to tell 80,000 teachers, that there is only long way to teach.

Question #5
What was the NYC School Governance Reform Act seeking to accomplish? Is it happening, what not? Has it been successful?

The general focus of this legislation that was to provide an elected official, who has to answer to voters, in this case the Mayor, with the means necessary the provision of the New York City in governance reform take responsibility for our schools. To that end, the Legislature has largely succeeded. The provisions of this New York City school reform legislation,
which was passed by both statehouses and signed by Governor Pataki, indicated that the New York City public school system would be administered by a Chancellor who would be appointed by the Mayor.

The Board of Education was replaced by a 13 member advisory panel for educational policy consisting of the Chancellor, seven members appointed by the Mayor, one additional member appointed by each borough president. Panel members will not be assigned offices, staff or vehicles.

The school construction authority is comprised of one appointee by the Chancellor and two by the Mayor.

Question #6

Is the school system generally better off under mayoral control?

Improvement in classroom instruction is what it is all about in the end. Mayor Bloomberg and Chancellor Klein have laid out ground work worked on changing classroom instruction. They have made some progress, if you look at numbers like I do. More progress was made than in some of the other cities. But if you ask "Are you better off now than you were before?" my answer is "Yes." Schools in New York are in better repair, teachers are hired earlier, budgets are more balanced, there are some after-school

487
programs that are running better, there's more consistency to the curriculum program.

A great deal of patience is asked for, given the reality that a school system the size of New York's cannot be turned around in four years. Changes have been noteworthy, though not dramatic.

Opponents of mayoral control indicate that the current New York City school system fails to guarantee basic human rights standards. Children are denied the skills and knowledge they need as a result of inadequate resources in the classroom, overcrowded and crumbling schools, the pressure and narrow focus of testing, inadequate counseling, and the criminalization of schools. Disparities in resources and outcomes based on race and class violate the human rights principle of non-discrimination.

Of additional concern is the focus on test prep instruction. Although there is no denying that this concentration on curriculum is at least partly responsible for recent gains our students have made on standardized tests, there is also concern that a well-rounded approach to education is being sacrificed as more and more of the school day is devoted to test prep exercises. Indeed with the emphasis on student 488
achievement on reading and math tests, it often seems that other areas are being sacrificed.

The system’s top-down bureaucracy prevents flexibility in reform efforts, and keeps the power to change the system away from parents, students, educators and communities. These problems run too deep for any one change in policy or shift in governance to solve. A whole system change in education is needed.

Research Question #7

What is your assessment of the school systems’ graduation rate?

The decline in and of itself I wouldn’t call a substantial or educationally meaningful decline. “But in the context of the trends and data over the past few years, it raises questions as to whether school completion really is improving in New York City.

Broken down by race, the graduation rates highlight a stark gap between black and Latino students and white students. About 80% of white students statewide graduated in four years, roughly twice the percentage of black and Latino students. (Appendix). For the most part their effect on graduation rates will not be
Research Question #8
What is your opinion of the New York City Department of Education’s Principals Academy training program?

In January 2003, the NYC Leadership Academy was created as a separate non-profit organization to recruit, train, and support a new generation of outstanding principals. According to the New York City Department of Education, The Academy is the centerpiece of the NYC Department of Education’s transformational strategy. The approach the Academy has taken to leadership development is unprecedented in the public sector. The Academy was modeled after successful private sector initiatives such as General Electric’s John F. Welch Leadership Center and the Ameritech Institute. The Academy is actively working on building a team of 1,400 great principals who are true instructional leaders, who can inspire and lead teachers, students and parents in their school community.

At a NYU Education Policy Breakfast Chancellor Klein indicated:

And yet we were totally underinvested in leadership, so one of the things that we did was go out and raise in
the private sector close to $75 million. Let’s not kid ourselves, people do not make that investment unless they believe what we believe, that leadership is transforming. And we have created the Leadership Academy, and we are now graduating people after a 15-month program that includes an intensive residency working with, following around, and studying with one of the great principals in our system. Last year we graduated 75 out of approximately 90, which seems right to me in terms of numbers. Those people are now working in our schools.

Can I prove after three months that this is a success? Of course not. That will require a period of years, but I am absolutely convinced that if we don’t get the leadership piece right, we won’t transform education. People ask me if there were one thing that I wish I could do better than anybody else in the world, what would it be? Up until quite recently it was to hit a jump shot from 25 feet. Today if there is one thing I could do better than anybody in the world, I would be the best principal-picker. That’s what I would do, because if I can get a great leader at every school, then I think we are well on the road to what we need to do.
The NYC Leadership Academy was launched in July 2003, and uses problem-based, experiential learning and providing candidates with strong leadership training. In addition to the Aspiring Principals Program, the NYC Leadership Academy provides leadership development programs for new and existing principals. The Principal Leadership Development Program, which began in October 2003, focuses on developing incumbent principals to lead their schools effectively and provides them with leadership development during the summer and throughout the academic year. Over the past year, the NYC Leadership Academy provided all of the principals in the City’s public school system with professional development programs.

I can tell you firsthand, as an experienced school administrator, I have worked with a New York City leadership Academy graduate, who was given a very difficult assignment. It always seems that the least experienced school administrators are given the most difficult assignments. In the case that I’m describing, the newly assigned principal was given the unfortunate task of taking over school that had four principals in eight years. Staff turnover was high and an audit of the school finances demonstrated a number of irregularities uncovered from some previous administrations.
As a matter of fact, over $300,000 was misspent, and had to be repaid using current year funds. It is difficult enough to open up the school year with a limited budget—to find that you are working with an unforeseen deficit only complicates all of the budgetary plans that a principal must prepare. This new assignment also requires leadership Academy graduates to help their school get past a terrible public relations incident that was reported in a number of city newspapers.

I believe that if you ask most Academy graduates that did not have intermediate supervisory experience (as an assistant principal), you’ll find that the training that one receives from this intermediate position helps tremendously to make the transition into the role of principal and school leader. With as much funding as this program is received, Academy graduates should receive the very best training that the school system has to offer. I don’t see this as the case. I am hopeful that our new school leaders, are provided with the necessary support, and this includes support from the regions in which they are located, in order to accomplish and succeed at what is one of the most difficult jobs one can have.
Q. This next interview is with an informant who has vast experience in the New York City school system. He's a community leader and served -- formerly served as an elected school board member. We're going to start with asking our informant if he could give us some background, personal background, educational background.

A. Okay. I came to this country at the age of nine. I was already ahead one grade. I already had completed the fourth grade in Puerto Rico. I was in an advanced you know, advanced education class over there. When I came here the first thing they did was lower me back to the fourth grade because of my age. That has always been something that in the back of my mind has always -- my welcoming to this country, getting left back after performing one of the top, you know in the class in Puerto Rico. And when I came here I was put automatically in a bilingual program, nor any -- knowing a little bit about [inaudible]. Puerto Rico and this was, you know, part of the courses that we take. I had the Spanish accent, but I basically
knew how to read, I knew what was being said to me, so I was put also in a higher class called 410 and at that time it's very, I was different from the kids that used to make fun of everybody that was in the higher classes, you know, you were — you know, you were isolated and intimidated, so it wasn't a good welcoming to the education system.

The following years, the next year after that I went to five-seven, and then in the sixth grade I went to six-five at Junior High School 50, and I decided to meet with the principal and I wanted to know what curriculum he had going that I could not handle. We made a deal and in the seventh grade I was placed in seven-one, and my placement in seven-one, so I had to debate again with the principal trying to get into the 7SP class. I remember the eighth grade and starting to go to high school. I went to John Jay High School. I maintained like a 95 average in high school, graduated with a regents diploma, what now is considered a super regents diploma and I was also a parent at the age of 16 in high school and I created a few clubs in the school and I went -- I went -- I was accepted to Penn State University, scholarship, made captain of the football team. Traveled to Penn State and due to my responsibility, could not stay there and I remember coming back married, you know, you
know, discouraged, knowing that I had to help out, you know. Then I decided to go to Long Island University, which I did. In the process of going to Long Island University I also had to work, so I was doing one semester of work, one semester, you know, and in the process, you know, coming from a background of my mother is a teacher, my -- both my sisters are teachers, the family always had, you know, heavily influence to get into the teaching business. Then after my -- after my son was going in school, shortly after that, he went to school and he was attending PS 23, I found that it was a lot of problems with the school and I got involved with the parents. In the process of getting involved as a parent, my children at that time, my little girl, my daughter Jennifer was doing very well and I took them to -- I decided to take a chance and go to Florida. So I went to Florida with my children, and I found going to Florida, my children were in the, you know, the 4H honor classes. When I got to Florida my children were -- shortly after getting there I was told that my children were going to get left back. So I had to sit down and look at the curriculum, and it was a very tough year because I had to work with both of them just to catch up with the other children. And I realized the New York City education system was not, you know, needed attention. I worked for Disney for a while as a private, as a consultant and
independent limo driver. Then I came back and at the time that I came back my children was doing very well. By that time they was reading a lot and I got involved with the school system and I started to go to meetings and I got more involved, and it wasn't until, it wasn't until there was this big snow storm, and there was a big snow storm and I remember the principal at PS 19, I would go and in this time they send everybody home, all the children, and I went and I approached the principal and I asked him why -- why, you know, my children worked, why are they sent home, there's no home to go to and he replied to me that all the children there were Welfare mothers, none of them worked and he felt all the mothers were home doing nothing. That really was the turning point in me getting more involved. That was like a - - I really had been interest, but not fire. Thanks to Mr. Gold, he really got me involved. I remember letting the superintendent know that I was running for school board and that I would win and that Mr. Gold would eventually be forced to retire. And he was my inspiration at that time. Because he was very, you know in those times we used to call it [inaudible]. I used to call it racially motivated. And he got me involved. And I've been in many battles, some of them stems from looking at the local high school that was graduating about 16 to 12 percent of the students, major problems with discipline and just as the school
[inaudible], part of the structuring process, which is now doing very well and still [inaudible] work in progress. I got involved with -- I got involved with junior high schools who was [inaudible] [inaudible] 393 and by the time [inaudible] down to 41 at one point. I was trying to push education there and one of the things that we did was, [inaudible] always been involved [inaudible] pushing kids to other schools. At the same time we were able to meet some friends that went back to St. Francis College and pushed for scholarships for kids in the community to go to school, hopefully they will come back and serve, so we were able to go over to the college and say, you know, it's not a lot of scholarships around here and we have some kids that are doing well, and we feel that they should have an opportunity. So I -- the years that I've been involved in this [inaudible] pushing kids to go to college. So some of the kids that graduated from -- you know, some of the kids that graduated from high school, we've been asking their coaches to push their education [inaudible] whatever college they go to and to always let them know that they could [inaudible] college. So I know I'm missing a lot of stuff, but when you get involved in community it's really a lot of stuff you get involved with, somebody might become [inaudible].
Q. Let's talk a little bit about your involvement and your experience with school boards. How long have you served and what were some of the accomplishments that you're most proud of, what are the biggest frustrations, and can you talk to us about the inner workings of school boards?

We'd like to now discuss in a little more detail your involvement with school boards, your successes, your challenges, and maybe you can talk to us about the inner workings of school boards.

A. The important thing about school boards is that they oversee policy and procedures, also the distribution of funds that [inaudible]. Being that school boards get elected [inaudible], it gives you an opportunity to work with it to [inaudible] the politics in the community and when you -- any time someone, especially in the area that I was a school board member, other districts only require like 200 votes and District 14 you need 1300 to 1400 votes just to get in the door, which gave you, which gave a sense that you had the ability to organize. This gave the politicians the idea that you command respect at that level, so we were able to use the councilmen and speak to the councilmen and encourage him to collaborate and bring in different computer labs to schools that would of never have them
and [inaudible] millions of dollars from city council money, we were able to bring attention, you know, we were able to do things that normally wouldn’t be done, but at a district level, you know, when you sit on a board that is, you know, 97 percent of the children are Latino, but only three members of the board are Latino and you have, and you have with you a group, I don’t know how to say it, a religious group has three members, it’s really hard, you need every one of those members to work together to reach goals. So what I say, what I gained was from being on the school board was the ability to do the most with the least, in terms of influence and in terms of advocating and we were able to do lots of things. We would eventually get one of the Latino members to become president of the board and not only that, saw the idea that it’s not about politics, it’s about the children, saw the idea that things could be done and make the other members of that board feel comfortable enough to let us go ahead and [inaudible] the leadership of education in the district, I think that’s really one of the accomplishments that is really incredible in my own thinking. I think the fact that we were able to bring in programs that right now as really one that is paying off. Some children are graduating from school, some children were invited -- were introduced to programs of the arts, and they [inaudible] now considering colleges in the arts
that they wouldn't have considered otherwise. But what's frustrating, that the Board of Ed changes the face but does not change what it really does. The same players are still pulling the same strings and always restructuring, revamping or any other word, we still do them with the same -- same group, and you know, some -- that's the reality of it. I think that -- I think that all the changes that have been made will regress in many things. The struggles of the parents and [inaudible] have come back. I think many -- I think many of the struggles in education have come back in the sense that, you know, parents do not have a place that they can go to and do a complaint. Parents can't go back [inaudible]. The new position of the parent coordinator sounds grate, but it is the parent-coordination position that is -- pertains to the control of the principal and although we have some great principals, in some cases it takes away that parent advocacy away from the game, because the parent coordinator cannot advocate for the parent. It's a fact that all parent coordinators, which advocated for the parents, are no longer working and that's real quick to learn about this system.

I think my biggest -- there's been so many things that -- my biggest success is that I could sit down with someone who was a student at a major junior high school and are now, that same
person is a teacher. I think that's a big accomplishment. [inaudible].

Q. Can you talk to us about the challenges that -- that come into play in establishing a campaign for elected offices, school board member and the -- and the -- and the experiences that you had, both good and bad with that.

A. Like I said earlier, I had the motivation to get involved. I had a principal I really felt was doing damage to the community and I believe they [inaudible], so I already had been involved with the -- I already had been involved with the PTA [inaudible] and I already had pretty much saw the ideas of the PTA and the members that this could be done. I was involved with the Boy Scouts, and I had at that time around 40 kids in the troop and I was very close to the parents, so I had that going. I also had a campaign manager, someone that basically was passionate about getting involved in education, but did not want to, you know, couldn't get involved because of his law practice or whatever. So I had -- everything came into place and at first I was very hesitant about doing it because, you know you don't run by yourself. You involve your family, you involve everyone that you now, and -- but once I went forward, I already knew part of --
you know, I had to get at least [inaudible] knowledge of how our politics, [inaudible] politics, so I knew how things were running. I knew exactly the numbers running in each district. I knew the numbers were not going to be easy, but I knew, I had an idea of where they were going to come from and what it would take to get it done. And running the campaign was more like motivating people to continue forward and selling your ideas, that things could be done. When I first did that, I did very well. I picked up my three -- three people had volunteered in the campaign and I didn't [inaudible], because somehow I touched some of the issues that were close to them. It was sort of running a campaign where you want to make a lot of noise to the right people and you want to stay quiet to the wrong people, so that's tricky because I didn't want to -- I wanted to pick up supporters, not people against me. So everything that I did was very cautious at the time of that campaigning. And a lot of people who came out, you know, really came out because of the work previously that was done. It wasn't -- it wasn't, you know, and I remember -- I remember -- I remember the time a lot of people in the train station telling me, oh, I saw your son. Your son told me to vote for you and, you know, then the guy tells me in Spanish, "Oh, I didn't know you had a Chinese kid," and I just laughed, because I knew that my entire boy scouts,
different backgrounds, were telling everybody vote for my father. And, you know, that was like really, you know, that was really, when you have 40 kids in a community going around telling people to vote for your father, and you multiply that quite a few times, you know, you got an effective campaign going on. So it was -- my first campaign was [inaudible] in many ways. I mean, they -- they did things that really amazed me. In PS19 they had an escort to the bathroom. They were stopped, the adults couldn’t escort somebody to the bathroom because that was politicking, and this is not something that I set up. Every adult that went to the bathroom in PS19 had a little 5, 6 -- an 11 year old walking and telling them that their father was running for school board and to vote for them, which unheard of, like they will be done, but at that time you know, most everything contributed and that was one of the factors. I know their personal campaigns helped out at the end very well. But it was -- it was -- the assignment of the you know, I always knew that getting on the school board was not about the title, it was just about the chance to fight, so I was just looking forward -- it’s like the guy just trying to play baseball. I just want a bat, and that was my mentality. I just went to bat. I just wanted to get an opportunity, and I knew that it would take me a while before anything got done, but at the beginning
it was just to try to get into the system with really the goal and that was it.

Q. Can you talk to us about the process of being elected, working with the board of elections, what was better known as the New York City Board of Elections to go through the election process from petitions to election day?  

A. Well, the first time I ran, I think I -- I'm not sure, I collected like 872, so I wasn't sure if it was 800 or 700. But getting those petitions was -- was -- was really labor some because to get it, to get the -- I think we collected over a thousand, but then they got cleaned out by my former campaign manager, Roberto and they was -- they was going like twelve hours a day. I would say it was like on Saturday we would meet at 8 o'clock in the morning, it was daylight to daylight most of the time of May, about eleven hours of daylight, so that was about the average of the campaign, and that was just getting the petitions and just going building to building that was in the district. It wasn't -- it was very time consuming. Then preparing the packages was not -- preparing that package is a little bit -- a little bit [inaudible] challenged, because most of them are challenged and they lower you to 250 you obviously not running. So you got to collect way beyond what you need. But
that gave me -- that gave me a lot of experience. I've done it in the past. I already knew where I was going with that. I knew exactly what the numbers were. Getting on the -- on the ballet was, you know, it was just the beginning, like everything you do goes by stages. One stage is the idea -- the idea to run, the idea that you need to collect signatures ends when you're already on the ballot and then from the ballot you go to the next stage which is [inaudible] support. I was very lucky. What happened, my parents, my parents were involved very much in the church, they're both leaders and they sort of came in as the second and third campaign manager, and my mother began to get began to visit church members to their house and strategize make them commit to when they're going to come out and vote and that was a big part of my -- my father was in charge of the church adult program, so he also began to do that, so all of a sudden I had parents from the boy scouts, I had my mother working the church, my father also. Then I had some PTA members and then some PTA members began to invite other members. And all of a sudden I had a group that, you know, three months before I didn't know who they were, but they're there giving me six, seven hours a day, and that was really amazing, and I always took the time to thank them every morning. If they needed to get coffee, I refused to have somebody get it, I would go get the
coffee for them and I always thanked them every day, and that was -- that was, you know, part of running the campaign. And then the [inaudible] proportion of voting was that you have to create a slate, and that's something else, because there you're negotiating duly negotiating your possible outcome. So you have to be very careful how you do that.

At the time that I was running, there was a lady named Maria [inaudible]. I don't remember her name, but there was two — two people that we decided, we decided to target Afro-American vote and we decided to target the other component of the Latino vote, across in Williamsburg. So we would, you know, somehow we felt that out of this three people we could come out with two elected officials. At the time I knew that engaging in this team, I might be the elected official out because the chance -- the numbers were very hard to project three winners. We knew two winners would come out at the best, not that it was guaranteed. So we knew that one of us was going to fall and that falling process was going to elevate the other member to win, and we knew that strategically where the previous election, where the votes came out of, that made us plan even more how that group was going to do and we, you know, and the group that I ran, we -- all three of us could of win except that the person that came
Q. So now you're an elected official. You're a school board member. The outcome of the votes that's been shared with the community and you attend your first school board meeting. What was that experience like?

A. Well before I attended my first school board meeting I remember the asbestos crisis, not a school board member yet, and I come -- you know, I wanted to greet some of the parents from the school that's [inaudible] the most. On the first day of school there's an asbestos issue. They're closing down schools and there is a classroom, obviously, with the roof exposed, and my first thing as a school board member was, you put the kids in the -- they put the kids in the room and things are falling on them, not necessarily asbestos. I think it was just a bad job, whoever fixed the roof, but at that time, panic and everything.
else. So panic [inaudible], I went in there and I closed [inaudible], and I said you close this room immediately. And this is somebody I haven't even met yet officially. That was my introduction to the superintendent, and the superintendent, you know, was so [inaudible], he must have said, oh, this guy wants to play hardball, but at the time there was, you know, so [inaudible], and then I remember going to the school board meeting and the first question, I remember telling the lady, I'm new, I'm learning. As soon as I learn about this question and how to answer it better I will come back to you, but I'm just learning. And the lady said, Wow, they were going to try to give me an answer. I said no, I'm going to learn this process and I will give you an answer satisfactory to you as soon as I know what the hell I'm talking about. And I remember -- I remember the first day, you know a protester going to the just protesting on something. I remember sitting with this person and it had nothing to do with education. This person just wanted a job. This person worked for the Board of Ed and was fired so now everything coming up to -- not every issue coming up to this meeting had to do anything to do with children, and then the issues with the union and the children. I learned pretty quickly that not everything is about education in the school boards.
Q. Can you describe to us the kind of relationship you had with the superintendents that served your district and can you also talk to us about the strategies that you've used to be a successful school board member.

A. Well, as I said earlier, the initial relationship with the superintendent was not all that great. But as I began, you know, a smart man knew that I wasn't going anywhere. He knew that I was not going to back out of anything, so he attempted to create collaboration, independent collaboration and that didn't work because I was more concerned about other issues, you know, there were a lot of good issues being brought up by different members. Upon arrival, what the superintendent had going was the dividing time period. He had modes, parties divided, even, you know, the only parties that were not divided was the Hasidim, but he had basically the Latino and Greenpoint area divided. And one of the things that started to happen was, that it was becoming more visible and as -- as I came in with a -- with a second Latino on my slate, so that automatically that was a collaboration and convincing that person to begin at least respectfully working with a third Latino was really something that changed the way politics, you know, it broke -- it broke, eventually it broke me away from the group that I originally started with and that
created a lot of, you know, because we felt that two people couldn't do much, but three people could do a lot more, and if three people were more boisterous than the whole group and they were serving an [inaudible] of injustice, we will begin to get it -- to get things done and for all these years I think that I broke up relationships with the Greenpoint, at points with the Hasidim, because some of their needs were not distant, so you had, you know, you learned. You learned in those boards, that what are the issues and how important, you know, you cannot just get everything, you have to negotiate and you have to be aware. You have to be you have to have a lot of knowledge to how things operate in schools and find out where are, you know, and one of the things that we did was, when I came into the school board, the minority representation in the district was really lower. It was like two principals that were [inaudible] and like two assistant principals in total. And having 97 percent of the children or not 97, no, let's just change that to 96, 99 percentage, they were minorities. So turning that around to -- to -- for those students to have principals of color and qualified, you know, that was a big thing. By the time I got out of the school board, you know, like we were [inaudible], we went from a low 2 percent to about fifty percent representation. That's the purpose of the -- you know, I thought that was very
important for that board to create that. When a student goes to school and he -- and -- and -- when a student is outside of the school and their assistant principal is shopping Key Food and some of their teachers is walking by, that's something that's priceless in my opinion, community organizing. So we were able to take that around. But that but -- but all that took a lot of work. All that took a lot of collaboration to different school board members, like, you know, some of the strategies that I basically use is simply talk to them, find out what you here for. What do you think about this? Have an open conversation and then when something came that was of interest to them, say look, guys, I think that we could do this and, but at the same time I'm trying to do A, B and C here, could you help out. So it was just -- it was just learning, just this open communication with other board members is really translated to collaboration and to get into strategy was to be honest and to straightforward ask them what they wanted. Some of them at the time were interested only in the personnel department of the -- the personnel department I think [inaudible] because at that time school board members could recommend people and some of them were not interested in that. Some of them were interested in what it could do for your religious friends and in terms of now -- you know, in terms of
appointing contracts to -- to -- to different, you know, to different people. So there was a lot of many interests involved so that gave a lot of leeway to people that were interested in education components. So that was easy.

Q. As you know there were two major government reform laws and that's one in 1996 and then a second one in the year 2002. Can you talk to us about your knowledge of those two laws and the changes that have taken place since then?

A. From a -- from a decentralized system to now, what is a more centralized system with a mayor who is in charge of and controls the education of the students of New York City. The key to decentralization was that you could [inaudible] from the demographics of the students in the neighborhood. And you could create programs and attend each district. Many of the districts that were decentralized were working better than now, than now the new system. Some other districts were like number one in reading, number one in math, because you only had -- you had the ability to implement monies to target different needs, and that was the positive thing of decentralization. Not everything was perfect. You had some school board members in the Bronx, in particular, it might be all over, but they were selling jobs and you had corruptions, and they took that, you know, they took the
the percent sample and applied it to the 99 percent as a marketing tool to go against anything else. And, you know, when you have a system that needs to be cut and everything that you touch rings a bell, then you need to create a system that doesn’t ring a bell. You need to start removing some key things. One of the [inaudible] is the [inaudible] the parents. Parents are a very strong force. And parents are the ones that have the school boards years, so now you get rid of the parents, so now you could do your million dollar budget cuts, because the parent is no longer, you know, in the advocacy position and now you could do now this school board system now, the same benefactors is cut there, the same ones with $190,000 jobs, stay there, but they have a more sense of security cause they don’t have to answer to any community. They don’t have to answer to anybody. So the new system is -- is really -- it’s really [inaudible] because the districts that were ahead in the old system are now falling behind because you can’t blanket everybody [inaudible]. There is no one, you know, you cannot create an education system for everybody. You need to look at each neighborhood, their needs, look for another, different ethical backgrounds, how, you know, what countries they come from. A child -- for example, a child coming from Santa Dominga, it all depends what part of the country he comes from. He could come from a place in Santa
Do you go where he's ahead in math of everybody here, and he could come from a place in Santa Domingo where he hasn't begin his math education and, therefore, he needs more attention and the same kid from that country might -- might he way beyond, might have -- you know, might already know the basis of algebra in the fourth grade and the other, and you know, so you cannot -- you cannot say only this system is going to work for everybody because, you know, even with China, a lot of the kids that come from China, some of them are, you know, they -- they don't know. They haven't had math experiences yet. You know, so -- you know, I find that -- that right now the system is -- is not working as well as it should. I find that in some things it is better, but as a whole it's just much worse.

Q. What are your thoughts on the Community Education Council, the CECs that are being established in each of the 32 school districts?

A. I think that's just a mandate from the Justice Department to put something in place or to in turn that Bush created that [inaudible]. Obviously, it's an advisory committee and basically now -- you know, the only way I have seen an advisory committee come to life is when they went back to 1960's and do protests. People are willing to get arrested in terms of making a change.
They -- this is just, you know, so they could say that they, you know, they -- they have parent input, which parent input is not involved in this. The positions are more like -- it's more to -- to keep the other elected officials happy to say oh, they took away the power of the parents and look what they gained here. So I have no -- I don't really think it's going to work. I think that it's just going to be a genesis stage to going back, regressing as parents, you know, regressing the power of the parents and involving the parents. Most people, you know, once they sit on these boards and they find out that they don't have a say is to go to the media and they're not going to be, you know, they've already been banned from doing all this. They basically -- they already -- it's like filling a job description. They've already been told what they can do and they can't do and so the advocacy component is gone and a lot of them are, you know, a lot of them are not going to be familiar with the system, and I think it's a great advantage to -- it's a great advantage [inaudible] and power because I think that we're now, you know, we have people that are not minority people all taking over the Board of Ed. The chancellor is not a minority. The head of the UFT is not minority, and other players that are -- that have generated income don't have a responsibility to the community and the Mayor is -- now what the mayor knows, he makes
millions of dollars. He don’t understand a parent trying to come up with $5 just to make a lunch ticket, so it’s not -- I think it’s really a formula that is created just to stat -- to fill a status quo. I don’t think it has any power and I don’t think he’s [inaudible]--

Q. What are your thoughts on the regionalization of the New York City Department of Education, the change from 32 community school districts into ten regions?

A. I think when people define the change into regional they don’t discuss about the budget cut because to create a region you have to cut money. To eliminate, you know, to go from 26 groups to 150, there was a great deal of budgets that are eliminated in districts in salaries and everything else. Some of them discuss at key fundamental educational needs programs that are needed. You know, you -- all of a sudden -- all of a sudden that key person that was a specialist in math who used to sit 26 schools [inaudible] 50 schools. All that person will not even assist, so people ask me what do I think of the regional versus the district and I just feel I just begin to discuss budget cuts because it has to do about about using, you know, the Board of Ed has always been the struggle of scarce resources, you know, for scarce resources for children and it continues to
be. This is just a big budget cut and some -- some people in some areas it's going to show in some area, you know, now they have and other monies you know, cannot be allocated to a problem. Now, it's like -- it's like being in a bigger pool and you're screaming. Nobody is going to hear you, because you don't have assets to one on one, the one on one instruction is different, the learning's, you know, the people that are learning instructors are -- the supervisors, they basically, you know, they basically don't -- their salaries does not add up to the -- the I would say the support that was there before. When they see supportive services, when this is supportive education, it's a cut, basically it's a huge cut that has been advertised as regional, but it's a heavy cut.
Our first question looks into the background of our informant and then asks for the informant’s personal experience with school decentralization.

I was born in Puerto Rico came to this country at the age of about 5½. I attended the schools in Brooklyn, in Williamsburg specifically. In fact these are schools in District 14. I was raised in Williamsburg was here into the age of about 23, when I received a Bachelor of Science degree and became a teacher. Anyway I attended the district 14 elementary school, graduated from the eighth grade and went to Boy’s High School where I participated on the boys’ baseball team. I took part in different activities in the school. I graduated in the 60s from a teaching school where I received a degree in physical education. After receiving my degree of physical education I went to work in a school near Poughkeepsie New York. In fact it was a school for special education children that were housed in a state school. I worked there for couple of years teaching
I can tell you that when I was going through the testing process to become a teacher in 1967, I saw the process of getting a job in New York City as going directly to 110 Livingston St. in Brooklyn, which is the Department of Education headquarters, and then from there that I would be assigned to a school. It never occurred to me that, even though I grew up in New York, I did not have an idea or a concept of community school districts. The do not occur to me. It seemed to me that everything was done through 110 Livingston St. later on that
after working in the schools a couple years, and being assigned to the district office, I was not aware of major differences between those schools will run prior to decentralization, that is prior to 1969 and the way after decentralization. I was assigned to the district office at that time there were a lot of community groups that were vying for effective participation, they wanted to be bought of the process. My recollection is one that is a little biased but I remember distinctly, those a lot of vested interest, the UFT, some of the political forces in the area were able to pretty readily saw the situation and began to look at what they wanted to get out of it. Many of who wanted to contribute, wanted to participate in the process unfortunately did not really have the power that they thought they had. They had as I recall, working at the district office we had a parent Council. The parents Council consisted of all of the PTA presidents. At the time that I was first there, it was pretty independent in fact. They did try to have an impact on what went on with the decisions that were made by the school boards and the decisions that were made by the superintendent. I believe that their powers were advisory. Is embarrassed that really did not have any real power to determine school policy. The community school board members represent the communities that were not truly representative of
the majority of students attending schools. In Williamsburg, you had a community that did not have many of its children attending public schools. For example, you had two or three Hasidic members of the community school board elected by the community, in reality they had no students in the system or in the district. You also had members from Greenpoint, Brooklyn, at that time, something like four members that were for lack of word, non-Hispanic or black. They were Italian or Polish and they were basically groups of people that have been put their by the UFT. They responded to the UFT issues - the way they wanted did things done. They did represent the communities that had children in schools - a very small minority of the children. I would tend to believe that maybe they represented in total 10% of the student population in district 14. Six board members who represented 10% of the student population but yet had majority say on the school board. The Hispanic community and the African-American community had altogether maybe three members. You had a minority of the school board members that represented 90% all the children in the schools had very little power no power at all. What do I remember about this? What is that it seemed to me at the time the policies that the school board carried out basically were those that kept the status quo. there were no dramatic changes
in curriculum, there were no dramatic changes in hiring policy, in fact the administration's that were elected over and over again were overwhelmingly people who were either a part of the UFT, part of the union in fact more so than in other places.

Has the composition of the board changed since you were first hired in the district?

The faces of the names have changed, but the composition has remained the same. So that you have the religious community— which in this particular district happens to be the Hasidic community. They have one third of the members and you have the Greenpoint community which also has one third of the members. The black and Hispanic communities combined also have one third. But again, you have the black and Hispanic community representatives to total three members of nine that represent over 85 to 90% of the student population. They still are a minority and do not have the power that other communities have. So what you have is a school board that has not changed in 25 years. Whatever power was invested in the school Board 25 years ago basically remains the same. In fact you might even say, this might be true of other political entities, the same people are still in power. It might not be the same exact same person or
individual, the same group is still in power, going back to 1971. It stands to reason that if you have the same constituency, the same power base, controlling the school board, then the same type of people being elected people being hired for leadership roles such as principals, assistant principals, superintendents and people who work for superintendents would not necessarily change.

To what extent has the black and Latino community benefited from decentralization?

I don't know that it has citywide. I don't know all the numbers have grown in terms of developing leadership. In the district in that I am in, there has been no benefit whatsoever. I am not so sure what that reflects. I think of the community was never really empowered, things never really changed, or does it reflect something more devious? It appears to me for what I can recall in the situations that I was in, parents since their roles were mostly advisory, the things you had a system that was established in which the union [UFT] retained a great deal of power over board members - whether it was bad or good. I'm not going to make a judgment, did have a tremendous influence. In comparison to other communities, school board members respond to
Parents are sometimes home and do not have to work. In the inner city parents have to go to work... Outside of the city, parents who may be at home have more time to challenge the school board or demand more of the system, the school system. The community school boards are too huge, they are too large. Most community school boards have anywhere from 25 to 35 schools in them. Compared to school communities and towns in other parts of the state, school districts of two or three elementary schools, one or two junior high schools and a high school. In these districts, parents have a focus where their children go to the elementary school, then to one specific junior high school and then one specific high school. Therefore, the issues of education always with them for 12 years, involving what appears to be to them, the same power structure. In New York City, in turn the community empowerment, the fact that they separated the high schools from the elementary and junior high schools. Made it into a somewhat difficult power structure that made it difficult to analyze if you are parent or community member that wants to get something from that system. You had a situation where the system was too big, people could never ever really get to know each other, small groups that had legitimate gripes, all concerns about the education of their children could never
order to organize into such a group to be able to fight or question the powers that be. People who had more resources, more time on their hands and had more communication with the district. What I mean by that is that you had a union which has a structure in the schools, along with the politicians, which has a structure in the community, that they would be able to bring groups together to control the agenda of the school board. I think that part of the problem that you had was intended from the very beginning. It was to make the school board so large that the only ones who could control it would be who politicians who were in place or large institutions such as the union for large groups. Average people wanted to have impact on the system would have a negligible effect. The reason for that is that they could just not organize and sustain it full enough to have any real impact on the schools. The real issues of how much money each school is going to get, how much are you all going to spend on the children, are you going to repair the buildings, are you going to provide real services, those of the real issues and as long as you keep changing what it is—"governance", from centralization to decentralization to centralization again, I think that as long as you have those issues as to the Chancellor is in charge or the superintendents in charge, the real issues
Most districts in New York State consist of one or two high schools, one or two junior high schools and anywhere from five or six elementary schools and that may be a large district. Here you have a community whereby people all get to know one another. Where you have parents from a particular community involved in the schools there is a continuity of people in on one another throughout their children’s school years. When you have that you have people who are able to come together to effect change. They are able to have input in what’s happening in their schools. But when you have a system whereby districts are composed of over 30 elementary schools, five or six junior high schools and since the high schools are not even in the equation, you’re spending a lot less administratively, what you have is the equivalent of five or six other state towns that equal one New York City school district. Again what to have they are a I would say in terms of services for those particular schools, the supervision of those schools, it could be I don’t want to say control but the effective assistance to those schools and the effective communication with the parents of those schools. Whether it’s be by the principal of the school all by the superintendent is in a way hurt when you have again
school districts that are so large. Maybe what could have been done in terms of decentralization, was to have instead of 32 school districts, was to have 75 school districts. That may have been a more effective way to handle the changes that you want it and the way to improve the schools. The way that the situation is set up right now basically for what I can see right now, what I saw during that time, is pretend that you’re changing the system, you’re not really change anything, you’re going to fake it, you that if they can’t get them to tell parents that they have a say although it’s only advisory, you can have an election process that have so many different communities in it with candidates that are unknown, candidates are backgrounds and interests that are not the same as the children in the area. In order to have someone become a member of the school board, to get a majority of the people will have the support of the large groups of the society or that society supporting them, even have folks are supported by the union, the UFT being elected, that members of individuals that are to have political backing, have the backing of a local politician, or of local political groups. Again, their interest is not always the same interests that the parents of the children attending the school have. While we look at it unfortunately political groups, the union they may have some interest the same
as a parents. For the most part they will not be in thinking in terms of student interest and positive student changes as the parent groups. A lot of people don't understand the difference between decentralization and centralization. And may be the best understanding is just that - there was no change, it was a pretend change, it was a change to appease a couple of groups, quieted some of the people down, was able to give some communities and ability to select their own superintendent, which in a way may have had some positive results or negative results. So that's one of the things that decentralization may have done. What other things the decentralization did do was that the communities were now able to select their own superintendent. The problem with that was that since the district did not represent the parents, or the majority of the students, political forces although forces in the community what you had was a system that cannot always respond to the needs of the parents. I think that you have an ambiguous situation where the centralization of decentralization all as you have now governance- it may not be by accident that it's ambiguous and difficult to understand. The interests of the student are not what may be involved, you have a lot of superintendents who would really love to effect change, you have many principals and teachers who want to deliver the very best education, but by the
hindering that desire on the part of teachers and on the principals and superintendents rather than helping it. Even some of the changes that have been made, for example, covenants related to getting parents more information, giving parents information on how the school is doing, in general how the children are cheating on tests, well for most parents this is meaningless just as it is for many teachers and many superintendents and many principals. In reality parents for the most part are interested in how the school is affecting one their child in particular and how it is affecting perhaps a particular group of kids. The school was that the state and city say this is how you of school are doing does not always reflect what the parents believe. I would save for the most part that a lot of the criteria that have been established by the state and by the Chancellor are again the same thing. If you can get the parents thinking about something other than real changes, real involvement, real improvements in the school, than they achieve their goal of not having anybody involved. They keep talking about improving the schools, if you improve scores, well some of the changes the school needs may not be reflected in the scores. Maybe it may be reflected more in the dollars that that is spent to repair the schools, in the dollars that is spent to build new...
schools, in the dollars that is spent to keep good teachers, in
the dollars that are spent to provide better facilities, such as
labs, sports for kids. If you compare New York City with any
other community outside the city you'll find that in most places
more than 50, 60 sometimes 70% of the student body is involved
in some activity or another from five to six o'clock including
weekends. In New York City this is not the case. It may be the
case someone in the high schools but certainly not at that
percentage. In the junior highs is a much much lower percentage.
Most of the activities at the school do provide a basically
focused on children who have tremendous needs, where they have
after school programs which are very good, and have helped a lot
of these kids. Most of the facilities in our schools go unused
by the larger community. What you have is a situation where you
wanting parents, where you want people focusing on ideas and the
issues that don't cost any money and keeps the focus of any
changes or faults of the system on people that may not be a
fault. So that you have simplistic questions and simplistic
answers - is this school a success is this school a failure.
This mostly focuses on the principal and the staff. Rarely will
any of the real questions and issues be redirected to where some
of the problems lay, the politicians which is Albany, the
Chancellor and the Mayor - how much money is being sent to the
schools. There is disparity between what is happening in the city schools and other schools in the area. You have a lot of different issues that no one really wants to look at. This may have much more to do with success and failure of schools than some of the achievement of the focusing in on now. I’m going to read to you a paragraph or two from a study of school decentralization and this from the series race in education reform in the American metropolis. “Writing in middle of the 20th-century Mirtle described the essential American dilemma” — Mirtle and later Fredrickson argued that the African-American population has an inferior status in the minds of whites. Based on historical relationships with slavery the deeply ingrained white attitude of black inferiority is the foundation for the society to keep the races separate. They go to write that the inferiority attitude is not just descriptive but also prescriptive, stimulating whites to build institutions to support their superiority economically and socially. Furthermore, these institutions re-create a sense of moral hierarchy in each generation of whites allowing for the continuation of racial prejudices. What is your reaction to this piece? Please talk about these racial/ethnic issues and how they affect urban education.
I think what you say is probably the crux of what we are discussing. Even if you think in terms of centralization and when he came about if you’re younger than I am, it was in the 60s when there was a lot of turmoil in our society that is. In the was a desire and a need to empower African-Americans. In fact for most including me, 1965 was so what of a true liberation the African-Americans. In many places including the north you had black Americans were excluded from many of the structures the businesses and banking a lot of power structure of our society. You had openly government institutions that prevented blacks from achieving and moving towards realizing the American dream. Race plays a role in everything that we are discussing involving centralization and decentralization. It is quite possible that although the community was asking for decentralization and community control, one of things that I suspect may have happened, and this is all I think some of the decisions that may have been made called forth by community groups or African-Americans or Hispanics the white power structure may have in some way gotten itself involved, leading the whole demand for whatever changes “whatever the community desires”. Is quite possible the community control and decentralization was a response in terms of fear that the entire New York City system would desegregate. Which would then involve
their children in some areas having to be bused to black or Hispanic areas and vice versa. One of the ways that I think that could easily have been stifled is to come of what a thing called decentralization. This is where you had communities basically isolated so that they would be able to control their own destiny. You had the need for or desire to have children bused from one community to another would not take place. I would say that in New York City probably you had very little bussing of children to different communities for the sake of the desegregating the schools. I am not so sure that the result would be that schools would be more effective. I know that in terms of how people think and I think that if history is a true gauge, the way that white people think the best way to do things is to make sure that they are separated from black and other minorities. In terms of the city politics, a minority community was gaining greater power by becoming larger and the demographics would probably reflect that. You had a New York City that was becoming a brown and black New York City. The response to the changes that were coming resulted in setting up a structure that in some way or another still maintain power by those who were in charge. This includes all the institutions that have influence in New York City.
When we examine decentralization, we talk about marginal groups being included as part of the institution center.

Now we have minority groups gaining status to the bureaucratic structures of our public schools. Yet the schools lack resources and status in the bureaucracy now largely made up of minorities is the first to be attacked for educational failure.

In fact, New York City it appears as though we have gained more principals, some superintendents and yet the school system it is said is still failing. The blame keeps being switched depending on where the minorities are. When we were in a centralized system, and you had a school system that predominately white, what UI was people blaming the communities, yet people blame the parents, you had people claiming the kids as being unprepared for school because of poverty because of different things.

which may be was the case, that poverty folks who were in poverty that do not has good paying jobs, housing was an issue, wondering where you are going to live, few have enough money for the holidays, etc. perhaps that was more important to some of these folks then and being able to concentrate on schools versus in daily living. Maybe that was the more important issue. What’s happened is that and what we’ve done is that the schools are failing who can we blame? Basically what is the power structure saying we can blame those same people of minority groups, then
we can in a sense without saving directly say that the schools are failing, we wonder why. The principals are at fault, the superintendents are at fault. Unfortunately what has happened is that it was thought to look and say visit these school systems are failing and it must be because of the leadership. They don't know what they're doing. You don't have to say that they're black. You don't have to say that the Hispanic. It will be obvious by the results. You have the same thing happening throughout the state you have several districts in Long Island for example, where the school district has been closed down. In each case, it so happens that the leadership of those communities were African-American. What you had or school districts just like in New York City school districts were removed and the school leadership was being blamed for not succeeding. You had what's called the SURR schools, in Long Island where the state took over it just so happens that these districts were African-American districts. I don't know that in any case where the school district was taken over by the state which was predominantly white. Where the power structure was white. Someone can say that the criteria for removing a school or school superintendent or taking over district is dependent on how they handled their resources their funding and in the overall academic achievement. That it has nothing to do black-
and white. Well I disagree; it has a lot to do with black and

The criteria that's established especially the scores
they are asking for of basically the new criteria that has taken
over for the IQ test. Reading scores, achievement scores but just
substitutes nowadays for IQ. The use of IQ scores were
disbanded, were considered biased and so they they cannot be
used. Now they use standardized test scores, regent's scores.
That everyone is the same chance of succeeding on these tests.
In reality they are just the new IQ tests, fall dependent on the
same intelligence. In many ways it has been shown that if you
have a community where there are better jobs, a community that
has a history of better housing, of feeling empowered, of using
a standard language that has more resources than you have a
community that will do well on these achievement tests. what we
looking at here were looking at a situation where no matter how
you change the rules of the game you was going to find some
minority person to blame for not achieving, or so minority
person to blame because students are not achieving. You always
going to maintain that hierarchy of white power, white
intelligence being superior to minorities and to blacks. What
you have is a situation that will in the sense lead to the
conclusion that we started out with any way that whites are
superior to blacks and other minorities.
In reference to testing at all levels including low grades, junior high in high school, I sincerely believe that the results have already been predetermined. Folks know that most young people in the African American and Hispanic communities were not going to do as well. So they become self-fulfilling prophecies.

What they really want to get out of this is the power structure is to have enough black and Hispanics concluding to themselves that they are unable to compete with other communities with other students. Hopefully they give up their dream of going to college and give up on themselves. I don't know if you read recently about Proposition 68. This has something to do with college freshmen the into play basketball at a particular institution. According to the proposal when they first instituted this proposition, the idea was that college freshmen were either failing out of school, were not able to get their degrees because they were concentrating on playing basketball and consequently they were being used and abused and so the proposition was established. College freshmen that did not meet a certain criteria on the SATs then these college freshmen were not allowed to compete. It was found by a judge in the results of the proposition, which may have been hidden agenda of the proposition was to keep large numbers of lack young men from competing at the college level in their freshman
For all intents and purposes, you had hundreds of kids who
more than they need. And the difference is in the United States
sports, based on test scores that supposedly predicted whether
they would be successful in college are not— I would tend to say
that a lot of these kids went to another school maybe not with
the same prestige in some cases may not have gotten scholarships
and even if they did get a scholarship they lost a year of
eligibility which meant that their skills might have
deteriorated as some of the kids may have. Racism exists that
while not obvious to everyone. They don't want black faces black
leadership outstanding young men who happen to be black or other
minorities to be the ones that are getting the accolades in our
society.

Poverty-stricken communities in the US have less resources,
their buildings are not up-to-date, the materials the
facility’s, laboratory equipment all these things are lacking in
the poor communities. While in the rich communities they have
more than they need. And the difference is in the United States
is great. I would tend to say that this is the way it is in many
of the institutions. There is a need somehow or another in this
country to have differences. I would even say to you, schools for
the very most part are places where you differentiate kids,
where you actually use the schools to say, where you should be,
and this is where you should be. In affluent communities, their kids will basically go on to become the lawyers of our society, while children of the folks in the poorer community will take the second-tier jobs with a few getting through the filters joining the more affluent students and getting the more lucrative jobs in our society. For the most part schools distinguished kids and separate them. I think that this is what a lot of the testing and standards that are being proposed in the state of New York which I tend to say will be copied by other states, not as much that the disparity in places such as California are great. You have pockets of very, very affluent folks and those disparities probably New York has the greatest disparity between the richest folks in the nation and the poorest folks in the nation. With the testing it will guarantee a certain numbers of minority groups not going to high education, will realize that they are going to have a hard time competing with the will affluent students. Several other things will happen. As colleges get so expensive, some of these students that are able to going to school, poor students will also must that they will be focusing most of the energy on repaying their debt. Perhaps they could have saved money to become for the mainstream. Then seven or eight years after they get out of school will be spent paying back an enormous debt.
While by the same token, students from the more affluent communities will be able to fall back on jobs obtained from people that are connected. To go into their parents' business, they will have funding to open up a store, and be able to join a cousin who belongs to some union. These children, those folks from the affluent communities will always be able to find something to do that will meet the needs that they have with the intelligence that they have. While those from the poor community, if they cannot succeed in the world of college in the world of work. And they don't have anything to fall back on. They will not be able to become the police officers or the FBI agents, whatever it is that you able to do when you're not able to go on to college. The overall picture is that you have in jobs such as teaching, where a lot of minorities that's the first to is to the dry to move out the they of the invisible a lot of success jobs like the way even now, the testing people. So that they can reduce the number of black and Hispanic educators. They are going to use that also to accomplish the same thing to keep people from becoming part of the society. Even though there are a lot of inclusionary ideas that are put forth, the powers that be continue to come up with ideas that that in the sense contradict these forces that are democratic and that are inclusionary. And they will set of systems that
appear logical and reasonable to actually keep people from being included in the greater society, and having chances of success.

what you have the school system that is being set up to promote blaming the professionals, especially if they are minority mean members and the point that students who are failures and should not be competing and the affluent communities will continue to focus on being successful and individuals in that community that are not successful, will be able to find places in a society where they can work without success even though they didn't. they will still be able to make a living, which will not be the case of the innocent are black or Hispanic, if they don't make it through school the chances of being successful at a different job of very slim.
(FORMER PRINCIPAL AND DISTRICT ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT)

INTERVIEW #9

543
J. Next, as with a retired school administrator, college professor, and in a short while you'll hear a great deal more about his background. We'd like to start with your thoughts on first of all, some background information and then if you could just provide us with some thoughts on the school format, your understanding of the act, and if you could talk to us about your thoughts on mail control of the New York City Department of Education.

A. My name is Barry Finkelman and in 1995 I was involved with the New York City -- in those days Board of Education. I mean most of my time working in Community School District 13 which is in the [inaudible] section of Brooklyn. During that period of time over twenty years I was a school principal, elementary school, pre-kindergarten through sixth, and I was deputy superintendent for a little while in Community School District 13 and I was also special assistant district attendant in Community School District 13.

The key point -- let me go back because Mr. Jusino needs additional information. Since 1995 since retiring from the New York City Board of Education I have continued to keep somewhat busy in the field of education and primarily some of the key areas -- yes, I've been a consultant. I've gone in with the union to help [inaudible] principals and assistant principals in schools when they're
settled [inaudible] bad feelings between teachers and administrators and community still existed. There was a really major racial overtone because if you remember the 1968 strike it had to do with [inaudible] strictly a racial type of situation where some people interpreted the decentralization process as being whatever the ethnicity of a group continue to be is, whatever the color of a group might be and that meant that that group was going to control and [inaudible] controlling was to get rid of anybody that wasn't looking like that group or thinking like that group. So that was all going on.

Urban coalition started in my school, P.S. 46, got very much involved as one of the model schools to try to see if we could come up with some ways of making decentralization work. Initially we created something called SCAC, school community advisory committee which was an attempt for schools to reach out into various key constituencies and bring them in for meetings. We did that. That gave rise to the development of [inaudible] schools that were meeting with the New York City Urban Coalition or working with them to try to develop something that they called comprehensive school base planning. In order to comprehensive school base planning the idea was you would create a planning team and the planning team would be made up of various constituencies interested in that school.

Looking back in retrospect you would understand that
Interview

facing problems among the faculty of St. John's University
where I teach courses in human relations and what we call
trium and supervised student teachers. I've also been
working for the College of St. Rose which is out of Albany
but runs programs, graduate programs in the New York City
area for the training of future administrators, school
administrators at all levels, and supervising the same
individuals when they are ready for their internships. So
I'm out there seeing what they're doing.

I think the most important significance for this study
that -- the time that I was principal and what was going
on. Decentralization was getting off the ground -- as I was
saying, decentralization was getting off the ground in the
late '60s. We had the experimental districts. For example,
Ocean Hill Brownville and there was Twin Bridges in
Manhattan and I think there was another one up in Harlem, an
educational park concept which came out of a theory of the
board foundation and then we hit the 1968 strike and shortly
after that in the early '70s I became an assistant principal
and then a principal.

At that time I became very active as a principal with
the New York City Urban Coalition because what their purpose
was was to try to reestablish some communications because
various constituencies so that school governance couldn't be
really a shared decision making process because in those
days since -- the 1967 strike even though the strike had
Interview

The planning team concept, the comprehensive planning and school based decision making then gave rise in the history of this whole thing to SEM/SDM, school based management, school decision making. We should understand that that's really what gives rise to where we are today with the leadership teams and we're under the state mandate every school now has one. Going back in those days, as I said, we started with a little volunteer cognate that was working, maybe twenty some odd schools working with the Urban Coalition, and then when the City of New York picked up SEM and SDM schools had to vote to even be part of this program. So it was an experimental approach that was going on.

Just an interesting point as an aside which you may want to bring into your study because it always sticks in mind. During all of this in the late '60s and the '70s the country was going through turmoil, the civil rights movement and all of that other country wide Vietnam War and there was a lot of controversy and the city was not immune to it and then decentralization and the racial overtones and all of those problems just fitted right into the disruption that was going on in the city. It was interesting because right after the 1968 [inaudible] they called in -- there was a talk show. We did not have cable television. It was a talk show, one of the talk shows. Maybe Jack Parr or Frost, one of these guys that was on television. I'm giving my age away when I mention these names.
Interview

I remember that one night they had George Bundy from the Ford Foundation and he was the father of decentralization in terms of the Ford Foundation pushing it. The city was in a total disaster now. Even the state in order to salvage the school system after the 1968 strike passed a decentralization war which was now a city wide endeavor as opposed to just those three experimental districts. The place was a mess, the city. They asked George Bundy how did he create such a thing. I always remembered to this day because I think even today when we're looking around at what's happening in Iraq and all the other things, his answer was really interesting. He said, to paraphrase it, hey, the Ford Foundation put out a theoretical paper. We didn't expect people to then go in it [inaudible] just because a theoretical paper said that this was a theory what could work and obviously when we put it into practicality problems arose and that's for these folks to go resolve.

In other words, the Ford Foundation, at least in George Bundy's eyes, was sort of walking away from the theoretical academic exercise of decentralization and I think throughout history and even today we're seeing where theories that sound good in the board room when they get put out into the day-to-day practicality there's nobody home at the board room any more to ask and if you found them they would probably tell you hey, we didn't -- we created a theory, we
I didn't think that somebody was really going to test it and see whether it created chaos or not. So that's sort of to some degree where I came from because of the nature of the times and me being somewhat of a risk taker and somewhat of a rebel back in those days as a new principal I got involved with this. So I think I have a pretty good understanding of the history of decentralization. I think that there's not many people that bridge that gap that can talk today and look back at where it came from. I know when I teach my graduate course, a course in school community relationships and one of the topics is governance and we go back -- these are folks trained to be administrators and we ask them about decentralization it's like -- not only is it a historical thing but it's not even in their memory bank. So we have to spend a good deal of time just going back so that they understand from whence we came and how we got to where we are today.

So there's been a lot of stuff going on. We know the history of decentralization. We know that we came about to where we are today because decentralization theoretically created a lot of problems. We know that over -- I don't have statistics in front of me, but we know that people are not satisfied. The theory just so you know so you have it on tape, the theory behind it was that it was still worried. Today we call it academic achievement [inaudible] which is very nice term to talk about the fact that various races do
better in school than other races. But rather than bring it into racial overtones we talk about an academic achievement gap so -- but basically what we're saying is is that some of the population that we're charged with educating just doesn't perform as well as some other parts of the population.

That was happening back in the pre-'60s. Nobody seemed to care about it. Basically the schools did very well with educating those kids that came to school who were ready for the way the school was and for anybody else that didn't the school then did a pretty good job of allowing them to sit around and spend their time and then either go into a vocational or drop out of school or whatever else they were going to do.

But then with the civil rights movement people began to take a look and say hey, wait a minute, this is not equitable and we could need to be concerned about those kids that don't seem to be doing well in school and decentralization was a methodology or a strategy that was supposed to improve academic achievement. That's the measure. They weren't here to go make parents feel good. Maybe they would feel good out of it. We weren't here to go and make different people on the outside feel good. What we were really about is to try to find a strategy that would improve academic achievement of students. That was the primary concern.
Interview

So what happened was people like the Ford Foundation and George Bundy [inaudible] looked out in the world and said wait a minute, how come suburbia they don't have -- see, in those days suburbia did a good job of hiding the problem. So nobody really knew that they had similar problems, but people thought that suburbia was [inaudible] and the Ford Foundation said ah, the question is governance. See, in suburbia the parents vote, they elect school boards, school boards pick superintendents, there is accountability, and that's why there is improved academic performance. So as naive it sounds we bought into all of this back then.

If we took the suburban model and brought it into the City of New York or any urban city and we broke the city down into little towns like they [inaudible] and use that governance model, which we now call decentralization, all of a sudden the kids in urbanville would score as well as kids in suburbanville and we knew the story. It didn't happen and there was a lot of turmoil and there was some good that came out of it and there was a lot of bad that came out of it. Let me see. The '60s, the '70s, '80s, '90s, 2000 thirty years later the legislature did away with the decentralization law as we know it, gave the mayor control of the system since it was already moving towards a little more centralization, a great deal more centralization. Decentralization was in trouble for a while, but basically [inaudible] law and the last reform acts that are now in...
place came about because after thirty years someone took a look at the system but it didn't just happen -- they've been looking at it for a while and said wow, we haven't improved. This experiment in trying to make the city look like suburbanville is not working. As a matter of fact, what's happened in the same thirty days is that many of the suburban communities now realize they have the same problems that the city has and obviously the governance model was not the cause of it.

So we now have a -- so that's sort of a historical view how we got to where we are today.

Another way of looking at this is when I started to teach in 1963 -- this is choking Mr. Jusino up. He can't believe that somebody can be that old. In 1963 when I started to teach we were in a very, very centralized system. You had deputy superintendents, the city was divided into different areas. I remember I think I was in what was called District 25-27 and over at Prospect Heights school there was an office of a deputy superintendent who was really under the direct control of the superintendent of schools in those days. I don't think we had a chancellor. It was superintendent of schools. We had a very centralized situation. Everything came down from the centralized to the deputies. I remember he came to visit me when I was coming off tenure, Mailman, Maurice Mailman. That shows how far back we were. Basically we were doing centralized
Interview

Curriculum and centralized this and centralized that. I wasn't even aware of any parent advisors making their world but there was no publicity of that (inaudible) about that.

But then from the '63s when I start into the experimental districts which then blow up in '68 which then give rise to a whole city of (inaudible) approaches we've gone through decentralization and now we're back to a centralized system. Although the names will change you now have a chancellor and you have regional superintendents who work directly under a chancellor and then local -- but everything is coming out on a centralized -- there's a centralized reading program, there's a centralized math program, there's very little encouragement or space for (inaudible) in terms of individual districts doing what they wanted to do which was mainly the premise of decentralization that we knew best what was for our kids and we didn't want to have to listen to on 110 Livingston Street. We in Bed-Stuy knew what was best and we would have the freedom to do it and we'd be held accountable.

Now we've gone back and said no, we, at city hall, we have the best knowledge and you'll do it the way we want and there is no (inaudible) at all. So we've gone full circle. You can call it anything you want but simply stated we've gone from a centralized, decentralized, back to centralized. As a matter of fact, although it just may be that I'm more sophisticated than I was as a young teacher in 1963, I
believe that we are more centralized today and more rigid today in this centralized approach than we ever were in the centralized approach of '63 because thinking back to '63 I remember that my school and any school had some flexibility to do what they wanted within the confines of the curriculum and the mandates of the city. Now I think someone would wind up being hung if they tried to do what they wanted to do. There is no -- so we are super centralized if anything. The pendulum swung not only the other way but past the other way.

I get around the city a lot as you know [inaudible] which is really -- I probably hear more now than when I was a principal. As a principal although I tried to get around it was very active in the city. I was probably [inaudible] Now teaching in graduate school you got to remember that every time I teach a course I'm getting thirty students coming from city -- from schools throughout the city. When I'm doing my mentoring -- I'm involved with City College in New York doing some mentoring, in math, improving AP. So I'm out there student teaching. I'm seeing the whole city. I really -- I'm not so sure that who controls it is really going to be the answer. I'm really not so keen that I -- although I must be honest that nothing really gets done in one year, but I really don't see a lot of things that I would consider to be really powerful and good happening under mayoral control.
Interview

Just let me give you a philosophical situation. First of all, I believe that the way you turn schools around and cities around and anything else the key -- if I've got a class -- it may be ideal, but this would be my vision. If I've got a school of forty classrooms, give me forty quality teachers and if I have forty quality teachers I don't need a curriculum department. I don't need anything else. I don't really care whose governance was doing. The bottom line is if you can't put top notch teachers in every single classroom then all of this other stuff in my opinion when we look back in history like I'm looking back with you today, we're going to find that there were -- we're going to get to meet George Bundy. I wrote a theoretical paper. Yes, obviously teachers are the key.

So until we see quality teachers, and I haven't seen it yet, under quality leaders and just because the mayor is creating a principal's institute or we have a great program where I'm at, I don't see the candidates being of that quality that they are going to be the kind of leaders we want.

Then there's another problem here under mayoral leadership which I'm just jumping around. I believe that a system that's going to have great teachers in the classroom is going to have great leaders. I think the more effective school movement showed it. I'm still a firm believer greatly to [inaudible] hopefully for the principal. I know
Interview

all the writings out there now that you don’t need the formal role to be leader and we should encourage leadership among our faculty and all that. I buy into it. But the bottom line really is I go back to Ron Edmunds, that academic focus led by a strong leader preferably the principal. I don’t see all of that happening right now. I’m a firm believer in the more effective school movement and I don’t really think that who’s governing or what’s happening is really going to make the difference.

That brings me -- I’m skipping around. I lost my thought but I want to bring it back. Just a couple of points. I want to add a couple of general points and you can ask me some questions. First of all, if we buy into the more effective school movement and we don’t just take it as lip service, we then ask well, what is the difference between a leader and a manager. There’s this models. Basically I think that we hear -- we hear people like Jack Welch and all these other people who would not have been managers. They are leaders. This is the way Bloomberg became what he was. He was a leader. Donald Trump was a leader. So if they were writing their biography they’re talking about let’s get leaders in business and they say that’s what we’re trying to duplicate, the business model into the school. Then put it mildly, I don’t see that. I think if you’re a leader you’re going to be out in the street without a job. I think -- they talked a good story.
Interview

about wanting leaders, but what they really are turning out is managers. There's nothing wrong with that. You have a lot of technocrats out there that are going to keep on doing and hopefully when someone above them tells them what to do they'll at least do it right. I'm not even sure that will happen, but we're not getting a lot of creative ideas, a lot of creative solutions at the site. Again, I don't think without that you're really going to make changes.

So, first of all, it's a question of leader versus managers in the area of concern. Second of all, from a particular point of view I have some problems with change and the whole mayoral thing and how it came about. I believe that change is not a revolutionary process. I believe that change comes about evolutionary. I think you have to bring people [inaudible], that when you shove it down people's throats initially you may get something that looks like there's movement but you're not going to get people to really integrate it into themselves. So what you're going to get which has been all too often the story in education, it's going to be -- it's going to be person driven. In other words, someone put their foot where they shouldn't put their foot and drives a program and as long as that person is keeping the foot there it looks like we're getting movement. But no one is really changing their behavior pattern and as soon as that foot isn't there any more you haven't really brought about change. You haven't
really brought about people who are now acting in a
different way. Before that person can get out the door the
people have now gone back to their own behavior pattern. So
I think that’s another problem that I see out there, the
concept of change.

Then when you talk about curriculum, and I don’t think
it’s only the mayor, but it’s this whole movement now. When
we’re talking about standards driven, I’m all in favor of
standards. I think you need to go where you’re going, but I
think that when we misuse tests which are supposed to be a
part of our assessment, when we misuse tests and if the
tests become the curriculum and that we spend our time
getting kids ready to take a test that was supposed to see
if they knew the curriculum but we have teachers who now
don’t know that they’re supposed to teach kids to read so
they can pass the test they’re teaching kids how to pass a
reading test, how to pass a math test. The instructional
piece comes out.

What we’re looking at is we’re turning out a citizenry
that’s going to have with [inaudible] everything with no
[inaudible] and then the next TV show you see you say well,
why is America losing the science race, why is most of our
graduate schools filled with European students, why is most
of our companies don’t have science. Well, one of the
reasons is you got to go looking back. What are we trying
to turn out? If we’re turning out kids that just need a
Interview

passed test and studies are beginning to show that and they just want easier way -- they're not even taking advance placement because they say wait a minute, if I get to pass a test this test is easier than that test. So we're not going to be a world computer and in thirty years we'll look back and say oh, well wait a minute, maybe we didn't turn out what we want.

Remember, the purpose of school in the history of American education or any society, the purpose of school is to turn out the productive citizen that that society really wants and what really worries me is that when we take a look at the productive citizen we're turning out it may be a little late to say gee, did we really want this. So I have some concern. I'm not sure that the mayor recognizes this. I think that when we talk about let's turn the schools around, what we're really talk about let's turn the schools around in terms of what tests show.

Just look at what we're talking about if you're an educator, Mr. Jusino, Willy if I may.

Q. Of course you may.

A. Look at what we're talking about. We're going to hold third-graders over unless they can get to two. I don't want to hurt your feelings, but to go celebrate and dance around -- here is the whole city got rid of ones and all -- and who had all these twos. What are you going to do with a two? In the state's description of twos it's a failing area. So
yes, it's nice we move kids from ones to twos but if that's all we're looking for and now we're going to go label schools being outstanding because they have kids in twos, what we're really turning out is a lot of illiterate kids that still won't do well in high school. Kids are not going to do well in high school and not drop out or be able to be successful when they are high threes and fours. We're going to go celebrating and give schools bonuses. We're going to give a principal a bonus because he moved his ones to his twos which is really saying if I'm being severely failing they're only a little failing but we're rewarding you because now you have the school of semi failures rather than total failures.

Then the other thing which you should keep in mind as an educator because the public doesn't see this I'm the first one to tell you that kids should not go ahead in school until they have the skills to really do it, and we need to really identify early and do what we really have to do very early and get the kids taught. Now whether we hold them over or not hold them over research has shown that that's not the answer. Good sound teaching in the early grades and identifying those kids who are at risk which we used to call in the old days early identification programs. There's nothing revolutionary about it. Just like there's nothing revolutionary about this holdover. We always held kids over. Even when we didn't have social promotion, ever
when we had social promotion we would still every year go
back in the history of the City of New York every year came
the spring there was a promotion policy and some kids got
held over and in some years you had even more holdover than
the mayor is talking about. You're talking about the
illustrious Gates Program. We're not -- not only did we
hold them over, we put them in small classes, we put them in
summer school and they even created a new curriculum for
these kids. You know what, it didn't work. It was a given.

So when we start saying we're doing away with social
promotion and now we're going to have the answer, the answer
really is like I went back a little while ago, can you
guarantee me that any kid that you now see is not doing well
in third grade is going to have a super teacher next year,
the year after and the year after that and so on. We need
to have super teachers. I mean just because you hold the
kid over if he's had a lousy teacher for the first three
years and now you hold him over and continue to give him
lousy teachers, I don't care how good your new curriculum
is, who's implementing it. The quality of the teacher. The
curriculum is not the answer. It's the quality of the
person implementing that curriculum.

So I have a big concern when everybody stands up and
makes this big hoopla over social — take the labels away
and just say what do you really say. When a kid reaches a
certain age if he doesn't have certain skills you're going
interview
to make him repeat some stuff, is that what you're saying?
Well, you know what, whatever you want to call it we've been doing that all along. What is unsaid -- okay. So now when he goes to the third grade 15,000 kids like you said and we send them to summer school and he still doesn't make it and we hold him over in the third grade and he still doesn't make it, so now you're telling me that there's no social promotion. So he's going to say or she's going to say in the third grade until they meet that. Is that what you're saying? Well, are you telling me that this city is prepared to now have sixteen and seventeen year olds still sitting in the third grade. We know that's not going to happen. So we always had that situation. Kids were always held over once in the elementary school. Kids were always held over once in the middle schools if you -- you know what, they still didn't make it. They wound up dropping out or becoming -- sitting around until they're 22 or 23 years old, they try to sit around as long as they can in the high school situation.

The bottom line is I'm not in favor of the social promotion. I think that's one more gimmick that we have and unfortunately school is a social organisation. Politics has always been part of it and when you have male control and someone is putting their whole career on education then I have some really serious concerns about what are they going to do to get reelected? Then once they've been reelected and they're not going to be around any more, what do they do...
Interview

with this system that now was put in place because they felt
that this is my key to getting reelected. Now I'm
reelected, I'm in my second term, leave me alone, I'm going
back to when Bloomberg thing I hope the school system stays.
My experience has shown that it's not going to stay. Even
if he puts things in place that are really good right now
and he gets through and he gets to the election, he hasn't
really brought about the kind of meaningful change that's
really going to make a lasting difference.

The other thing that I'm really concerned about is I
know the model. The model is that you have a chief
executive officer as the chancellor. Well, in this
particular case the mayor has really become the quasi
chancellor and you need further proof. Any time something
hits the headlines in the school you don't have the
chancellor standing on the front steps with the microphone
talking about it. You have the mayor standing on the front
steps. The chancellor has become nothing more than a
delivery boy standing behind him [inaudible].

So what really worries me is I really don't think they
really have brought in a really quality instructional
person. I don't even think Lamb was a quality instructional
person. She's not the reputation which she came -- there's
no big surprise she ran into trouble when she got it, but
you got the mayor [inaudible], you got the chancellor
lawyer, and then you got a whole bunch of other things.
interview

Nothing personal against Carma [inaudible]. I think she's a good systemic person. She's been around a long time, but I'm not sure they really put the educator in the second seat, a powerful educator like some of the other cities that took this model. Chief operating officer, yes, he can be business, he can be a lawyer, he could be anything, and then parallel to him the real educational needs. I don't see that happening.

I see the chancellor -- the mayor sort of making the decision and I don't really see the checks and balances of a quality education. From my time around when the mayor or the chancellor will name people who they say oh, no, that's not true Barry, we got this and we got this, my experience has shown me that a lot of the people that they're naming as the educational people are what I would consider nothing personal. Secondary and tertiary managerial type that in they've been around. They're not the real leader type thing and they're still survived and now they've drifted into these positions and now the city is holding them up as the model and the reason they're a model is they're not really leadership. They're just going along. If you looked at the old system they were the tertiary ring of people. They were not the upper level people. Now we've promoted them, given them new titles and made them the upper level thing and surrounding them also with a lot of good Harvard people, Yale people, young people with a lot of good ideas but those
are untested ideas and these folks, a lot of them are naive and need to be sort of groomed into what the realities of the system is.

If I may, again, you take it, you look at the world around us today. We have people who decided that we could do A, B and C and then when we put troops on the ground or put people there we found that the reality, when you bump into the reality you find out that the theories maybe had to go back to -- remolded because they sound good in the board room but they really don't shape up well in the reality type of situation. So that's my curriculum change, leadership.

Q. Thank you.

A. There's one other thing I'll put on the tape. You can use this whenever you want. I tell this. It really shows my facetiousness at times.

Someone asked me what happens when we have no time for a lot of things in the curriculum, like we don't pay attention to the affected domain. The -- in Progress High School, one of the things that makes Progress High School different than any other high school is that they didn't forget that they had to develop the person before they could worry whether the person was an educated person or whether the person would do a lot of things. Progress recognized that. But what I -- someone asked me what do you think all this emphasis on the reading and the math and then I said well, what about building the social emotional development
of the child and you hear people, no, no, no, we don't have time. We got to get ready for the tests. So they said what do you think is going to happen? I said well, you know what I think is going to happen, in about fifteen years when we visit the prisons the students that are -- our former students that are now in the prison they will be able to show us transcripts where they got higher scores on their reading test and higher scores on their math test. So we will have a higher scoring population in the prison but we will have done nothing to reduce the population that's in the prison because we haven't dealt with the heart, we haven't dealt with the social emotion. If you tell me we have no time then this society should be ready to pay the price of what it's going to get. Remember I said early, schools turn out the kind of citizen they want and if this is what you want as a citizen someone that can say in the third grade I didn't hold over because I passed that test, I wasn't a one, I was a two, but now I'm here for fifteen years to life. With me that's what you consider to be a productive citizen, I have a problem with that.
some folks fought for decentralization and thought that they had won the battle, my opinion is that the powers that be wanted it to be decentralized. They saw at that time that New York City was changing and that the powers or the population was going to be, in the near future is going to be a minority population and the people in power didn't want to see New York City having a minority mayor with minority control of school boards and so the decentralization was given its -- was given more -- what would I call it. Was allowed to happen by the people in power so that you could diffuse the overall power of minority groups in New York City so that they would -- you could still, have areas where -- I would, say the way they broke it down you would have majority of the districts control by other than minority groups and now in the late '90s as the policies that were instituted by different chancellors and different mayors which resulted in New York City becoming a place where people wanted to live where folks from could be New York City was more attractive to the non minority populations and it became the especially towards the late '90s the love of Wall Street and the love of people with money and the non minority population started to infiltrate city again with the -- with a few changes in the policies of the state which resulted in more minorities, black and Hispanics especially in particular losing their jobs due to changes in the requirements of New York State. The
Interview

positions that were vacated by these folks were now filled by non minority folks from other parts of the United States and from -- even from Europe and from Long Island. So that when those changes were seen and it appears that New York City is not going to be turning to be a minority community or a minority -- a majority of minority members are not going to control the city. The city and the state along with the legislature decided that hey, it's okay now to have mayoral control since the minorities won't be controlling that huge budget in New York City.

Q. I'd like to follow up. You mentioned -- made reference to a handful of administrators having played a role in the stability of District 14. Can you tell me if there was UFT, United Federation of Teachers role at all?

A. There was -- in District 14 you had a -- when I speak of a handful of administrators I include definitely the United Federation of Teachers that had a big input to what happened in the district. In fact, I would say they control the district in the names of Mario Defano and Bill Rogers who was the superintendent. They basically controlled the entire district. But I would say that even though District 14 was controlled by Mario Defano and Bill Rogers and a handful of others who coopted the parents and were able to manipulate them to support some of their policy, I still believe I believed at the time and believe now that the central board acted to support these types of efforts or at
least was looked the other way, when folks by the name of Defano or Rogers did what they did.

I would say that the -- one of the things that the districts or the leadership in the districts who had bad intentions, which Mario Defano and Bill Rogers appeared to have, what they were able to do is they were able to continue to be able to blame the central board when things went wrong. Part of the reason was that the districts were given somewhat limited powers to do as they saw fit and supposedly parts of their budget were controlled by the central board.

In District 14 which had a horrendous history of corruption which took part which entailed the superintendent Bill Rogers’ and Mario Defano, the responsibilities of the central board which was to audit and to manage the district’s budget in terms of how things were being spent. The central board did not seem to do the right job because they were able to “supposedly allegedly steal” $6 million over a span of fifteen, twenty years. To do something like that you needed to have someone who I believed looked the other way.

I was told, I’m not sure for how many years, that District 14 unlike every other district in New York City was one of the districts that did not always spend their allocated budget amounts and was able year in and year out to return money to the central board. They were basically
Interview

Magicians unfortunately at the time taking money from classrooms and student services and not spending it appropriately and therefore they were able to save money but they basically on the backs of children. Again, the central board did not inquire as to how this was happening because they did have supposedly ultimate responsibility in terms of auditing the districts. Nevertheless, the communities involved again were very large. It was between -- encompassed Greenpoint community and -- the Greenpoint community and the Williamsburg community and parts of Bedford Stuyvesant and also one of the communities that had a great impact on how monies were spent yet they didn't have one single child in the district was the Hasidic community. They were able to help the powers that be to maintain control over what happened in the district.

The fact that the central board still maintains some kind of budgetary controls over the district meant that the people in charge were not the ultimate people responsible and thus were able to fool a lot of people. I believe that if you had smaller districts with the ultimate responsibility laying in the hands of those in the district and those school board members so that they will be responsible for the entire budget and how it was handled with oversight by the state that the types of problems that occurred in District 14 and in a couple of other districts.
Interview

would not have occurred because they would not be able to point a finger some place else as some administrators were prone to do on many, many occasions.

You're always going to get some people who believe they're very smart being able to manipulate others, but when you make into something of a manageable district with only 5,000 to 6,000 or 7,000 students that makes it a lot easier for people to one, get involved; two, to recognize the implications of the monies being allocated and why they have to be involved. When it's very, very large and people don't even know where half the meetings are then it makes it a little more difficult. So even if the districts that were decentralized they probably should have been a lot smaller for it to have been an effective program. But I'm not so sure if those in power wanted it to be effective. They just wanted it to be some place where they could point their finger at other people rather than themselves.

Those in politics are not in politics because they're stupid. They're very smart and they're always looking to find someone else that a finger can be pointed at rather than themselves. A lot of the social problems that exist in New York City and in the nation are not just the result of "schooling." They're the result of political policies and tax policies, housing policies that result in poor people and people with less power being pushed into certain areas and consequently being relegated to jobs that don't pay a
interview

sufficient amount and that they are always in a stressful survival mode rather than the mode of trying to change and to help themselves.

Could you comment on the UFT's role in school board elections?

The UFT played a tremendous role especially when Mario Defano was involved in the district. They literally spent thousands upon thousands of dollars, thousands of man hours getting volunteers to work at all kinds of hours to impact on who was elected or not elected in the school board elections. The membership of the UFT benefitted from this situation because many of them, more than a handful became administrators or were considered highly when the administrators selection of administrators became a possibility.

The UFT provided funding for just about all the candidates so it didn't really matter who won. They provided -- more importantly they provided bodies, personnel to handle the campaigns, and give out the literature, contacted community and so the UFT had a tremendous, tremendous impact on the school boards. In fact, I would say they definitely had the most influence of anyone else. If you didn't have the support of the UFT then it was hard to be elected.

But this was something that probably would have been worked out in the long run had there been more...
accountability. One of the things that I think was a major problem in the school board and that was purposely set up the way it was in that the central board did very little monitoring of the processes and working of school boards themselves. The school boards, especially in District 14, provided very little if any substance in terms of its school board meetings. The school board basically never dealt with the real issues of how you can monitor and in a sense (inaudible). The personnel being selected, the names were given, but there were many other areas where the school board did not show -- work with transparency. The selection of many personnel were done privately or if not they were not mentioned as part of school board meetings. The salaries involved were never mentioned. You had personnel being assigned to different schools including teachers or aids that never become a part of any agenda.

In order to have true transparency and be able to force people into being accountable what the central board had to do, which it refused to do, was to require that all personnel being assigned, being promoted, being given a job in a district such as even aids or para professionals, teachers, those folks should have become part of the minute of a school board so that people could see who -- the entire community could see who was being selected, why they were being selected, some rationale being given. The budget being proposed should have been given much more time to be
Interview

explained to the communities involved, and for the most part
the district in District 14 explanation of budgets was... if
it's not nil it was very perfunctory and very skimpy. The
educational programs being proposed were not at all
thorough, but this I think is happening also in the new
decentralized system. They have so large I would doubt I
tend to say that most people don't know where the meetings
are being held.

Again, yes, decentralization had its drawbacks in terms
of some of the things I mentioned, but I don't think that it
was the fault of decentralization itself. It was the fault
of the way it was arranged so that folks in power could
always point a finger at the central board why things are
not getting done. Had more strict parliamentary procedures
and reporting been in place, I think that... more parent
training had been in place regarding what to expect from
school boards it's quite possible that... I know that things
would have probably worked differently even with its
drawbacks as having large population and having an awful lot
of schools being part of a district.

To summarize, the UFT had a tremendous impact, undue
influence. I'm not so sure that it shouldn't have been that
way, but unfortunately in some cases they were able to
manipulate the system in a way that did not always benefit
the children first.

Q. You've described the impact that the UFT has had on

574
Interview:

[inaudible] school boards. Can you describe now the role and the impact that elected officials currently have in the restructure, New York City Department of Education, and compare that to what their role may have been or may not have been in the past?

A. My observations of the role of elected officials in reference to District 14 is that elected officials had some influence but it was a shared influence with other parties and it was in a way one that was not a very strong influence and they in terms of the community school boards had to guess ask for favors which I guess they could get but it wasn't the same thing as controlling it. I think that in the new process and the new restructuring elected officials have much more influence, are able to influence the mayor, the other party leaders, stay in the background but yet have much more influence in the -- in my observations in District 14 this did not occur. Elected officials' influence is much more minimal and which was -- wasn't for good or bad that's how I saw it.

The new structure I think is a lot more influence and they're not accountable for it because in the new structure only the administration is accountable and whatever influence the elected officials have does not have to be revealed which is not unusual and may be the way things work or have worked in this country for hundreds of years.

Q. The New York City Board of Education was abolished and
Interview

Interviewer: Replaced by new panel for educational privacy. What are your thoughts on that?

I think that the actions taken by Bloomberg not too long ago reflect what their role is. The role is not to provide for original ideas or diversity or different thoughts on how things might work or to provide the input from different segments of the population or different interest groups. Their role is to do whatever the mayor said, do it when he says it and basically they are a rubber stamp for whatever the mayor wants and whenever he wants it, and those, who do not agree with what he wants are removed without any—without much fanfare. Either they do what he wants or they are removed and this is sad because unfortunately the book is not written on education that says that we have all the answers.

Although you have the national government legislatures and [inaudible] being put forth that give you what supposedly are the ultimate answers in education in reference to reading, math and everything else, just because a government promotes an idea or a concept doesn’t mean that it’s right. In fact, history would say that those who follow what the government says is correct are usually historically proven incorrect. We can go back as far as Galileo. We can talk about other folks not just in education, in all areas, in science that when the government is the one that is promoting, that is trying to enforce a
type of belief then you probably have that if it needs the government to support it then it's probably wrong.

So if you give all the power to Mayor Bloomberg and he can make those decisions then it's probably wrong.

Unfortunately it stifles different ideas. It stifles creativity and it stifles independence of thought. So unfortunately that is the fact that is occurring now. Anyone who sees it differently then isn't following the events that have occurred recently.

Q: What in your opinion will be the impact on learning the instructional process?

A: The new structure that has been established has I think selected in terms of instructional focus of -- I think has great potential. It has great potential because it has adapted some instructional methods or instructional ideas and concepts that are consistent with research and good educational and sound educational base. However, the hysterical urgency at which the changes are being tried or tried to be implemented make it so that it will fail. There is no way that you can do overnight -- this is what they're trying to do, is to implement the types of changes that they want and expect the result that they think they can get from it.

At the elementary level especially in particular having the concept and ideas of Lucy Carkin and [inaudible] and having children read all the time are great ideas. Trying
force it down the threats of professionals overnight is going to be very difficult and very hard to take, which I've watched the coaches, had not observed them working in the schools. However the litter that I hear in terms of a position where people resent the things that they're being told to do and unfortunately it's probably not because they don't want to. It's because they don't understand it. It doesn't just come about from a great deal of training, a great deal of exposure. It also comes about from an acceptance and a realization that the changes that are being proposed for the teachers is of benefit to the teachers because it's a benefit to the student.

I believe that given some time these ideas will be accepted. In fact, they are ideas that work and had been accepted country wide in many, many other communities. By the same token, these are not ideas that had been grasped or accepted in one year. They've slowly evolved in these other communities where they see that educational methodology is something that a community of teachers has to accept and evolves according to how they see it. It's not something you can force down the throats of people.

In terms of the actual success of any concept or idea in education to say that it's going to be from one year to the next or two years is really not tenable. It's not something that happens, but yet the mayor in his wisdom is going to now require that third grade students pass a
particular test. Unfortunately the majority of the population and even newspapers will not focus on what's really happening and that the -- what the mayor is trying to do is to make sure that the third graders of today this -- may 2004 will not be fourth graders in 2005. If they're not fourth graders in 2005 those who failed the test in third grade will not take the fourth grade test in fourth grade and therefore the fourth grade scores will probably soar in 2005 and the mayor can use that to prove how successful his administration is.

Any time that you have this much -- education has always had policy involved with it. Not always. Not as much as it has now. In terms of administrations, there have not been as involved or as [inaudible] involved on a day to day basis as the current mayor and politician.

Unfortunately the manipulation of schools, administrations, administrators and teachers and students will be an ongoing event that the rest of the population has to be weary of because it will mean that you can't trust anything that's happening since it will be used for political purposes to get someone elected or to get someone unelected in a political office.

The history of politics being involved in education is not new. However, the strong emphasis on testing and the involvement of politicians of which really started in 1983 with the -- a nation at risk which was chaired by George
Interview

Bush, Sr. under the Reagan Administration has really polarized the two parties or different educational interested groups into putting the focus of the success of a nation, the success of individuals solely on education when this is not literally the case since there are a lot more factors that get involved into someone's success or the nation's success than just the educational system that's in place.

Unfortunately with the newspapers acting as a cheerleaders, education will always get the blame for what's wrong in our nation and really get any credit when things go right in the nation. In the late '80s when things were not going well and the nation was set to be behind the Japanese and the Germans in terms of production, in terms of efficiency, education was blamed as the culprit and that this is education or the lack thereof of certain skills and science and math by our students which considered what was wrong. When our economy became the best in the world in the '90s, and we seem to be the leader in the world in everything credit was given to the wonderful CEOs, the wonderful managers of our economy, and education was still considered deficient in providing the types of workers and the type of people that we needed in our work force.

The contradiction in that are the enigma which this provides is ludicrous. So it doesn't matter. Educational forces will always be a great target for politicians and
Interview

until the nation realizes that this is a cause we will have
problems at least difficulties in moving on and providing a
better educational environment for our students.

Let me add that in the -- in the last four or five
years there have been tremendous amount of legislation at
the state level that has focused on what the best reading
programs are legislating that certain techniques, certain
methodology could use to teach reading. This has quadrupled
in the state legislatures throughout the nation. This is
sad in that you have legislators being so intrically
involved in proposing specifics to educational agencies.

Many of these legislatures or people proposing these new
ideas are unfortunately being influenced and pushed by a lot
of religious groups in fact. Whenever you have religious
groups being directly involved and influencing legislators
into making legislative proposals or establishing laws in
states influencing the way that something is taught then you
really have to question how effective any of this will be
because religious groups as any other interested group have
a particular way of viewing what the outcomes of education
should be and you unfortunately will not get the type of
legislation which in a sense allows folks who know the area,
the specifics, the specialists to be able to select what is
best for the students without worrying about how it will
impact politically on them.