

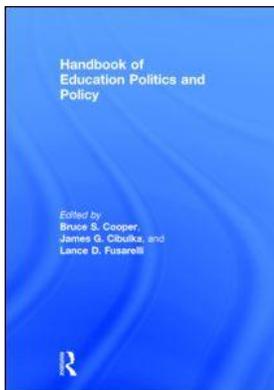
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ADVOCATES AND PARTNERS FOR EDUCATION EXCELLENCE

A 21st-Century Role for Mayors

Frederick S. Edelstein

INTRODUCTION

In the five years since “The Evolving Political Role of Urban Mayors in Education” chapter was published in the *Handbook of Education Politics and Policy*, mayors are seeing their role in education from a slightly different perspective. Their understanding of the importance of education to their community and its economy has matured, and most have adjusted their approach to be participants, advocates, and partners in the education reform process. Mayors are no longer outsiders looking in, but are insiders engaged and often using their bully pulpits as advocates for change. It should also be stated that other locally elected leaders such as county executives have also taken an interest in a role in education.

The public discussion is less about “takeover or control,” although there is still interest among some mayors. Now, the conversation is more about how mayors can be advocates for improving education in their city, town, or community and take an active role in the change process. The importance of mayoral leadership and involvement rose to a new level when Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, speaking before a gathering of mayors and superintendents in March 2009, urged the mayors to assume greater responsibility for improving public education. Secretary Duncan took the position that mayors can provide steady and strong leadership to raise performance in schools.

These remarks are another indication of the growing interest in mayoral accountability in a climate of declining public confidence in America’s education system (Wong & Farris, 2011, p. 215). Duncan has participated in four consecutive winter meetings of the U.S. Conference of Mayors at which he discussed education issues and indicated his willingness to have one-on-one conversations with attending mayors.

Mayors are now more focused on what they can do within their communities as a partner, and connect the variety of services and issues including education, health care, social services, workforce development, environment, juvenile justice, and the city’s economy. Thus, the coordination and possibly control of these functions becomes the role of the local general purpose government (a city or county) (Henig, 2013).

The range of roles of what mayors can do and how they are engaged has not changed significantly. What has evolved is their effort to improve communication and messaging, explain and show by example how they will be engaged, and connect issues and services. During the past five years Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson, the current president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, has made education a priority both during his presidency and prior to that by leading an effort to increase mayoral involvement in education. Since being elected mayor and becoming active in the conference he has made an ongoing effort to explain to mayors the variety of roles that they can have in education at all levels, especially at the local level. Much of his campaign is based on the strategies and examples included in the U.S. Conference of Mayors' action guide entitled "Mayoral Leadership and Involvement in Education" (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2006), which was developed and written by Frederick (Fritz) Edelstein during his tenure at the conference. The action guide's mayoral examples have been updated, but the strategies and suggested types of involvement are the same in newest published version of the guide.

The depth and breadth of involvement by mayors in urban, suburban, and rural cities and towns have expanded as a result of a better practical understanding of the complexity of education and related issues, and how they are linked within their community. Kenneth Wong (2011), in an article entitled "Redesigning Urban Districts in the USA," discusses the redrawing of boundaries between the school system and other major local institutions, and cites this change as a reform strategy. Wong attributes this change in part to mayoral involvement in education. Jeff Henig's new book, *The End of Exceptionalism in American Education* (2013), discusses education as part of general purpose government rather than as a separate entity or governmental function as it is currently. Thus, education becomes subsumed within city government rather than its own governmental entity.

The 1990s started a new wave of interest in education by mayors, beginning with the mayoral taking responsibility for and control of the Boston Public Schools, as well as Mayor Richard Daley's new responsibility for the Chicago Public Schools (now under the control of Mayor Rahm Emanuel). This was followed in 2001 by New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg's control of his city's schools with the approval of the state legislature, and later, Washington, DC. In 2007, Mayor Adrian Fenty received authority from the city council to take over the responsibility for the District of Columbia's public schools (now under Mayor Vincent Gray).

Other efforts for a more active mayoral role in education during this period included St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay's initiating the establishment of charter schools, and Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa's establishment of 40 mini school districts within the city after he failed to take over the city's schools. In February 2012, Cleveland (Ohio) Mayor Frank Jackson's proposal to the governor and state legislature to make changes to his city's schools was successful.

In late 2012, Columbus (Ohio) Mayor Michael Coleman became more engaged in his local district as a result of a school system scandal on data manipulation. He formed a special commission (with the support of Ohio's governor and the local business community) to review and recommend the restructuring of the Columbus school system. The commission's final report recommended increasing the mayor's role in education and the state's legislature passed legislation that institutionalized the recommendations of the commission. The recommendations have the support of the business community, education associations, and the governor.

Mayors in several other cities have discussed and considered mayoral control and expanded involvement including the cities of Bridgeport (Connecticut), Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Newark (New Jersey), Sacramento, St. Paul, and Minneapolis. So far, none has taken control, but are fully engaged.

Also, numerous mayors of smaller cities and communities have become engaged in the education reform conversation and process such as Davenport (Iowa) Mayor Dave Gluba, Pembroke Pines (Florida) Mayor Frank Ortis, Syracuse (New York) Mayor Stephanie Miner, and Welch (West Virginia) Mayor Reba Honaker.

However, mayoral control of school systems is not a universal trend. Regardless of the approach or level of interest, the basic rationale mayors use to have control of their local school systems is quite consistent. In Chicago, Cleveland, Boston, Philadelphia, Trenton, Providence, Hartford, New Haven, New York City, and Washington, DC the fundamental rationale has been accountability for the use of public dollars and the impact of education on the community as a whole. Other mayors use the same rationale as they move to increase their role in education, but not to control the public schools.

Mayors believe that their leadership and involvement can assist school districts to be more transparent, efficient, and accountable, as well as provide better coordination of services with other agencies that affect the lives of children and families. These efforts can result in improved student achievement, increased graduation rates, and improved level of skills needed to transition to postsecondary education or the world of work. More important, mayors understand that increased educational attainment is critical to maintaining a city's economic viability and is essential to attract new jobs and business. In Wong and Farris' discussion of regime theory, they provide another reason for a mayoral role in education. "The mayor is expected to engage other key stakeholders, he or she is uniquely positioned to overcome power fragmentation, to raise system performance and strengthen public confidence" (2011, p. 220).

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The present-day view that mayoral involvement in education can produce positive outcomes represents a marked departure from the past. At the turn of the 20th century—the last period when mayors had significant authority over public schools—the effects were not good. At that time, mayoral involvement in education was associated with widespread cronyism, corruption, and the predominance of adult interests over the interests of students. It was this situation that ultimately led reformers to replace mayoral control of education with a system in which public schools were overseen by local school boards and professional educators.

This chapter describes the growth and evolution of mayoral involvement and role in public education, and analyzes how it differs from the mayoral role more than a century ago. It is clear that the standards-based accountability movement in education, as well as the emergence of education as a high priority for voters, has resulted in the development of a form of electoral currency that creates political incentives for mayors to take a greater role in the management of their school districts or become involved in the issue given its impact on the city's economic well-being and how it is viewed as viable, robust, and healthy.

The passage of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001 increased awareness and understanding of educational achievement and related outcome data, increased

federal, state, and philanthropic support for educational improvement and change, and encouraged numerous reports and research studies that support linking social, family, and children's services to improve a student's opportunity for success in school and life. NCLB coupled with the historic effort by the National Governors' Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers to create and establish the Common Core of State Standards Initiative were instrumental in defining excellence, common sets of skills and knowledge, and a uniformity for education standards in the nation, which never before had a common set of standards. Both the statute and the initiative coupled with President Obama's education initiatives (Race to the Top and i3, which support common assessments) have contributed greatly to changing mayors' views as to whether they should become involved in the affairs of their cities' school systems and what they can do to effect change or at least be a part of the process (Kirst & Edelstein, 2006).

This chapter also discusses the continuing shift in how mayors see their leadership role and education's relationship to other key local government issues. Before the new wave of mayoral interest in education in the 1990s, very few mayors sought a role in public education because it was largely viewed as separate from the rest of the city's political and business life. Some mayors steer clear of their cities' schools to this day. But in many other places, mayors have found that they can use the bully pulpit as the chief elected official of the city to raise concerns about the quality of the education system, promote bond and tax levy efforts linking education to workforce development and key social services, and even question and criticize the local school board and superintendent. Prior to the 1990s, such actions were rare. The sea change here is the notion that local general purpose government has a role in education (Henig, 2013; Usdan, 2013).

Five mayors who took an interest in education and became actively engaged in local education efforts are now serving as governors and three as lieutenant governors. They have taken their mayoral experience and interest and moved it to the state. The five governors are Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper (former mayor of Denver), Kentucky Governor William Haslam (former mayor of Knoxville), Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy (former mayor of Stamford), California Governor Jerry Brown (former mayor of Oakland), and North Carolina Governor Pat McCrory (former mayor of Charlotte). Three former mayors, who were engaged in local education reform, serve as lieutenant governors: Gavin Newsom in California (former mayor of San Francisco), Jerry Abramson in Kentucky (former mayor of Louisville), and Robert Duffy in New York (former mayor of Rochester).

THE LITERATURE ON MAYORS AND EDUCATION

The literature on mayoral leadership and involvement is not extensive. Over the past 15 years more has been written on the topic because of the increased interest among mayors and policy makers. Most recently, the focus has been on the results of mayoral control, especially the New York City effort. Studies and analyses of the mayoral role in education have been undertaken by a variety of scholars including Michael Kirst, David Tyack, Larry Cuban, Mike Usdan, Kenneth Wong, Paul Hill, Jeff Henig, Wilbur Rich, Warren Simmons, Sarah Reckhow, Fritz Edelstein, and Clarence Stone. Some of the work includes Cuban and Usdan, 2003; Henig and Rich, 2003; Hill, 2005; Kirst, 2002; Kirst and Bulkley, 2003; Kirst and Wirt, 2005; Usdan, 1994, 2005, 2013; Wong, 2005, 2011; Wong and Shen, 2003a, 2003b; Wong and Farris, 2011; Simmons, 2005; Edelstein and LaRock,

2003; Henig, 2013; and Reckhow, 2013. Their research and writing, and the work of organizations such as the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and the National League of Cities, have established the primary body of research and information on the mayoral role in education.

Works of particular note that draw on the earlier scholarship in the politics of education include Jeff Henig and Wilbur Rich's edited work *Mayors in the Middle: Politics, Race, and Mayoral Control of Urban Schools* (2003); Larry Cuban and Mike Usdan, *Powerful Reforms with Shallow Roots* (2003); an *Education Week* commentary by Fritz Edelstein and J. D. LaRock, "Takeovers or Toeholds? Mayors Don't Need to Run Schools to Make Them Better" (2003); Fritz Edelstein's monograph for the U.S. Conference of Mayors, *Mayoral Leadership and Involvement in Education: An Action Guide for Success* (2006); his "The Evolving Political Role of Urban Mayors in Education" (2008); and the National League of Cities' *Improving Public Schools: Action Kit for Municipal Leaders* (2002).

The growth of interest in this topic was reflected in the summer 2006 issue of the *Harvard Educational Review*, which focused on the mayoral role in education through a series of articles by Michael Kirst and Fritz Edelstein, Mike Usdan, Kenneth Wong, Paul Hill, and Warren Simmons. Clearly, this topic will continue to spark scholarship because of its continued political saliency and as mayors try new and different approaches to being engaged at the local, state, and national levels.

Of the more recent work, Kenneth Wong in 2011 in an article on redrawing boundary lines of relationships entitled "Redesigning Urban Districts in the USA," and Wong and Farris' chapter in *Shaping Education Policy: Power and Process* entitled "Redrawing Institutional Boundaries" broaden the discussion of mayoral leadership roles. Two books published in 2013 that include discussions of the evolving mayoral role and what may influence that role are Jeff Henig's *The End of Exceptionalism in American Education*, and Sarah Reckhow's *Follow the Money: How Foundation Dollars Change Public School Politics*.

Much of the press, writing, and research have focused on takeover—not the change in the type of involvement mayors have undertaken. Takeover is still the "sexy" subject in part because it has taken place in the largest urban centers. Gone mostly unnoticed have been the fundamental change efforts by mayors, which are making a difference in the success of schools and students, and having an impact on the community as a whole.

ESTABLISHING THE MAYOR'S ROLE

Mayoral takeovers of school systems usually generate the most public attention, and much of the recent research has focused on mayoral control in New York City and Chicago. However, most mayors merely want to increase their working relationship with the public schools, not assume responsibility for their day-to-day management. The political and geographic configuration of school systems and local government often poses an obstacle to an increased mayoral role, particularly for large cities that are located in a county-based system of government, such as in Maryland, North Carolina, and Florida, and sporadically in other states like Virginia and Georgia (Edelstein et al., 2005).

In some cities, several public school systems are located within a city's limits, so mayoral control would not be practical or realistic. This exists in such cities as San Jose, Houston, Mobile, Dallas, San Antonio, Fresno, Indianapolis, and Omaha. A rare instance is when the city school system may be larger than the city limits. This is the case with the

Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), which encompasses more than 20 cities within its boundaries. When Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa sought in 2006 to initiate a takeover of LAUSD, this structural challenge posed a serious obstacle to the mayor's takeover plan. In the end, he was allowed to control a mini-district within LAUSD and within the confines of the city's boundaries.

In cities without such structural constraints, one can find mayors with some degree of control over or direct involvement with the public schools. Not all of these are recent. Several mayoral "control" arrangements are the result of long-standing governmental changes that occurred many years ago. Some of these are a result of the tradition of local governance by the town hall meeting. In cities such as Providence (Rhode Island), New Haven (Connecticut), Trenton (New Jersey), Hartford (Connecticut), and Oakland (California), the mayor selects either all or some of the members of the school board, and at times serves on it in an official or ex-officio capacity.

In Cleveland, the mayor has responsibility for selecting the school board; then the board selects the superintendent, but the mayor has no say in the budget development process. The mayor of Cleveland received responsibility for the city's public school system in 1998. In 2012, as a result of poor school performance, the district, the governor, and the state legislature agreed to a proposal made by the mayor and school superintendent with business community support to increase the mayoral role in an effort to improve the school system's performance and options for students.

The Cleveland process to select a school board includes an application, interview, and vetting to develop a slate of candidates. The slate is presented to the mayor and selections are made from the list. A similar approach is used in Providence. This process differs from that used in some of the "takeover cities," including Boston, Chicago, and New York, where the mayor directly appoints the school superintendent and all or most of the school board members. In Philadelphia, the mayor and the governor select the school board as set out in state law. Because Washington, DC is considered for the purposes of education both a city and a state, the takeover legislation created only an elected state board because a local board would be redundant. Under the current state statute, the New York City mayor and borough presidents select members of a policy board. With the election of Mayor de Blasio nothing has changed even though during the campaign he made several statements about changing the current structure. There was a review of this structure because the state statute is up for reauthorization after Mayor Bloomberg's third term (Liu, 2013).

Why have mayors become more involved in local public education? As stated several times earlier in this chapter, the standards and accountability movement in public education has played a significant role as has the access to quality data and the use of technology to provide greater transparency. As part of the U.S. Department of Education's Race to the Top Initiative, winning states are required to have districts provide individual student data to the state and to parents. Learning about and understanding student performance is easier and expected. Trying to hide poor performance or graduation data can only get administrators into trouble.

In 2012, Ohio's state education agency uncovered the manipulation of test and attendance data in several school systems. This included Columbus and forced the retirement of the school superintendent at the end of the 2012–2013 school year. A state investigation emboldened Columbus Mayor Michael Coleman and the community to increase their involvement and oversight and force a top-to-bottom examination of the district.

Mayor Coleman became visibly engaged in education. Up to this point during his tenure as mayor, Coleman's involvement was at arm's length except for managing and funding the city's after-school program. Coleman became enraged and frustrated over the school board's lack of cooperation, but not enough to want to ask for the power to take over the schools. He considered how he might replace or change the school board, but rejected that approach. The mayor's efforts have the support of Governor Kasich and the state legislature.

In 2013, as a result of the school system's problems that had come to light, the mayor along with business leaders created a citywide commission to determine how to improve the school system's management, organization, and delivery of education. Although the school board asked for the mayor's participation in the search for and selection of a new superintendent, it never followed through on this request. The search continued even after the mayor asked that it be delayed until the commission made its recommendations for improvements. Then, Mayor Coleman stated he would not support any permanent successor to Superintendent Gene Harris. Coleman insisted that the board name an interim school superintendent, and he stated that the board was "on a path toward failure" if it didn't heed his advice. This furthered the schism between the elected board and the mayor, business, and other political leaders as well as many in the community. The board eventually did suspend the search given legislation written by the state legislature and later hired an interim superintendent, Dan Good.

The interim superintendent now meets weekly with Mayor Coleman, a welcome sign that two of the community's top leaders are pulling together on behalf of a public asset in dire need of support: the city schools. An indication of the importance of the mayor was that Good's first meeting the first day on the job was with Coleman. Mayor Coleman's inclination to stick with the leadership role he took on has been very encouraging and novel. Ohio law separates the governance of school districts from that of cities, villages, and townships, and historically, Columbus mayors have had little role in schools. But these aren't ordinary times.

The city, by contrast, has been excellently managed by Coleman and is thriving. That's why Coleman's decision to create a Columbus Education Commission and to invite top civic and academic leaders to participate was so valuable.

Similar data manipulations occurred in several smaller Ohio school districts. It is not clear if other community elected officials will take similar action, as has the mayor in Columbus. Clearly this indicates that mayors understand the need for quality education systems and transparency.

Many school systems have found themselves with significant funding deficits in recent years. Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel has had to be involved in significant budget cuts, school closures, and a reduction in the teaching force. The most unique mayoral action has come in Philadelphia. The school system had a \$50 million deficit that threatened opening school on time. Mayor Michael Nutter fought with the state to obtain the necessary funds, but the governor balked because he felt there had not been the management reforms necessary to provide the additional funds. So Mayor Nutter decided to issue \$50 million in general purpose bonds to cover the costs to open school on time. This is a perfect example of general purpose government becoming involved in education for the good of the city. Mayor Nutter was both an advocate for and partner with the school system.

Mayor Nutter recognized the importance of education at the beginning of his tenure. The mayor has had a long-standing working relationship with the school system, in part

because he selects members of the school board along with the governor. He has an education advisor who is very proactive. And he established within City Hall an office to assist high school students in gaining access to postsecondary education including advice on student aid, college applications, and the academic rigor needed to pursue postsecondary education. It is probably the first office of this kind in the country within a mayor's office.

The disaggregation of data, as required in NCLB, has pointed out shortcomings in performance in many schools for various selected student populations. This policy required by NCLB has assisted mayors and others to understand and address the needs of underperforming schools and students, and provide additional supportive services. With this information several mayors have strengthened their efforts and increased programs including expanded learning time and longer school days (Peterson, 2013).

Mayors clearly understand and identify with the concept of accountability. Numerous public opinion polls have indicated that the public holds mayors accountable for education whether they have formal responsibility for the schools or they don't. Polls also indicate that voters consider the quality of education one of the most important issues facing their communities, and one of the most important factors that local voters consider in choosing whether to reelect a mayor. This public—and electoral—sentiment has impelled mayors to take a more active role in education. By rejecting increases to real estate taxes or the issuing of new bonds to fund education and/or school construction, voters also have indicated numerous times in various cities that they are not willing to continue to write a blank check to the local school system without corresponding results. Such negative votes translate into citizens saying they want more accountability for the funds school systems receive. Most recently this has manifested itself with “parent triggers” that enable parents to change the management and organization of individual schools that are not performing.

Several mayors have suggested that they can provide the back office functions of a school system more efficiently and effectively than school boards or educators. As many educators would agree, the core business of education is teaching and learning—not managing lunchrooms, information technology, bus systems, payroll, human resources, legal services, grounds maintenance, facilities management, and school construction and modernization. As such, many mayors have decided to take on these functions when making their first foray into school system affairs.

For example, when Dannel Malloy was mayor of Stamford, Connecticut (prior to becoming governor), he made a cost-effective decision that the city would manage information technology support and purchasing for the school system, as well as payroll and maintenance. Savings were returned to the school system. In St. Petersburg, Florida, then Mayor Rick Baker worked out an arrangement with the county school superintendent for the city parks and recreation department to take care of school grounds maintenance for schools that are adjacent to city parks. Similarly, in Nashville during Mayor Bill Purcell's tenure, he helped add parks to school grounds as a community and school asset.

In several cities, mayors have become deeply involved in teacher contract negotiations, given their skill and experience in collective bargaining and understanding the long-term budget implications of compensation package increases. Shortly after taking control over the Chicago school system in 1995, Mayor Richard Daley moved quickly to soothe the strained relations between the city's teacher union and the school district, leading to the ratification of a new contract after months of stalemate. This occurred again in

2012 under Mayor Rahm Emanuel, who forced a variety of issues to be included in the contract negotiations, in which he was fully engaged. These included a longer school day, a longer school year, and teacher evaluation components. Emanuel was a champion for all of these and won each one.

In 2003, Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper (now Colorado governor) became involved in negotiating and then promoting a new pay-for-performance teacher contract, Pro Comp, that has since received widespread public support. We will be seeing more and more of this level and type of involvement in cities and smaller communities because mayors understand the direct relationship between education and a city's quality of life, including economic well-being.

In 2011, then New Haven (Connecticut) Mayor John DeStefano was involved in the teacher contract negotiations. In the end, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan applauded the new contract as a landmark in education for how it was structured and the compensation component, as well as the cooperation between the teachers' union, district, and the mayor. Mayor DeStefano has also been a champion for early learning and early childhood programs in the city.

As Hill (2006) noted, before mayors get involved in public education, they must be prepared to address the complicated accounting and financial management issues of the school district. Both the public and some local education professionals are concerned about school budgets and tracking how funds are spent in schools and classrooms. Some school systems have more than one accounting system, which makes efforts to increase financial transparency difficult. If there is to be true accountability and transparency, then one set of books that covers the city as well as the schools would clearly be preferable to separate accounting systems.

Mayor Daley made budget transparency and fiscal management key priorities when he took over the Chicago public schools in 1995. Tracking education dollars within school districts has become a very important issue as legal challenges continue over the ways states fund local districts and how local districts allocate funds to individual schools. It is expected in the coming years that there will be more school finance cases as a result of inequitable funding formulas in states.

The most notable cases were in New York and New Jersey. Other states are now being confronted with similar court decisions. Mayors in all types of communities are a part of the discussion, especially in New Jersey. Also as school and city/county budgets come under greater fiscal pressures, we may see consolidations of budgets as well as increased budget transparency. Consolidated education and local government budgets exist when the city and education system are co-terminus.

MAYORS, EDUCATION, AND WRAP-AROUND SERVICES

Another key reason for mayors' increased interest in public education is their growing perception that education should be linked with other human and social services that the city provides. Most mayors—and educators—agree that teachers cannot attend to the needs of all children by themselves. Thus, mayors are increasingly collaborating with school systems to provide a more comprehensive and strategic approach to ensure that children are ready to learn and be successful in school.

In 1993 Louisville Mayor Jerry Abramson (now Kentucky's lieutenant governor) established the first "Neighborhood Place," a program that links education and related

social services for children and families. There are now eight such programs across Louisville and Jefferson County. Louisville's current mayor, Greg Fisher, has continued this effort and has expanded his education efforts. In 2004, under the leadership of Mayor Greg Nickels, Seattle revised its "Family and Education Levy" to fund activities that focus on closing the achievement gap and investing in student health services through school-based health centers in the city's public comprehensive high schools. In New York City, then Mayor Michael Bloomberg collaborated with the Children's Aid Society to locate social services and health clinics in several schools in the Bronx, as an initial step to integrate school and social services as part of his "Children First" education reform plan. The city has also been supportive of the Harlem Children's Zone.

In Washington, DC, then Mayor Adrian Fenty adopted a similar approach in his 2007 legislative proposal to change the governance structure of that city's public schools. The legislation created a committee within his cabinet of all the departments and agencies responsible for child-related services and provides services to children as they attend school. This policy and practice has been continued under Mayor Vincent Gray, who chaired the city council when Fenty was mayor. There will be a new mayor in January 2015 who will also be a former council member, and we shall see if the policy and practice continues.

Mayors recognize the need to coordinate education and social services as a critical component in reducing the achievement gap, ensuring that students are ready to learn, increasing graduation rates, preparing students for postsecondary education and the world of work, and meeting many low-income students' basic physical and mental health needs.

One of the best examples is in Metro Nashville. First under Mayor Bill Purcell and now under Mayor Karl Dean, they have made a full-court press to improve the schools and related services. Mayor Dean was the first mayor in the nation to hold a dropout prevention conference and this has remained a high priority. Other mayors have joined the national effort to increase high school graduation rates because they understand the economic impact of having a trained and skilled workforce.

Dropout prevention and increasing high school graduation rates are a new hot issue on mayors' agendas. Over the past four years, mayors from across the country have partnered with school systems and the America's Promise campaign to develop strategies and initiatives to address this national problem. Dr. Robert Balfanz, a researcher at Johns Hopkins University, coined the phrase "dropout factories" to describe and identify the group of high schools with the lowest graduation rates. This effort has become a national campaign that includes an initiative to increase high school graduation rates by the president and Education Secretary Arne Duncan. The number of high schools has been reduced during the past two years, and mayors have been instrumental in raising the issue and participating in local interventions.

In rural McDowell County, West Virginia (population 22,000), an interesting and unique initiative is currently under way with the full support of the county board and other locally elected officials including Welch Mayor Reba Honaker. The American Federation of Teachers is a full partner in this effort along with the state of West Virginia and an additional 110 organizations, businesses, and individuals. This is a true example of blending educational needs with related services. Mayor Honaker is engaged in everything, both inside and outside her jurisdiction because of the importance of the effort. She is everywhere.

A critical shortage of teachers exists in McDowell county as well as housing for them. The Welch mayor is creating housing through the renovation of abandoned buildings in her city to create a teachers' village. Also, given that this is a mountainous area without much flat land, parking is a problem. So the city is creating parking for the teachers. Mayor Honaker has made the library into a community-learning center to address adult literacy needs. Hunger and drug addiction are two big problems. Forty-six percent of the students live in homes where a parent has had a drug abuse problem and 72 percent of the homes have no working adult. Nine deaths a month are attributed to narcotics. The mayor and other leaders are trying to change the culture, keep students in school, recruit quality teachers, and be creative in the change process, including engaging the county community in the conversation.

EXTENDED LEARNING TIME OPPORTUNITIES

In many cities—especially those where mayors have selective involvement in public education—mayors provide the funding to support after-school and extended learning time programs. They commit millions of dollars in city budgets to fund these year-around efforts.

Similar to their motivation for integrating education and social and related services, mayors have become involved in supporting after-school and extended learning opportunities because they understand that children and teenagers who have nothing to do when school lets out can get into trouble.

Two of the simplest interventions have been substantive after-school and extended day or year programs that combine academic with social and athletic activities. This modest investment has paid off significantly in the cities where it has been implemented. Mayors in Columbus, St. Paul, Nashville, Charlotte, Louisville, San Jose, Albuquerque, Akron, St. Louis, Trenton, Providence, and many other cities are the primary funders of after-school and extended day programs. Sometimes they are responsible for managing the programs; in other cases, the funding goes directly to the school system. Mayors are always raising funds to sustain and make these programs successful and ensure they address the needs of more children for a longer part of the year.

A compendium entitled *Expanding Minds and Opportunities: Leveraging the Power of Afterschool and Summer Learning for Student Success*, edited by Terry K. Peterson, PhD, was published in February 2013. It is the seminal work on after-school and extended learning time. The book features studies, reports, and commentaries by more than 100 thought leaders, including community leaders, elected officials, educators, researchers, advocates, and other prominent authors. One such piece is by St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman, who writes about the importance of after-school programs to the city of St. Paul and his role in this effort—another example of general purpose government being engaged in education and the mayor being both partner and advocate.

Also, the Ford Foundation announced in 2013 the Time (Time for Innovation Matters in Education) Collaborative, which is a joint venture with the National Center on Time and Learning. It funds projects in select public schools and communities in Colorado, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, and Tennessee to expand and redesign their school calendars starting in 2013 in an effort to radically improve learning for tens of thousands of students. The Ford Foundation has committed \$3 million a year over three years in support of these state efforts. Three of the states (Colorado, Connecticut, and

Tennessee) have governors who previously served as a mayor. The governors attribute their interest and eagerness to participate and their understanding of the importance of this effort to their experience and lessons learned as mayors.

EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

By the 1980s, many cities found themselves in economic doldrums or in actual decline. Cities were losing jobs and population, with little new economic investments being made. Since then, many mayors have argued that low-performing schools and the inability of public school systems to prepare students with the skills needed to be successful in the workforce are among the root causes of this decline. Despite changes in industry and the elimination of manufacturing jobs, mayors point out the need for new types of jobs in the economic pipeline. However, many mayors have found it difficult to get the local education system to react to the changing job environment.

Since the 1960s, mayors have been advocates for and cared deeply about workforce development and job training. Most programs have either been under mayoral or county government control. In 1993, one of the first pieces of legislation President Bill Clinton proposed to Congress was a novel school-to-work program, which required a partnership of the federal Departments of Education and Labor. Although the program no longer exists, it started a new era of cooperation and set the tone for enhanced working relationships between city and education leaders. More efforts have followed at the local level (Edelstein, 2008).

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was reauthorized twice during the Clinton administration. It included accountability, reform, and curriculum and standards alignment requirements that provided a policy foundation and framework for the NCLB. ESEA has yet to be reauthorized since the passage of NCLB, but the Obama administration has tinkered with the legislation through directives, policy guidance, waivers, and new initiatives such as Race to the Top. New reauthorization bills were introduced in the House and Senate in June 2013. The likelihood that reauthorization will occur is not promising prior to the 2014 mid-term elections and those results may effect efforts to reauthorize the legislation in the 114th Congress prior to the 2016 presidential election. Currently the proposals in the House and Senate are significantly different in substance and approach.

These mayoral efforts in education have coincided with a rebuilding of many of urban centers, because of an increase in federal investments. Mayors were invigorated, and found themselves with an opportunity to begin economic development projects to revive the vitality of their cities only to find themselves strapped for budget dollars when the recession hit in 2008.

Mayors continue to view the quality of education provided in their public schools as a stumbling block. Clearly there is a need for them to become more engaged in public education. But many mayors wonder how to undertake this challenge because they do not have legal responsibility for the schools. This interest and awareness have taken place at the same time as discussions focus on the need to align school curricula and needed skills, defining skills for the 21st-century workplace, and the inclusion of community/technical colleges as part of a workforce development strategy.

First, with private industry councils and now workforce investment boards, mayors in partnership with business and industry have an opportunity to be more engaged in, and

have a say about, the content and objectives of public education as one examines career and college readiness. This provides an opportunity for mayors to take their first step or foray in the world of education or expand their existing involvement. Too often mayors have been slow to speak out on education, in part because it was forbidden territory as an outgrowth of the changes first initiated in the early 20th century. Today, education is no longer a foreign or forbidden issue. In fact, such efforts are more often expected, especially now that there is acceptance to include in the discussion of 21st-century job skills and educational skills.

In 2011, the National Governors' Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers were the catalysts for the development of the Common Core State Standards. This effort was a major undertaking and political statement. The U.S. Conference of Mayors passed a resolution endorsing the Common Core because it understood the implications of and relationship to workforce skills, quality education, and high standards for all students.

During the first term of the Obama administration, the Departments of Education and Labor partnered in making grants for college and career readiness, for workforce and technical training development, and to community colleges to strengthen workforce skills in communities. These efforts were often coordinated with the U.S. Conference of Mayors Workforce Development Council comprised of the workforce directors in most major cities across the country. This cooperation continues during the administration's second term.

THE MATURING OF MAYORAL LEADERSHIP AND INVOLVEMENT

In the late 1960s, New York City Mayor John Lindsay and Detroit Mayor Jerome Cavanaugh were the first urban mayors to speak out about the relationship between education and a city's economic viability. Neither sought control of their schools, but they did begin a public discourse about a mayoral role in education.

In the wake of Boston's struggle with school desegregation in the 1970s, the city's mayor, Kevin White, made an effort to take over the schools by asking the Massachusetts state legislature to give him the authority to do so. Some 20 years later, Mayor Thomas Menino oversaw the full takeover of the Boston Public Schools by the city government, which was followed by Mayor Daley's takeover of the Chicago schools in 1995. This was the beginning of a broader movement supporting an enhanced mayoral role in education (Edelstein, 2006; Kirst & Edelstein, 2006). In both Boston and Chicago, mayors pushed for a greater role because they saw poorly managed school systems that were not being held accountable, and became frustrated with the failure of their schools to educate students.

Several other mayors followed once the precedent had been set. Not all of the efforts were drastic mayoral takeovers, but they were based on the same principles: to improve the quality of education provided to students; increase transparency in such areas as accounting; and improve the school system's management. Today, mayors are no longer asking if they can be involved, but how and what can they do as part of their role as the chief elected official of the city.

Mayoral involvement in education has taken both formal and informal approaches. The takeovers that have been discussed represent the formal approach. In several other cities, mayors have a formal role as a result of long-standing statutory changes, and other cities have created arrangements for mayoral involvement that do not involve takeovers.

The formal and informal roles take many different forms that are primarily shaped by individual mayoral interests, personality, unique issues, and the needs of the city and school system. Henig and Rich (2003), Cuban and Usdan (2003), Hill (2005), Kirst (2002a, 2002b), Kirst and Bulkley (2003), Kirst and Wirt, (2005), Henig (2013), Wong (2011), and Reckhow (2013) all provide descriptions of the political evolution of the mayoral role.

Henig and Rich (2003) wrote several case studies of what transpired in the cities of Baltimore, Detroit, and Cleveland when the mayors in these cities sought to increase their involvement in public education. A shortcoming of many of these case studies is that in most of the cities discussed, mayoral involvement had not yet been institutionalized, so when the mayor changed, often the mayor's role in education changed, too. Only a few cities have what one might describe as "a mayor for life." In these instances, the political and mayoral roles are significantly different from cities that have term limits, where a mayor seeks higher office or moves on to a career outside public service or where the mayor is defeated for reelection. There are few cases when the mantle was passed that level of involvement and commitment did not change. Two examples are Chicago and Nashville.

Mayor Richard Daley of Chicago was elected in 1989 and served until 2012. Thomas Menino of Boston was elected in 1993 and served as mayor until 2014. Their tenures in office are much longer than those of typical U.S. mayors. But the long-term mayor of Charleston, South Carolina (Mayor Joseph Riley) has shown a major commitment to education. Mayor Riley has a more informal relationship with education issues in his city, but it is very strong because of his passion for the issue and his longevity in office. Mayor Riley is the longest-serving urban mayor in the nation and is considered the "dean of mayors." He will end his tenure at the end of 2014.

In Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, then Mayor Stephen J. Reed was deeply involved in local education issues for years. Mayor Reed, like his counterparts in Chicago and Boston, had control over the Harrisburg schools, which was granted in 2000 when the Pennsylvania state legislature approved a mayoral takeover as part of a larger education reform bill. Reed was very engaged in public education, seeing it as one of the cornerstones in the revitalization of Harrisburg. He met with the school superintendent weekly to chart the education course for the city. Now, the current mayor of Harrisburg does not have that authority over the schools in part because of the academic improvements by the district. Daley and Menino became involved because education was essential for the vitality and growth of their cities and because, in their view, a good system would project an image of quality for their cities.

Another long-serving mayor who has increased his involvement in public education is Akron Mayor Donald Plusquellic. Although he has no formal education role, without his leadership and novel approach to funding school construction Akron would not have been able to receive school construction funds from the state. When a local bond referendum failed, Mayor Plusquellic stepped in because he recognized an opportunity to make schools joint-use facilities and "community assets." The schools would become a resource for the whole city, not just students. Residents would have access to auditoriums, libraries, and recreation facilities. Mayor Plusquellic accomplished this by using the city's municipal bond allocation to provide the matching funds, thus mandating a joint-use strategy. The mayor has a place at the table for planning the new schools and has an ongoing dialogue with the school system.

Plusquellic further showed his interest in education through his involvement with a statewide effort, the Ohio Mayors' Education Roundtable. Created in 2003 as a means for mayors from Ohio's eight largest cities to discuss local and state education issues, the Roundtable evolved into a group that included mayors from the state's 21 largest cities, the chief state school officer, and the governor's education advisor. The focus of the group from mid-2004 to 2006 was school finance reform. Plusquellic's commitment, along with the involvement of Columbus Mayor Michael Coleman, Dayton Mayor Rhine McLin, Springfield Mayor Warren Copeland, and other mayors from across the state led an ongoing dialogue about education in the state. Mayoral staff also played an important role in shaping policy documents along with a working group comprised of education stakeholder organizations. All of the state's education stakeholder groups were a part of the discussion and development of the ballot initiative, but the conversation would not have taken place without the mayors' involvement (Edelstein, 2008).

In 2007, a California Mayors' Education Roundtable was created comprised of mayors from the state's largest cities and continues today. One of its first acts was to write a vision statement signed by the mayors. California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger met with the Roundtable mayors in March 2008 to find ways to work together on several key education issues including dropout prevention and linkage of youth services as well as funding. This effort continued in 2013 with Jerry Brown (a former mayor) as governor under the leadership of Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson. Also, Mayor Johnson has engaged U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan in regularly scheduled conference calls with mayors from across the country on education issues and how they can be effective in their communities.

In 2012, Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson announced a new reform proposal in partnership with Cleveland Public School head Eric Gordon. The plan would rely heavily on charter schools and a portfolio management approach. Also, there would be a focus on improving student achievement in existing schools and enhancing teacher classroom skills. He had the support of Governor Kasich and the state legislature, as well as business, philanthropic, and community groups (Henig, 2013, p. 151). In 2013, a similar legislative effort began to provide new authority to Columbus Mayor Michael Coleman, including charter school authorization. And Mayor Nutter's effort in Philadelphia is a further indication of how far mayors have come in understanding the importance of education to a city's vitality, economic development, and stability.

EXPANDING MAYORAL LEADERSHIP AND INVOLVEMENT

As the number of mayors involved in education continues to grow because of the saliency and local nature of the topic, mayors are adopting unique approaches and strategies that others have not used before. For example, in 2006, Miami's mayor, Manuel Diaz, had a compact with Dade County schools superintendent Rudy Crew that focused on the mayor's involvement with Crew concerning the schools located in the city of Miami. Also, the compact specifies a plan for the creation of new schools in the city to meet the specific interests and needs of Miami's diverse community, and lays out the ways the mayor will be involved in the planning and implementation of new schools.

Using a more informal approach, St. Petersburg Mayor Rick Baker had a verbal agreement with the Pinellas County school superintendent to work together on education issues. Baker has initiated a number of new programs for the 40 public schools located in

his city, including a mentoring initiative, a scholarship program, and a schoolyard maintenance effort coordinated by the city's parks department. Before taking such actions, however, Baker consulted with the superintendent.

Although these two Florida mayors were the elected leaders of the largest cities in their respective counties and provide the largest number of students to their respective public school systems, they could not have more formal roles in public education because the school systems in their cities are county based, and not contiguous with the cities' boundaries. However, the mayors were committed to education because they understood its importance to their cities' future economic growth. This commitment manifested itself in a strategy that is focused on improving the schools, lives, and opportunities for students and the city as a whole.

Recently elected mayors in several cities are in the midst of or have worked to define their relationships with local school system leaders, such as Charlotte Mayor Anthony Foxx (now U.S. Secretary of Transportation), Louisville Mayor Greg Fisher, Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson, Hartford Mayor Pedro Segarra, San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed, Jacksonville Mayor Alvin Brown, Denver Mayor Michael Hancock (chairs the U.S. Conference of Mayors K-12 Task Force), and Providence Mayor Angel Taveras. Other longer-serving mayors are strengthening their efforts to be engaged in education, such as Des Moines Mayor Frank Cownie, St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay, Columbus Mayor Michael Coleman, Newark Mayor Corey Booker, Bridgeport Mayor Bill Finch, Long Beach Mayor Bob Foster, St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman, Davenport Mayor Bill Gluba, and Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings.

GENERAL TRENDS

The mayor is the only locally elected official who can bring the community together to raise an issue or solve a crisis. Mayors are responsible for general purpose government; they are the CEO (Henig, 2012). Mayors organize and call town meetings, orchestrate the discussion on education issues, utilize the bully pulpit to take a position, and promote a specific initiative or strategy that will benefit the schools and the community. One example is mayoral support of local school bond issues and levies. Another is supporting the expansion of early learning opportunities. In most cases, a mayor's support and involvement are tantamount to passage by the voters or initiating a new program.

Increasingly, mayors are signaling the importance of public education as part of their portfolio by expanding the number of staff assigned the issue at City Hall. Some mayors have formally established offices within city government focused on education and related issues, and others have added high-level appointees whose responsibilities include these topics. The mayors of Philadelphia, St. Paul, District of Columbia, Louisville, Los Angeles, New York City, St. Louis, Newark, Orlando, Indianapolis, Providence, San Francisco, Fresno, Chicago, Boston, San Jose, Akron, New Haven, Bridgeport, Baltimore, Albuquerque, Nashville, Columbus, Charlotte, Denver, Salt Lake City, Ft. Worth, Jacksonville (Florida), and many more have a cabinet-level position or senior-level appointees working on education and related issues.

Still others have taken more novel approaches, going so far as to use the power of the mayor's office to establish new schools outside the traditional school system. For example, the former mayor of Indianapolis, Bart Peterson, sought and received the authority to approve charter schools, making him the only mayor in the nation with such power.

(Peterson's successor, Mayor Greg Ballard, retains this authority and created the position of deputy mayor for education.) Peterson exercised this authority by creating a new charter school system in Indianapolis under the aegis of the mayor's office. Under the leadership of David Harris (who created and now runs The Mind Trust), the division gained local and national attention for its rigorous review of applications, strong accountability, and reporting requirements for all charter schools under the mayor's authority, and the ongoing quality of the charter schools that have been authorized.

In 2006, the mayor and the city of Indianapolis won an award for public-sector innovation and creativity from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government for these efforts, and Mayor Peterson formalized the arrangement further by establishing a specific division in the mayor's office to manage the charter school program. Numerous mayors and city officials, educators, and others have visited Indianapolis to learn more about how the mayor obtained and implemented this authority.

Several mayors have expressed interest in obtaining similar authority in an effort to shake up their school systems or provide an alternative after unsuccessful efforts to work with local school boards and school systems. The mayors realize that charter schools are not a panacea for the problems of their cities' schools. However, they do believe charter schools can provide an opportunity to bring about change through public education and one that they can have an influential role in shaping without wading too far into the traditional school system's affairs.

In March 2013, Prince Georges (Maryland) County Executive Rushern Baker III proposed that he takeover control of the county school system. The countywide district has had a series of violent episodes in schools, poor academic performance, and a high turnover of the county school superintendent during the past several years. His proposal was modified by the state's legislature. In the end he was given the power to select the school superintendent and four members of the county school board including the chair and vice chair. The board has a total of 13 members so he did not get total control over the school system, but does have say in its governance and management. On June 1, 2013, Baker appointed the new school board chair and vice chair, and a new superintendent was selected prior to the 2013–2014 school year. He is one of the first, if not the first, county executive to have this state-legislated role in education. States and mayors have, but there is no known history of a county executive.

Numerous mayors of cities and smaller towns, especially in the Northeast, have had a formal role in education. They have had no need to seek more innovative ways of getting involved, as in Indianapolis. These formal responsibilities include appointing school board members, selecting school superintendents, and oversight and passage of school budgets. This long-standing involvement is particularly pronounced in localities in New England as an outgrowth of their "town meeting" tradition of local government. In these communities it is common for mayors to appoint school board members, sit on the school board as a member or *ex officio*, and even at times help select the superintendent. These examples are rarely mentioned when there is an outcry against a strong and formal mayoral role, especially in takeover situations. However, in communities such as New Haven and West Haven, Connecticut; Providence, Rhode Island; Chicopee, Massachusetts; Trenton and East Orange, New Jersey; and many other smaller communities, the mayor either selects members of the school board or has a seat on the board. In Hartford, Connecticut Mayor Pedro Segarra selects a majority of his school board (Edelstein, 2008).

Former New Haven Mayor John DeStefano stated on numerous occasions that he believes that serving on the school board is one of the most rewarding things he does as mayor. He led the recent effort to redefine and restructure the teacher contract (described earlier) and has been a major proponent for expanding early childhood educational opportunities in New Haven schools. It is too early to tell how the working relationship is going between newly elected Mayor Toni Harp and New Haven's new superintendent, Garth Harries.

Providence Mayor Angel Taveras (now running for governor) and his predecessor, David Cicilline (now a member of Congress), used their office's long-standing responsibility over education to promote the modernization of school buildings, which they believe will help carry forward larger-scale neighborhood redevelopment efforts in the city. With the mayor's support, Providence has led the effort to promote "smaller learning communities" in public education, community schools, and extended learning time. And they support small schools, including The Met—a nationally recognized alternative high school developed by Big Picture Learning. In addition, Mayor Cicilline led a state-wide campaign for school finance reform. Providence's mayor also appoints the school board, helps select the school superintendent, and has oversight authority with the city council for the school system's budget.

Mayors also look for new opportunities for involvement. College and career readiness and college access are two areas where mayors have begun to exert their involvement. Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter has established in City Hall as part of the mayor's office a college access office to be of assistance to any student who wants help in finding postsecondary education opportunities and learn more about what it takes, courses and costs, to go to school beyond high school. The office also provides information on student financial assistance for postsecondary education. His education advisor, Lori Shorr, has been instrumental in setting up this office. Soon we will see better linkages between college access, career opportunities, and job skill programs.

Each of these and other examples indicate how mayors have embraced education as an issue in which they can be involved. This engagement is in part a result of the broader portfolio, which exposes them "to different ways of thinking about education and to different ways of implementing government power" (Henig, 2013, p. 77).

THE PERILS AND CONSEQUENCES

Mayoral involvement and leadership in education are not always a smooth road or rosy scenario. These efforts can create tension or be effective only for a short while and then be nullified. One prominent example occurred in the late 1990s, when Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan pushed a slate of mayor-backed candidates for the school board and won the majority. By the next election, he lost the majority as a result of an effort by the local teachers' union to unseat his candidates. Mayor Riordan made education reform a major priority, which included recruiting former Colorado governor Roy Romer to become the Los Angeles Urban School District (LAUSD) superintendent. Romer has retired as superintendent after having served three different mayors.

Los Angeles' former mayor Antonio Villaraigosa lobbied the state legislature in 2006 to change the governance structure of LAUSD so the mayor would have more control. The effort resulted in a jumbled piece of legislation often characterized as the "bill of 100 compromises." In the end, the mayor was allowed to have control over a small number

of schools as a demonstration district. Romer was vocally opposed to the mayor's efforts, but Villaraigosa had the support of former Mayor Riordan to change the education governance structure. Ultimately, Villaraigosa's efforts were undone when the school board successfully challenged his takeover legislation in court on state constitutional grounds. Despite this defeat, Villaraigosa sought new ways to maintain a role in school system affairs (Danzberger, Kirst, & Usdan, 1992; Hess, 1998). He worked with the city's new school superintendent, John Deasy, and met with members of the LAUSD school board. In subsequent school board elections he has supported slates of candidates, but not always winning a majority of the seats. It is a wait and see what Los Angeles' new mayor, Gil Garcetti, will be doing in education.

The experience of St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay offers another cautionary tale. From the beginning of his first term in 2001 (in 2013 he was elected to his fourth term as mayor), Slay felt as mayor that he needed to become more engaged in the city's low-performing school system—a sea change from previous mayors' views. Almost from the beginning, political shock waves reverberated in the city. The outgoing school superintendent, not a favorite of the mayor, announced at his last school board meeting in 2003 that the district was facing a staggering and unexpected budget deficit.

Mayor Slay worked with the existing school board and the business community and hired a business takeover firm, Alvarez and Marsal, to fix management and accounting systems of the school system and ensure they were in order, and establish fiscal responsibility. The process took one year, and during that period the mayor became even more active in education. He supported a slate of school board candidates that won and gained a majority on the board. The new board began to initiate reforms in consultation with the mayor and his staff. In addition, the mayor worked with the board to select a new school superintendent, Creg Williams, who had worked for Paul Vallas, the former CEO of the Chicago and Philadelphia public schools as well as New Orleans and currently the interim superintendent in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Hopes rose for stability, continuity, and a comprehensive approach to improving the schools. Unfortunately, in 2006, the results of the next school board election defeated the mayor's candidates and the majority (Wong & Shen, 2003b).

As a result of the school board election, Mayor Slay requested that the state take over the system because of the rash action by the school board and the continued poor academic performance of the district. The state department of education created an independent commission to review the St. Louis public schools. Its report recommended that the state take over the district until 2011 and turn oversight of the schools to a three-member board. The state implemented the recommendation. Oversight panel members continue to be selected by Mayor Slay, the state's school superintendent, and the chair of the city council. Mayor Slay got in part what he wanted, but still does not see things changing or moving quickly enough. The school system's problems are still not being solved. Nor is there a permanent governance structure to bring stability to the system in the near future (Edelstein, 2008).

Also, Mayor Slay did not let his frustration with the public school system stop his interest and involvement in education. He has been actively involved in supporting the establishment of quality charter schools in the city. And when these schools are not successful, he has supported the withdrawal of their charter. The first charters began to appear during the 2008–2009 school year.

Leadership of the school system in many of the mayoral-controlled districts can be a perilous journey. Several educators have seen their star fall hard during their tenure as

the head of a district. In 2012, Jean-Claude Brizard was handpicked to lead the Chicago public schools by Mayor Rahm Emanuel. However, he became a casualty of the teacher's strike just three weeks after the mayor negotiated a new teacher contract later that year. The mayor replaced Brizard with Barbara Byrd Bennett, former superintendent of Cleveland (Ohio), which had semi-mayoral control. Similarly, in New York City, Cathy Black, who succeeded Joel Klein, found her tenure as chancellor very short lived and was replaced by Mayor Michael Bloomberg with former deputy mayor Dennis Walcott. Now, recently elected Mayor Bill de Blasio selected Carmen Farina, who is former New York City Schools administrator. In Washington, DC, when Mayor Fenty was defeated for reelection by Vincent Gray, Mayor Gray replaced Michelle Rhee, who had a two-year tenure with Kaya Henderson as chancellor of the DC public schools. Ms. Henderson had worked for Ms. Rhee so the transition was easier. DC has a mayoral election in the Fall 2014, that will elect a new mayor. One candidate has already committed to keep Kaya Henderson as chancellor, and the other candidate has yet to take a position and currently chairs the city council's education committee.

PASSING THE TORCH

A number of mayors have forged partnerships with their superintendents to assist in improving learning environments and support cooperative programs, supplemental educational activities, coordinating services, and the general importance of education. One of the best examples of this occurred in Nashville, Tennessee, under Bill Purcell, the mayor from 2002 to 2007. Purcell believed strongly in spotlighting education through the use of the mayor's bully pulpit, and sponsored a "First Day of School" rally at the beginning of each school year. This included a major event in the city's municipal arena that drew thousands of people, including thousands of parents who were attending the first day of class with their children. It eventually became so popular that others attended from communities outside the county.

In addition, the mayor instituted a policy that city and county workers could take the morning of the first day of school off to escort their children to school. Soon after, local business leaders followed suit. Furthermore, the mayor developed youth councils to provide a voice for students and encouraged them to speak out about their schools. Finally, the mayor worked closely with the county's school superintendent to develop a strong after-school program that is credited with helping to raise test scores.

The mayor did not run for reelection in 2007, causing many to wonder whether the next mayor would sustain Purcell's commitment to education. However, by establishing a pattern and legacy of mayoral involvement through the efforts described earlier, Nashville's current mayor, Karl Dean, has continued the tradition of support for the school system. "Alignment Nashville," a metro-wide coalition of the 260 nongovernment organizations focused solely on improving education, has played a key role in sustaining this involvement (Hill, Campbell, & Harvey, 2000; Hill & Celio, 1998; Payzant, 2005; Sharrat & Fullan, 2005; Simmons, 2005; Smith, 2005).

The coalition has four committees that include the leadership of the school system, local government, independent agencies, business, and other organizations and focuses on addressing the priority needs of pre-kindergarteners, kindergarten through middle school students, high school students, and students beyond high school, including those in need of workforce development and job training services. True to Purcell's pattern

of influencing the public education from the outside, the groups in the coalition work together, rather than each trying to get to do something with the school district or inside schools. Because of Alignment Nashville's continuing work, as well as the efforts of Mayor Purcell, the coalition has been able to make educational change an institutionalized priority and keep its eyes on the prize—a quality education for every child in the school system.

Mayor Dean has furthered that tradition by hosting the first communitywide summit on dropouts in the nation in 2011. He has also been active in all aspects of education and working closely with the Race to the Top reforms in the state.

The question of whether mayoral involvement can be sustained after an activist mayor leaves office was also posed in Long Beach, California when Beverly O'Neill, a three-term mayor, retired from office in 2006. One of O'Neill's major legacies was her involvement in education. As mayor, she created a citywide partnership with all of the city's education leaders, including the school superintendent, community college and university presidents, and business leaders. This partnership created an important city dialogue that led to increased cooperation between the members of the city's education community and the support of innovative programs and approaches that improved the Long Beach Unified School District's academic performance, which culminated in the district's receipt of the prestigious Broad Prize for Urban Education in 2004. O'Neill's successor, Bob Foster, was one of the business leaders who participated in O'Neill's citywide partnership.

Mayor Foster continued the tradition, commitment, and belief that education is a key driver of success, vitality, and economic growth in the city. In his first year as mayor, he helped create a new school with superintendent Chris Steinhauser, and they plan more partnerships. He has just finished his second term, and we will see if the successor, Robert Garcia, keeps up the tradition.

In other cities like San Francisco, Fresno, Syracuse, Bridgeport, St. Paul, Providence, Chicago, Charlotte, Dallas, Denver, and Louisville, mayors who were elected more recently are all continuing the tradition of increased mayoral involvement in education established by their predecessors. This is another indication that education is here to stay as an issue in which mayors can be engaged, involved, vocal, and proactive. In many respects mayoral leadership, involvement, and advocacy in education are expected by the voters and have become an institutionalized role.

CONCLUSION

No major mayoral takeovers of public school systems have occurred during the past five years. There has been a significant rise in mayoral interest, involvement, and engagement in education at the local, state, and federal levels. Education is now a topic that has become a part of mayors' talking points and policy discussions. Mayors have become very familiar with the multitude of education issues confronting their communities and the nation, and articulate about how education is directly connected to other city issues that affect growth, economic stability, workforce skills, and social services.

During the past several years, mayors have been aware of and engaged in the discussions concerning the stability of their public school systems, districts' capacity to meet the new Common Core standards, a state's Race to the Top requirements, teacher evaluation and retention, recruitment and contract issues, charter schools, choice vouchers, budget and data transparency, school safety including bullying, technology, and a myriad of other

education and related issues. They have not shied away from participating in all of these discussions, decisions, or solutions. Mayors have built a comfort zone over the past five years that has emboldened them to be a part of the solution and not avoid being engaged.

Some scholars, experts, and policy wonks have called for more takeovers by mayors because they see education as an integral part of general purpose local government. They include Chester A. Finn, Jr. of the Thomas Fordham Institute, Frederick Hess of the American Enterprise Institute, and U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. Several mayors have expressed interest in having the responsibility but none have been able to secure state approval to take the step. These include the mayors of Bridgeport, Milwaukee, Indianapolis, St. Paul, and Sacramento.

One can expect efforts by mayors to assume formal control of their cities' school systems to continue on an episodic basis and when the conditions permit. More likely, however, mayors will continue to be more actively engaged in education in various ways depending the saliency or urgency of the issue; how quickly a school system responds to making the changes necessary to meet the educational needs of its students; the requirements of federal and state education statutes; community calls for improvements; and the increased needs of the city to link education and related services. Mayors have made the connection between quality education and the economic well-being of their city. This can only mean that education will continue to be a part of a mayor's agenda and interest since a city's future and vitality will in part be influenced by the quality of his education system's graduates.

Mayors are politicians, and public support is critical to any decision that they make, especially one that changes the governing landscape in the city. But mayors are also risk takers once they weigh the political consequences.

Clearly, mayors are more comfortable making education part of their portfolio in some shape or form. They definitely want to expand their partnership with the school system, and find ways to work jointly whenever possible. Given current budget constraints for both cities and schools, mayors and school systems may find ways to jointly purchase services and equipment to reduce costs and get more favorable pricing. We will also be seeing more mayors and locally elected officials testifying on behalf of or in support of their school districts at the state and federal levels, which would be unheard of only a few years ago. Mayors have become advocates for education because quality education benefits the community.

Research on mayors and education has focused too much on takeovers and the outcomes of this strategy. These studies have not addressed the impact of mayoral leadership and involvement through the informal engagements that change policy, practice, and programs; change a community's commitment to the public schools; establish an initiative that forces changes in behavior; make services that keep students in school more efficient; or one of many other improvements. This focus for research should be encouraged rather than what seems to be "sexy" but is more mundane and likely to make a long-term difference. We need to learn more of these influences and impact on school systems, students, teachers, related services, and the community.

In the end we have seen a change in the landscape. Mayors are becoming more engaged, visible, and vocal when it comes to education. These efforts are only the beginning. Citizens can expect their visible involvement more and more.

The ice has been broken and the tradition has been started. No longer are mayoral interest and advocacy taboo. Mayors' engagement is expected and even required in some

cities, as people get used to mayoral education involvement. The case has been made for the connection between education, city/county services, and improving the quality of life for the whole community.

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