

Parents & the Community matter on Schools

The Mayor's comments on his Friday WOR radio show reported today in the New York Post (see below) offends this [former](#) community school board member and parent of two children who attended the the NYC public schools. The whole concept of community involvement, of parent involvement, even control by a popularly-elected public official (aka the Mayor) mandates that those who make education decisions remain accountable to parents, the community and our electeds. Bottom line remains, if school administrators – especially those at the top such as the Schools Chancellor – and those who appoint them (our elected Mayor in this case), fail to make the case on a policy to parents and the community, perhaps they need to re-think the policy or its presentation, or both. Outside the City, most school districts still elect their school boards. What I [stated](#) as the 2003-2004 school year began still resonates, “I submit that to improve our schools, including keeping our best schools ones where students achieve their best, we need to refocus the debate to teaching and learning and how to support that.” For more on school governance please look at pages 26 and 27 of [CIVIC 2030](#).

- Corey Bearak, Queens Civic Congress.

http://www.nypost.com/seven/05232009/news/regionalnews/lesson_tensions_170608.htm

NEW YORK POST

LESSON TENSIONS

By DAVID SEIFMAN and CARL CAMPANILE

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Mayor Bloomberg said yesterday that parents should butt out of trying to dictate educational policy as the debate over mayoral control of the schools intensifies.

"You do not want parents setting educational policy. You do not want parents telling teachers how to teach. Teachers would not be happy about that," Bloomberg said on his WOR radio program.

"That's what you have professionals for," he added.

Bloomberg is battling to persuade the state Legislature to extend the 2002 law that gave him authority to run the schools. The law expires on June 30, and there's a push to rein in the mayor's powers over city education.

The biggest criticism of mayoral control is that Bloomberg and Schools Chancellor Joel Klein have rammed through policies -- such as school closings -- without adequate parental notification and input. They have disputed those charges.

The mayor sees parental involvement as positive when parents help their children with studies and hold schools accountable for results. But he draws the line at policy.

Meanwhile, Bloomberg opposes plans pushed by school activists and some lawmakers to beef up community school districts and empower school superintendents. He said that's a return to the failed policies of the old Board of Education.

"If you want to really hurt the school system," Bloomberg said, "let's take some money out of classrooms and build 32 more bureaucracies."

Parent activists said Bloomberg's comments prove their point that Hizzoner and Klein ignore their concerns.

"That's dismissive and arrogant," said Jim Devor, a parent leader with Community Education Council 15 in Brooklyn. "He's contemptuous of parents."

Even lawmakers in Albany who support mayoral control said Bloomberg should give parents greater say.

"We want the school districts to be basically what they should be: a place where parents, teachers and principals can deal with problems," said state Sen. Frank Padavan (R-Queens).

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