

CAMPAIGN FOR FAIR LATINO REPRESENTATION

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 FairLatinoRepresentation

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May 9, 2016

Hon. John J. Flanagan
Majority Leader
New York State Senate
Room 330, State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12247
flanagan@nysenate.gov

Hon. Carl L Marcellino
Chair, Education Committee
New York State Senate
188 State Street
Room 811, Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12247
marcelli@nysenate.gov

Re: Opposition to Mayoral Control of NYC Schools

Dear Majority Leader Flannagan and Chairman Marcellino:

The Campaign for Fair Latino Representation (CFLR) opposes the continuation of and questions the proposal for Mayoral control of the New York City school system. We would like to propose instead that the Senate adopt legislation that would call for the adoption of an elected school board for New York City and provides for a one year transitional extension of Mayoral control during which an independent commission is established to develop a new school governance system.

We believe that the Latino community and all New Yorkers would be best served with an elected school board and a decentralized system that would promote the full participation of parents and the city's residents in decisions affecting the one million students in their schools. Latinos in particular, who make up the largest segment of the city's public school students (41 percent), have been ill-served by the current system. For example, despite the large size of our student body, Latinos only make up 14 percent of the school system's teaching staff, a problem not being addressed under the current system.

We believed that Mr. de Blasio's campaign promise of being more inclusive meant that our community would have a greater role in shaping the city's educational policies. Instead, parents complain of their exclusion and SCHOOL educational achievements remain mediocre. We believe that school governance in New York City needs to be reflective of the system of elected boards that is practiced throughout the state.

In addition, recent opinion polls among residents of the city have indicated that New Yorkers are opposed or very divided over the issue of Mayoral control. The existing research on mayoral control does not conclude that it results in higher

educational achievement. However, at no time has Mayor de Blasio held public hearings on the subject or consulted with the public in other ways. While we agree with the Mayor that the educational system needs real improvement, we do not agree that mayoral control will deliver that. This issue seems to be one more example of this Mayor's general top-down approach to policy making and governing that has been roundly criticized with respect to his rezoning and housing plans and how he has represented himself when running for office.

We urge the New York Senate to represent the best interests of Latinos and other New Yorkers by charting a new course in the governance of the New York City school system. Give the tax-paying residents of this city the right and opportunity to directly participate in the improvement of our schools. End the mayoral control of New York City schools.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,

Javier A. Nieves

Javier A. Nieves

Chair, Campaign for Fair Latino Representation

Former Member, New York State Assembly (1993-4)