

JOSEPH P. VITERITTI

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Why Governance Matters

Governance is an institutional arrangement that assigns power to public officials and defines the mechanisms for holding them accountable. In big-city school districts, good governance is the progeny of an uneasy marriage between democratic and managerial ideals. Like all large organizations, urban school districts require the skillful coordination of human and material resources; yet they are public institutions. Whereas democracy is based on a commitment to wide participation and deliberation in decisionmaking, management is energized by a determination to get things done efficiently and effectively. Democracy can be awkward, slow moving, and cumbersome, while managers need to be bold, agile, and sometimes obstinate. In one sphere patience is a virtue; in the other it can be seen as a disability.

Striking the proper balance between democratic and managerial expectations in the design of a governance system is no easy task. It is neither a science nor an art. It is itself a political process in the best sense. To have legitimacy, a governance system must be designed to involve those who have a stake in its functioning, or at least their duly chosen delegates. It must be carefully adapted to the political and institutional environment in which it is expected to thrive. It must not only create opportunities for leadership but also allow for representation, responsiveness, and transparency. The governance question goes to the heart of an American conversation that began in a small room in Philadelphia during the summer of 1787 and continues today throughout the land on multiple levels.

Roots and Branches

Americans have always been suspicious of concentrated power. Their system of government is based on the principle of checks and balances, according to which authority is shared among institutions. It is purposely clumsy. The power of local government is further circumscribed under American federalism. As a matter of law, local government is a “creature of the state.” Even in states that honor the principle of home rule—a domain of authority the states assign to city governments on local issues—the amount of discretion appropriated to city governments is determined by the state legislature, which in most places enjoys “plenary power.”¹ At the municipal level, mayors are expected to share power with a city council and in some places a city manager. Because of the distinct nature of local government—which more than any sphere in the public sector is responsible for the daily delivery of services to people and communities—local executives are granted wide latitude in administration. It is their job to make sure the buses run on time, get the trash collected, oversee the police, supervise emergency services, operate parks and recreation programs, and administer health and social services for the poor.

Education, on which more state and local dollars are spent than any other public service, has historically been treated as a special case. For more than a century and a half, local school boards have been elected so that schools can function separate and apart from the municipality, even though there are not many scholars remaining who share the notion once held by Progressive Era reformers that this separation will insulate schools from politics. That claim seems utterly naïve to anybody who has ever witnessed the rough-and-tumble of school politics, writ large or small. Nevertheless, the traditional model for governance endures in most places.

Separating education from an array of municipal services that are geared toward the needs of young people makes it more difficult to integrate these same services with what goes on in schools where children and young people congregate daily. In big cities, where disadvantaged students are especially dependent on support services to be ready for school, the need for service integration is more pronounced. Big-city school districts, for the past fifty years, have been the great disappointment in American education.² When we speak of the learning gap between the races in this country—which continues to be about four years in reading and mathematics—we are generally referring to the failure of urban schools, which are responsible for teaching a disproportionate number of students from African American and Latino communities.

It should come as no surprise that this national frustration with urban schools has led to demands for accountability and leadership. Nor should it be a surprise that opinion leaders at the local level turned to popularly elected mayors to answer the call. Somebody had to take charge. Somebody had to be held responsible. Somebody had to grasp this stubborn bull of a bureaucracy by the horns and show that urban school systems could be managed. A strong executive might fill the bill. Why not let the mayor run the schools in the same way that he or she runs other city agencies?

There was a new theory of democracy embedded in the call for mayoral control. Ironically, the idea was also borrowed from Progressive Era reformers who gave us independent school boards. When these nineteenth-century reformers got fed up with the corrupt shenanigans of their city councils, they turned to a strong-mayor model, which they called good government.³ The mayor would be a more visible public figure, so they thought, more easily scrutinized by voters. The position itself would attract a higher caliber of personnel than that typically found in the council—a business leader, perhaps, who was above politics. He (and the mayor was most surely a “he” in those days) was more likely to clean up the mess that machine politicians had created in the corrupt recesses of the government, or so it was thought.

This new notion of municipal democracy was somewhat revolutionary for a generation brought up according to the precepts of Jeffersonian localism and Jacksonian populism. Decentralized grassroots democracy, epitomized in local legislatures, was considered to be closer to the people. The spoils system had allowed common folk to penetrate a class-based government controlled by wealthy gentlemen. In the earliest iterations of the office, American mayors were chosen by the city council. This was far more democratic than the previous arrangement, in which state governors selected city mayors, often from a rival party unsympathetic to local interests—themselves an improvement over the colonial governors who preceded them. Yes, the council, it could be argued, was close to the people. Sometimes, though, it got too close, and the grass roots of city politics had a way of burying its practitioners in deep layers of political soil. Popularly elected mayors were supposed to save us from all that as the nineteenth century turned into the twentieth.

There is a corollary theory of democracy implicit in the recent demands for mayoral control of the schools, of which I admittedly have been an early and consistent proponent.⁴ Like contests for local legislatures, school board elections are characterized by low voter interest. Like members of city councils, members of school boards are not usually high-profile political personages in their local communities, especially in big cities. Certainly they were

not so visible as mayors, and therefore they could be less subject to popular review. Visibility was supposed to promise accountability.

The introduction of the mass media into politics and government further changed the terms of conducting business in the public sector and turned the axiom of Jeffersonian localism on its head. Access to government, or at least knowledge about it, was no longer a function of geographic proximity, as it was in Jefferson's time. Citizens now seem to know less about officials who emerge from their own neighborhood institutions than about those who rule from the high towers of the government. The faces of government executives are more likely to be plastered on the front pages and flashed across video screens. That is true today from the president of the United States on down to the most remote official on the local planning or school board. Executives in government are more familiar to the average person. This does not automatically translate into greater accountability, but it is a start.

Elected school boards, especially those in large urban areas, brought their own problems as governing institutions. Those that were elected at large tended to underrepresent minority populations because minorities could be outvoted in citywide contests.⁵ Those who were elected through single-member districts that represented discrete geographic communities tended to provoke, feed, and accentuate neighborhood animosities, which were often defined by race, ethnicity, and class.⁶ Mayoral control, it was hoped, would bring peace and stability. The city of Boston, which tried both types of school boards before putting the mayor in charge of its schools, illustrates this point nicely. Desegregation battles in Boston, fought out on the local school board as well as in federal court, had brought racial animosity to an unprecedented level in the North. Mayoral control in Boston has engendered continuity in leadership and a new focus on learning. The Boston story is important because the Boston experience became an impetus behind contemporary demands for mayoral control of the schools in other cities, numbering nearly a dozen to date.⁷

Coinciding with enhanced federal and state roles brought on in education by more regulation, proficiency standards, and interventionist courts, the appearance of education mayors in big cities has led some scholars to speculate whether school boards, notably elected boards, are an endangered species.⁸ A recent article in the *Atlantic Monthly* appearing under the title "First, Kill All the School Boards" actually argues the case along these lines rather strongly. The author, Matt Miller, quotes Mark Twain, who once said, "In the first place, God made idiots. . . . This was for practice. Then he made School Boards." The article approvingly cites the emergence of mayoral control in Boston and New

York and concludes that in an ideal world, we would “scrap” school boards, “especially in big cities, where most poor children live.”⁹

Patterns of Mayoral Control

Not all forms of mayoral control are the same. In Boston the mayor picks a seven-member school committee from a list of names nominated by a screening panel, and then the committee chooses the superintendent. In Washington, D.C., the mayor selects the chancellor (superintendent) and four of nine board members, who must be confirmed by the city council (the other five members are elected). In New York the mayor selects eight of thirteen school board members, including the schools chancellor, who serves as superintendent of schools and chair of the board. As a result, each of these mayors enjoys different powers and prerogatives with regard to education policy and administration. In all cases the term *mayoral control* is an exaggeration, since all local chief executives are forced to share authority on municipal matters with other state, local, and federal officials. Education is no exception.

As several of our authors explain more fully in later chapters, the involvement of mayors in education, especially in large cities, where school districts depend on municipal officials for local funding, is not a new phenomenon.¹⁰ From 1955 to 1976 Mayor Richard J. Daley appointed all members of the Chicago school board, as did all of his successors at city hall until 1995, when his son, Mayor Richard M. Daley, took over the schools. Although as mayor the elder Daley did not have formal authority to appoint the school superintendent, as the powerful Cook County boss of the Democratic Party he was able to effectively oversee educational affairs in much the way he ruled over all governmental matters in Chicago and its environs. But the two mayors functioned differently. The father operated according to a political model for governing; the son operates more as a manager.

The new model for governing carries different expectations for the present-day “education mayor.” The elder Daley was preoccupied with keeping the political peace and maintaining control. This might have involved careful attention to the distribution of jobs to constituent groups that produced winning coalitions at the polls or making sure that African American students were kept out of schools in white neighborhoods where they were unwanted. It rarely involved a focus on improved instruction. Nor would current demands for the efficient management of resources have jibed well with the reward system that kept the political machinery of old Chicago humming. It is not accidental that the incumbent school chief in Chicago is called a chief

executive officer or that the younger Daley chose his former budget director, Paul Vallas, to be the first individual to hold that office. Chicago's corporate model may be the purest form of managerialism that exists in American education; it is also a loose paradigm for the new type of school administrator installed by contemporary education mayors.

Never before were school organizations appended so closely to the institutional apparatus of the municipal government. Despite the promise of better service integration, some critics would wonder out loud whether schools really are like other city agencies. Actually, they are not. Each school is a unique community with its own culture. Each school requires intimate levels of cooperation from administrators, teachers, students, parents, and neighborhood actors in order to thrive.¹¹ No other local service requires this kind of collaboration. Schools are different.

Then again, no two agencies in city government are alike. Ask any police officer, firefighter, hospital nurse, or pothole filler. Moreover, if the integration of education into the governance structure of municipalities raises anxieties among school people, we should be reminded that the old-style education bureaucracies overseen by traditional school boards were notoriously inept, wasteful, and obstructive. Their failure to bring a majority of students to an acceptable level of academic achievement was a major reason behind calls for mayoral control. The old system did not work for most inner-city children.

Empowering mayors with such authority, nonetheless, introduced new risks. Although these innovative arrangements may allow the mayor to hold professional educators more accountable, not everybody is convinced that the voting booth is an adequate instrument for holding the mayor accountable. An up-or-down vote every four years may not be enough. The problem is exacerbated in jurisdictions that have term limits, in which an incumbent mayor might be required to stand for reelection only once in eight years. In other cases, it can turn the schools or their test scores into campaign props. Some commentators, however, hold that these are empty concerns since the electoral process seems to work in other policy domains locally and nationally. Or does it?

Although the city council, which has power to approve the local budget, should serve as an institutional check on local chief executives, the record of local legislatures is mixed, at best. As an institution, the council, especially in big cities, has had a difficult time shaking off its nineteenth-century reputation for cronyism, pettiness, and incompetence, much of it well deserved. While the high visibility of media mayors has increased opportunities for public scrutiny, it has also created a more formidable bully pulpit, which empowers skilled incumbents to manipulate coverage and sway public opinion. This

was not as much a problem with Progressive Era mayors, who did not have access to electronic communications.

Accountability can be especially challenging now, when the mayor's press office has control over the very data by which the incumbent might be judged. It places an enormous responsibility on reporters to read beyond press releases and investigate the evidence behind a story. The passage of the No Child Left Behind Act and the imposition of reporting requirements by state education agencies have facilitated this role somewhat, but investigative news gathering still requires digging by the press. Not all reporters have the time, resources, and expertise to meet the challenge.

A reading of the professional literature, in these pages and elsewhere, reveals certain patterns that are evident in the politics of school governance. Whenever and wherever mayoral control of the schools was implemented, it was usually done with the strong support of business leaders. The latter have a clear stake in education. Good schools are a prerequisite for a business-friendly environment. An educated population is essential for a skilled workforce. There is a natural affinity between the corporate organizational culture and a managerial model that fixes responsibility in the hands of a strong executive who is expected to manage tax-generated resources wisely. In Boston the productive engagement of the business community proved to be of strategic importance in building a coalition for school improvement. As Dorothy Shippy warns in her study of Chicago, however, an overreliance on the business model for public schools can undermine democratic norms and leave ordinary people on the sidelines of school politics.

The implementation of mayoral control is usually a source of anxiety in African American and Latino communities, whose children constitute a majority of the students who attend urban schools. The centralization of power and authority at city hall can remove decisionmaking from community-based institutions, including schools themselves, where parents tend to have better access. Unlike business leaders, most parents do not have the political clout that is needed to get a call through to the mayor's office. Nor does mayoral control provide parents with the same kinds of local connections that are possible when a neighborhood gets to elect its own representative to a school board. Notwithstanding the messy politics associated with school boards, mayoral control replaces a governance structure designed on the basis of single-member representation at the community level with leadership that is chosen on an at-large citywide basis.

There is nothing necessarily illegal or unfair about the new arrangements, unlike certain types of electoral systems that systematically penalized minority

voters; yet it is understandable why the more centralized system is greeted with caution and even suspicion by people who already see themselves as being powerless.¹² A lack of confidence in a governing arrangement, the widespread perception that it is unfair or rigged to favor one group over another, can ultimately bring it down. The Detroit experience, which ended with the termination of mayoral control in 2005, demonstrates the point rather dramatically. Legitimacy is indispensable to the health of any democratic institution. As Wilbur Rich adroitly explains in his chapter 7, the political tensions that surrounded the Detroit schools were multilayered, involving racial, partisan, and regional animosities. City residents had little confidence in the capacity of the system to treat them or their concerns seriously.

To be honest, school politics in the city, whether played out in Detroit or elsewhere, was never a beacon of robust democracy. Those who need to derive the most from the system in terms of instructional and support services usually are among the least empowered to demand it. As noted earlier, school board elections have historically been characterized by low turnout rates when compared with other political contests. Low turnout favors organized groups, which do not always represent populations in the schools. Consider the case of New York City. Before the 2002 implementation of mayoral control, New York had one of the most ambitious systems of political decentralization in the country. Yet for more than thirty years, turnout rates in community school board elections had not exceeded 10 percent of the eligible voters and were usually much lower. Candidates were largely anonymous. Although there is some dissatisfaction with the current arrangement in New York, there is no overwhelming public outcry for a return to the old system of elected school boards.

Of course, political scientists have known for some time now that the factors that give people a sense of political efficacy go well beyond structure. The ability of an individual or group to exercise influence is tied to a host of interconnected social variables such as income, class, and race. Prominent among the characteristics associated with political and civic involvement is education.¹³ This basic fact of political life needs to be acknowledged in the current discussion. No matter what governance plans are put into place, if young people do not get a decent education, their chances of becoming engaged citizens as adults are greatly reduced. Indeed, their chances of living healthy and productive lives are greatly reduced. No local or municipal service is so clearly tied to their future as education. Schools not only need to be governed well, they need to succeed at what they were meant to do; they need to educate.

Crafting a System

Established tools are available for determining whether a school or school district is effectively educating students. Scores on standardized tests, notwithstanding their limitations, are the most common barometers. When combined with other measures such as graduation, dropout and attendance rates, and school safety data, test scores can be useful in judging the success of schools. Assessing the performance of a governance arrangement is a more complex proposition. Not only is there the problem of separating the structural arrangement from the existing leadership, both of which can affect performance, but also there is no reliable way to demonstrate a causal relationship between the success of a system over time and its institutional architecture. At best one can establish correlations or associations. Even this can be problematic for the careful researcher.

Kenneth Wong and his colleagues have designed one of the most sophisticated models imaginable for measuring the impact of mayoral control on school performance.¹⁴ The model suggests that cities that have put the mayor in charge of education have managed (no pun intended) to improve student achievement better than other cities have. This is good news to be sure. Jeffrey Henig's more rudimentary analysis, in chapter 2, of scores from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the so-called nation's report card, tells a different story, however. It indicates that cities in which the mayor was put in charge of schools do worse—perhaps, as he adds, because mayors have been asked to take charge of some of the worst school districts. So what are we to make of this? Does governance really matter? How are we to know?

The bottom line for any education plan adopted is that it should eventually produce results in the classroom. If students do not learn, then there is no point to any of this. But making a direct connection between structure and results is difficult, maybe impossible. Structure is not a solution; it is an enabler. It creates possibilities for the kind of bold leadership needed to turn around failing school districts. The New York City school system, for example, has undergone more change in the past seven years under the Bloomberg-Klein administration than over any similar time frame in its entire history. Most informed observers, whether or not they agree with the administration's changes, believe that this would not have been possible under the previous governance arrangement in New York. But those who are unhappy with many of the policies also feel that the present system does not provide for a sufficient level of public input or accountability. Structure should, after all, also create opportunities for democratic engagement and participation.

Governance does matter. It appropriates power, authority, and access, and it apportions these precious political commodities among those who govern and those who are governed. Striking the proper balance between the managerial and democratic imperatives required for running a city school district is the fundamental challenge of good municipal governance. The appropriate balance might change from time to time in a given city—at one point demanding a powerful executive capable of disrupting the status quo, at another requiring a consensus builder who can bring cooperation and stability.

The more power we give an executive to manage efficiently and effectively, the more diligent we need to be about checking that power so that the operative system is representative, responsive, and transparent. There is no single “best system” for achieving these goals. The final arrangement must be carefully embedded in the history and culture of the local environment. It must be fitted together by an assortment of diverse actors who have a stake in its success. The participants in this design process should study and learn from other people and other places. But in the end, what matters most is what works for them in their particular place and in their particular time.

What Follows

As Betsy Gotbaum and Steve Aiello have noted, the chapters in this volume were commissioned as part of a larger review that took place in New York City concerning the future of mayoral control in the schools. Although most of the inquiry conducted by the Commission on School Governance was focused on developments in New York, the panel also examined governance arrangements and their effects in other cities. The commission’s approach in this regard was rather straightforward: identify the country’s best scholars on the subject at hand and ask them to write about what they know. That same formula served us well in putting together this book. The contributions are thoughtful, well informed, and diverse in their perspectives.

The collection is organized into three sections. The first three chapters, by Jeffrey Henig, Michael Kirst, and Kenneth Wong, provide general overviews of the subject. Henig and Kirst have written as much on the subject of mayoral control nationally as any other researchers around, and Wong’s recent book has attracted a great deal of attention from people interested in the issue. Henig is the most cautious of the three in estimating what can be learned from studying different cities or what might actually be achieved by altering governing structures. He warns us to move slowly and carefully. Kirst is more pragmatic. He sees the selection of a governance plan as a series of trade-offs

among competing values that institutional planners want to fulfill. He reminds us that no system of governance is perfect and advises us when making a choice to just ask whether the system in place or under consideration is better than the alternatives. Kenneth Wong is the most enthusiastic supporter of mayoral control among the contributors. Drawing on data gathered for his earlier book and updated for this one, he finds that cities in which mayors are in charge of education not only improve student achievement but also manage their resources more effectively.

In addition to sharing their own perspectives on the general experience with mayoral control across the country, Henig and Kirst give some attention to Cleveland, in which it might be said that mayoral control is proceeding without much direct involvement by the mayor, at least compared with other cities such as Boston, Chicago, and New York, where the mayor seems to have a strong sense of ownership in the schools. Although he was an enthusiastic supporter of school reform, Mayor Michael White never saw himself as the personification of education in Cleveland, nor would doing so have been appreciated by his high-profile school superintendent, Barbara Byrd-Bennett. White's successor, Jane Campbell, insisted on a larger presence in education; but the present mayor, Frank Jackson, has played a rather passive role in school matters so far.

The next three chapters, written by John Portz and Robert Schwartz, Dorothy Shipps, and Wilbur Rich, provide in-depth case studies of Boston, Chicago, and Detroit, respectively. The three cities studied here are prototypes of big cities that have tried mayoral control of their schools. In Boston the mayor worked in close collaboration with education professionals to achieve reform; in Chicago the mayor often worked around school administrators or worked without them. In Detroit, it might be said that mayoral control went forward without the public or its support, but not for very long.

John Portz has followed mayoral control in Boston more carefully than any other researcher. His collaboration with Bob Schwartz allows the addition of historical insights from one who has closely observed education in Boston for more than three decades. In answer to Mike Kirst's question about whether things are getting better as a result of a governance change, Portz and Schwartz generally would answer affirmatively in reviewing the Boston experience, although a reading of their chapter suggests that a number of cautionary caveats are in order when one makes generalizations that might be transposed elsewhere.

Writing on Chicago for many years after having served as codirector of the Consortium for Chicago School Research there, Dorothy Shipps has generally

been less positive in her assessment of mayoral control. Shippis has persistently raised concerns with what she sees as the outsized role assumed by the business community and the diminution of community influence in policymaking since the mayor took over the schools.¹⁵ Here she steps back from the situation a bit and, acknowledging some progress in academic performance, addresses the institutional capacities that are needed to make mayoral control of the schools work best in large American cities.

Wilbur Rich's chapter on Detroit is a study of mayoral control undone and what can happen when a system of governance lacks legitimacy among the people who are being governed. Drawing on a concept developed in his previous research on urban school systems, Rich sees a "public school cartel" at work that instinctively opposed changes to the status quo ante in order to protect long-standing interests that do not necessarily coincide with the welfare of students and schools.¹⁶ Rich has written extensively on race, urban education, city mayors, and Detroit politics, but this is his first in-depth assessment of the experience with mayoral control in the Motor City.

The last three chapters of the book are the first systematic examination of mayoral control in New York City to date. Here I find myself in fine company. Diane Ravitch is the premier historian of education in New York; Clara Hemphill's series of books on the city's schools are widely considered essential reading for any parent with school-age children in the Big Apple. In her historical essay, Ravitch explains that mayors have always had a large influence over education in New York, but she finds that the amount of authority given to the mayor under the current plan is unprecedented and problematic. Hemphill, focusing her attention at the community level, finds that the elimination of elected local school boards, while not to be regretted, has left a rather confused and confusing array of institutions in place for parents and other activists who want to have a say in their schools or who just want to be informed.

My chapter places the institutional arrangement of the schools in the larger framework of municipal government, an approach I would commend to students of school governance in other cities. Here I draw not only on the findings and recommendations of the Commission on School Governance, for which I had the privilege to serve as executive director, but also on my past experience as an adviser to the charter commission that wrote the present city charter. Throughout its history, New York City has attempted to balance a tradition of having both strong mayors and strong communities. The balance began to lean more heavily toward the mayor with the adoption of the 1989 charter, and it probably tipped too far when the mayor took over the

schools in 2002. The recommendations made by the Commission on School Governance are designed to correct that imbalance without undermining the goal of having the mayor play a central leadership role in education. I trust that these findings and recommendations will be of interest to scholars, students, and practitioners in other cities, in the same way that developments around the country informed the project in New York. In the short postscript at the end of this volume, I share some final thoughts on the benefits, difficulties, and pitfalls of studying governance and its possible improvement.

There is some overlap among the chapters, especially between the introductory chapters, which provide general overviews, and the remaining chapters, which penetrate more deeply into specific cities. This could not be avoided in soliciting such comprehensive reviews of the topic. As editor I wanted to give all the authors free rein in saying what they had to say, which I believe in all cases is quite valuable for anyone interested in the subject. Readers will find agreement, disagreement, and an invitation to draw their own conclusions.

I should also emphasize that while the central topic of this book is mayoral control, school governance, even in cities where the role of the municipal executive has been greatly enlarged, is not just about the power of these mayors. School governance does and should involve many players and institutions, as becomes apparent in the forthcoming pages.

There is an excellent and burgeoning literature on the subject of mayoral control, much of it written by the contributors to this volume.¹⁷ I suspect and hope that there is more to come on this important topic. The idea and its implementation are works in progress in need of ongoing study. This book is a marker on that journey.

Notes

1. See Anwar Hussain Syed, *The Political Theory of American Local Government* (Random House, 1966); Gerald E. Frug, "The City as a Legal Concept," *Harvard Law Review* 93 (April 1980): 1057–154; Joseph P. Viteritti and Gerald J. Russello, "Community and American Federalism: Images Romantic and Real," *Virginia Journal of Social Policy and the Law* 4 (Spring 1997): 683–742.

2. See Charles M. Payne, *So Much Reform, So Little Change: The Persistence of Failure in Urban Schools* (Harvard Education Press, 2008).

3. Joseph P. Viteritti, "The City and the Constitution: A Historical Analysis of Institutional Evolution and Adaptation," *Journal of Urban Affairs* 12, no. 3 (1990): 221–36.

4. Joseph P. Viteritti, *Across the River: Politics and Education in the City* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1983); Joseph P. Viteritti, "The Urban School District: Toward an

Open Systems Approach to Leadership and Governance,” *Urban Education* 21 (October 1986): 228–53; Joseph P. Viteritti, “Urban Governance and the Idea of a Service Community,” in *Caring for America’s Children*, edited by Frank J. Macchiarola and Alan Gartner (New York: Academy of Political Science, 1989), pp. 110–21; Joseph P. Viteritti, “Abolish the Board of Education,” *New York Times*, January 6, 2002, p. A13.

5. See Kenneth J. Meier and Robert E. England, “Black Representation and Educational Policy: Are They Related?” *American Political Science Review* 78 (June 1984): 392–403; Theodore Robinson and Robert E. England, “Black Representation on Central City School Boards Revisited,” *Social Science Quarterly* 62 (September 1981): 495–502; Joseph P. Viteritti, “Unapportioned Justice: Local Elections, Social Science, and the Evolution of the Voting Rights Act,” *Cornell Journal of Law and Public Policy* 4 (Fall 1994): 199–271.

6. Donald R. McAdam, *Fighting to Save Our Urban Schools—and Winning: Lessons from Houston* (Teachers College Press, 2000).

7. The cities are Boston, Chicago, New York, Cleveland, Providence, Harrisburg, Hartford, Trenton, New Haven, and Washington, D.C.

8. William G. Howell, ed., *Besieged: School Boards and the Future of Education Politics* (Brookings, 2005); Noel Epstein, ed., *Who’s in Charge Here? The Tangled Web of School Governance and Policy* (Brookings, 2006).

9. Matt Miller, “First, Kill All the School Boards,” *Atlantic Monthly*, January–February 2008, pp. 92–94, 96–97, quotations on 94, 97.

10. Marion Orr, *Black Social Capital: The Politics of School Reform in Baltimore* (University Press of Kansas, 1998).

11. Nicholas V. Longo, *Why Community Matters: Connecting Education with Civic Life* (State University of New York Press, 2007); Clarence Stone and others, *Building Civic Capacity: The Politics of Reforming Urban Schools* (University Press of Kansas, 2001); Robert D. Putnam, “Community-Based Social Capital and Educational Performance,” in *Making Good Citizens: Education and Civil Society*, edited by Diane Ravitch and Joseph P. Viteritti (Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 58–95.

12. See Stefanie Chambers, *Mayors and Schools: Minority Voices and Democratic Transitions in Urban Education* (Temple University Press, 2006).

13. Norman H. Nie, Jane Junn, and Kenneth Stehlik-Barry, *Education and Democratic Citizenship in America* (University of Chicago Press, 1996); David E. Campbell, *Why We Vote: How Schools and Communities Shape Our Civic Life* (Princeton University Press, 2006); Peter Levine, *The Future of Democracy: Developing the Next Generation of American Citizens* (University Press of New England, 2007); Ravitch and Viteritti, *Making Good Citizens*.

14. Kenneth K. Wong and others, *The Education Mayor: Improving America’s Schools* (Georgetown University Press, 2007). See also my review, “The Education Mayor: Improving America’s Schools,” in *Teachers College Record*, March 11, 2008 (www.tcrecord.org/content.asp?contentid=15094).

15. Dorothy Shipp, *School Reform, Corporate Style: Chicago, 1880–2000* (University Press of Kansas, 2006).

16. Wilbur C. Rich, *Black Mayors and School Politics: The Failure of Reform in Detroit, Gary, and Newark* (New York: Garland Press, 1996).

17. See, especially, Jeffrey R. Henig and Wilbur C. Rich, eds., *Mayors in the Middle: Politics, Race, and Mayoral Control of Urban Schools* (Princeton University Press, 2002); John Portz, Lana Stein, and Robin Jones, *City Schools and City Politics: Institutions and Leadership in Pittsburgh, Boston, and St. Louis* (University Press of Kansas, 1999); Alexander Russo, ed., *School Reform in Chicago: Lessons in Policy and Practice* (Harvard Education Press, 2004); Shipps, *School Reform, Corporate Style*; Chambers, *Mayors and Schools*; Wong and others, *The Education Mayor*; S. Paul Reville, ed., *A Decade of Urban School Reform: Persistence and Progress in the Boston Public Schools* (Harvard Education Press, 2007); Larry Cuban and Michael Usdan, eds., *Powerful Reforms with Shallow Roots: Improving America's Urban Schools* (Teachers College Press, 2003); Michael W. Kirst and Fritz Edelstein, "The Maturing Mayoral Role in Education," *Harvard Educational Review* 76 (Summer 2006): 152–64; Frederick M. Hess, "Assessing the Case for Mayoral Control of Urban School Systems," *American Journal of Education* 114 (May 2008): 219–45.