
Mayoral Leadership and Involvement in Education

Part of the New Politics of Education

Presidents' Joint Commission on LAUSD Governance

Testimony by

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Who is the Mayor?

- Has the whole city as their constituency.
- Is usually elected citywide not by districts.
- Serves as the city's CEO and highest elected official in the city.
- Responsible for city staff, offices and policies that provide programs and services needed by students enrolled in school and their families.
- Held accountable for services by voters whether or not they have full responsibility for them such as education.
- Uses the bully pulpit to discuss issues and promote initiatives.
- Takes the lead in promoting initiatives on behalf of the city.
- Represents the city in all official matters and on all issues.

Mayoral Roles in the City

Convener

Facilitator

Broker

Partner

Resource

Catalyst

Provider

Leader

Manager

What has been the Traditional Mayor-School System Relationship?

- Traditionally there has been little to no connection between the social services and education or school.
- There has been little communication between city hall and the school system. Too often this is to the detriment OF a student's education.
- Services that are related to but not directly educational are rarely co-located in a school.
- There is A cultural barrier between the two governance structures in part perpetuated by the fear of takeover or loss of power by the school system and board. It is also due to a sense of history which is ironically not totally correct.



*What actions or behaviors
define mayoral leadership
and involvement?*

The phrase DOES NOT imply or mean a mayoral takeover of the school system.

What it does mean:

- Taking a visible lead role on tough issues
- Speaking out when necessary at the front end of the debate not late in the game
- Including education as a priority for the city
- Requiring city agencies to work with education to provide comprehensive services
- Filling the void
- Making sure schools are included as a critical element in neighborhood development or redevelopment
- Establishing that schools are centers of community

Mayoral Qualities & Skills

Creates the conditions

Provides a political buffer

Facilitates different dimensions

Provides a lobbying arm

Acts as a political advocate

Facilitates the outcry on an issue

Creates a more formal involvement

Makes EXPLICIT what has been implicit

Calls for transparency

Coordinates A comprehensive strategy

Orchestrates

Knows how to get things done

5 Types of Mayoral Involvement

- 1) **Total Control** - The mayor selects the school board and school superintendent. *Chicago, New York City, Cleveland, Boston, Harrisburg*
- 2) **Partial Control** - The mayor selects part or all of the school board who in turn selects superintendent. *Philadelphia, Providence, New Haven, Trenton, Oakland, Baltimore, Indianapolis*
- 3) **Partnership** - The mayor and school superintendent work together to address common issues and initiatives to improve education. *St. Louis, St. Paul, Denver, San Jose, Phoenix, Columbus, Akron, Toledo, Ft. Worth, Austin, Louisville, Nashville, Long Beach, Miami, Bridgeport, Norfolk, Atlanta*
- 4) **Medium Involvement** - Mayor may want to do more but is stymied by the political environment or relationship with the school system. *Des Moines, Kansas City, Manchester, Charlotte, St. Petersburg, Omaha, West Palm Beach, Sacramento, Milwaukee*
- 5) **Withdrawal or Lack of Interest** – Efforts to be involved are thwarted by road blocks or there is no interest in greater responsibility. *Minneapolis, Newark, Little Rock, Boise, Garden Grove, Cincinnati*

Ways in which Mayors can be involved:

- Partner with the school system on specific initiatives
- Convene meetings that involve a cross section of community leaders
- Lead the effort to recreate/redesign high schools
- Make contracting and management of non-education functions an Office of the Mayor responsibility
- Manage and host after-school programs
- Share parks and recreation facilities
- Provide city funding for tutoring, after-school, reading programs and mentoring
- Provide city social services at schools
- Use their mayoral bully pulpit to take the lead on raising public awareness
- Run a slate of candidates for school board seats.
- Request the state legislature to give the mayor the authority to take legal responsibility for the school system

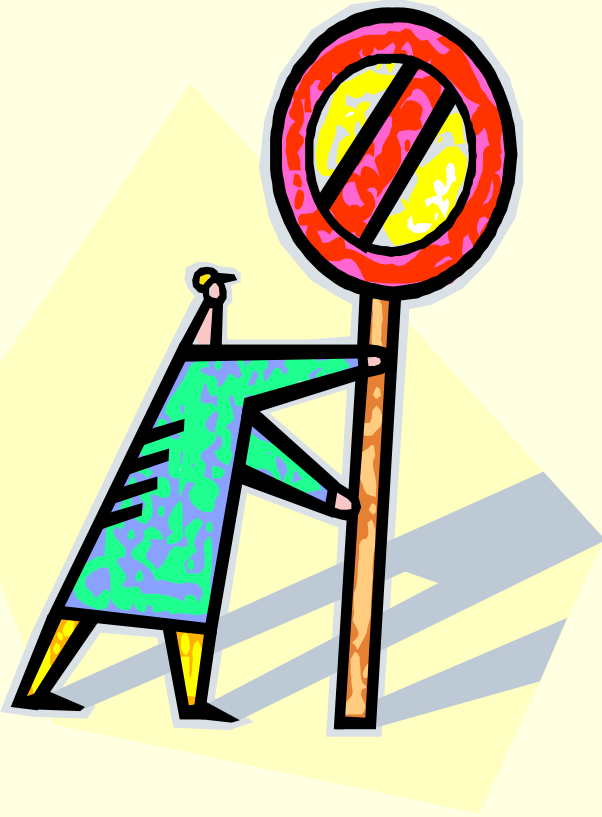
Suggested Strategies for Mayoral Leadership & Involvement in LA

- Add the superintendent of schools to the cabinet.
- Make the school budget part of the city budget.
- Appoint the members of the school board in a non-political process but not the superintendent who is selected by the board.
- Define clearly the role and function of the school board.
- Manage back office activities currently conducted by the school system that can be done more cost effectively and efficiently by the city. Cost savings are returned to the core business of education – teaching and learning.
- Work with the superintendent to revise the management structure of the school system so it is more responsive, efficient and effective.

Suggested Strategies Continued . . .

- Require directors of city social services to work with their counterparts in the school system.
- Make sure or if possible require that new schools built in the city are centers of community, joint use facilities, and find ways to include in these schools additional city services that enhance the opportunity for students to learn.
- Develop policies and programs that help recruit and retain teachers
- At a minimum monthly or regularly scheduled meetings of the mayor, school superintendent, heads of LA colleges and universities and business leadership to discuss strategies to improve education in the city.

What I would NOT recommend?



- Increase the number of members on the school board if it continues to be elected or even appointed.
- Make school board membership a full time occupation.
- Continue to perpetuate the cultural divide between city government and the school system.
- Continue to have too many bosses for superintendents and principals