



State Board of Education Resolution
Recommendations on Changes to Education Governance in the District of Columbia
SR22-17

WHEREAS, the D.C. State Board of Education (State Board) is committed to ensuring students, caregivers, and educators receive an excellent and equitable school experience;

WHEREAS, the State Board has sought to understand the strengths and areas of improvement for the D.C. education system in general and D.C.’s mayoral control system in particular;

WHEREAS, the State Board established an ad-hoc Board Governance Committee in February 2021 with the passage of SR21-2, “On the Establishment of Committees”;

WHEREAS, the State Board defines “education governance” as the structures, processes, and lines of decision-making that are designed to ensure school accountability, transparency, responsiveness, rule of law, stability, equity and inclusiveness, empowerment, and broad-based community participation;

WHEREAS, the State Board, after two years of research and engagement with experts, stakeholders, and the public—using surveys, focus groups, and other forms of community feedback—heard the following takeaways:

- To improve parent and caregiver engagement, D.C. residents want increased clarity on the education system hierarchy and which agency to contact for certain issues, including their specific contact information,
- D.C. residents are aware of some D.C. education agencies and offices by name but are not aware of their specific roles within the D.C. education system. Residents perceive the education governance system and structure to be overwhelming and difficult to navigate, even for the most informed and involved parents/caregivers,
- To ease the complicated structure of the D.C. education system, there should be a central website with everything residents need to know about education and schooling in D.C. and share monthly communications with concerns that families and students shared and how they are being addressed,
- Students, educators, and caregivers need a more streamlined approach to communication, more opportunities to give feedback, and greater transparency for how that feedback is utilized,
- Community-based engagement by the State Board is key to raising its visibility and leverage as a trusted resource,
- Issues that need to be immediately addressed by the education system in D.C. are program quality in schools, mental health issues of students and school staff, bullying and violence issues, and too many tests;





- D.C. residents asked for restructuring education governance and power dynamics to allow for stakeholders to have greater input and for decision-making to be more transparent and accountable (i.e., rethinking mayoral control, increasing school autonomy, removing bureaucratic redundancies, etc.); and
- The education system in D.C. should focus on ensuring:
 - Equitable funding and resources to schools, students, and educators
 - All students' access to a well-rounded education, and
 - Improving transparency in school data, such as how funds are spent;

WHEREAS, after further feedback from the public and additional expert witnesses at the November 16 Public Meeting, the State Board found that improvements need to be made in the following education governance areas:

- Data transparency and access,
- Student, caregiver, and educator voice in the education decision-making process,
- Timely resolutions to individual education issues posed by students, caregivers, and educators,
- Easily accessible information on the roles and responsibilities of all D.C. government agencies that impact education,
- Efficient and effective communication, and action across all government agencies impacting education, and
- The need for checks and balances that assure higher quality, credible education data and practices; and

WHEREAS, the State Board developed recommendations and topics to further explore to address the above areas of improvement.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the State Board recommends the DC Council act legislatively to ensure the following actions are implemented to improve the educational experience of students, caregivers, and educators:

1. Expand the State Board's authority to obtain data upon request from D.C.'s education agencies (e.g., the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME), the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), and the DC Public Charter School Board (PCSB)) in a timely way,
2. Authorize the State Board to initiate policy in the areas in which it currently has statutory approval authority as enumerated under § 38–2652 and to amend policies brought to the State Board by OSSE,
3. Authorize the State Board to approve the opening, closing, and siting of schools,



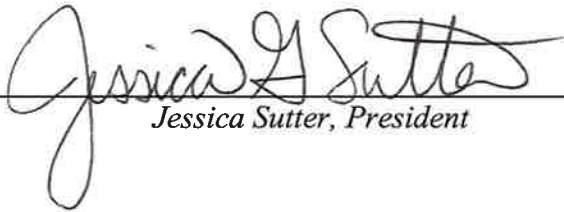


4. Afford the State Board with a “great weight”¹ requirement in all government agency decisions that impact schools, students, and education stakeholders,
5. Create a centralized website or education governance hub and constituent hotline that maps, tracks, and closes constituent education issues under the auspices of the Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education and Office of the Student Advocate, and
6. Create a citywide board that oversees DC Public Schools (DCPS) operations and facilities;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the DC Council should explore and expand options and conduct further research to improve the current education system for the following topics:

1. Expanding the State Board’s role to include appointing the State Superintendent of Education, with confirmation from the DC Council;
2. Creating a structure, independent of DCPS, that would hear termination appeals from teachers and principals who believe they were terminated because of their views on school and system practices;
3. More broadly building structures and improving the capacity for students, their caregivers, educators, and community members to participate in advisory capacities in a more equitable way; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that as the DC Council considers these recommendations, it should consider how to provide the State Board with increased staffing and programmatic capacity to ensure the above recommendations are implemented with fidelity and the greatest degree of success, accounting for wider State Board roles, responsibilities, and authority.

Date Adopted: 12/21/2022 Signed: 
Jessica Sutter, President

¹ “Great weight” in this instance would resemble the requirement afforded to Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANC) enumerated under § 1–309.10.

