March 6, 2014

TO: Alix Beatty
    Lorraine McDonnell
    And the committee

FR: Jeff Henig

RE: Putting DC in context

Attached is my take on some of the questions I understand you to be wrestling with. It’s a longer document than I’d envisioned initially. My late great friend and colleague, Lee Sigelman, used to say to me “I could have written something shorter, but I didn’t have the time.” That may apply here. I expect with more time this could have been condensed and sharpened. But this will have to do.

You’ll see that I spent much less time on DC itself than on a series of strategically selected comparison cities. Since I’ve been away from DC for some time (almost 12 years!) and you’ve been thinking about it in the course of this project, I thought that would be a more effective allocation of my efforts.

I hope this is useful and welcome any feedback or questions.
Mayoral control is a governance reform that comes replete with a theoretical rationale. The rationale explains why formally shifting authority might make a difference in the policies districts pursue, in what teachers and schools actually do, and ultimately in how well children learn. Determining whether mayoral control has delivered on its promises is tricky, however, not just in the District of Columbia (hereafter “DC”) but also generally. More than two decades after mayoral control was adopted in Boston, almost fourteen years after DC voters approved a referendum to move to a partially mayor-appointed school board, and seven years after the DC City Council approved the more complete version of mayoral control in place there today, there still is no surefire way to fully disentangle the effects of formal governance structure from those of leadership, implementation choices, local political context, and national education policy changes. Still, those interested in leveraging improvements in the District’s educational outcomes need to make inferential judgments about this in order to choose among alternative paths forward. And while it may not be possible, pending more time and better research to do so with the confidence and certainty that researchers strive for, there is enough empirical grist for making preliminary inferences and assigning likelihoods to some possibilities relative to others.

In this memo I’ll first briefly lay out the theoretical arguments behind mayoral control to explain why and how it is supposed to make a difference. It’s not clear, though,
whether the adoption of mayoral control in specific cities has been based on a
deliberative consideration of that rationale or driven more by tactical calculations and a
sense that “something; anything” would be better than maintaining the status quo.
Accordingly, I’ll also say something about the distinction between “pull” (the compelling
arguments for mayoral control) versus “push” (the pressure to do something different)
factors.

Second, I will flesh out the reasons why it is so difficult to provide a confident
answer to the question of whether mayoral control is making a difference. One set of
reasons has to do with rival explanations: mayoral control is correlated with other
interventions and events that also stand as credible explanations for the policies pursued
and their initial consequences. A second set has to do with timing and the passage of
time; although the shift to mayoral control is no longer a new oddity, most of what we
know about it has been limited to a handful of cities and to “first-generation” mayors—
those who often eagerly embraced the responsibility and chose to make education reform
their defining issue—and during a particular national era of testing, choice, and
accountability pressures. Some of these complications may be particularly confounding
in DC, which because it sits under the eyes and to some extent under the authority of
Congress, is especially susceptible to the winds of national policy fashions.¹

Third, and most importantly, I’ll discuss what we can learn from comparing the
arc of D.C.’s recent education policy history with what has happened elsewhere. While it
won’t be possible to fully disentangle the threads of causality, there are insights that can
be drawn from examining some specific types of cases, including: 1. Districts in which
mayoral control pre-dated the contemporary school reform era; 2. Second and third
generation administrations after the contemporary adoption of mayoral control; 3. Non-mayoral control cities that are pursuing education policy agendas similar in key respects to those associated with mayoral control; and 4. Contemporary mayoral control cities that while pursuing elements of the standard MC reform agenda appear to be doing so with a style or approach that is less aggressive and deliberately disruptive than has been associated with mayoral control as manifested in Chicago and New York City, high visibility cases that have disproportionately shaped the public’s understanding of what mayoral control represents.

**Why Governance Structure Might Make a Difference**

There has been a fair amount written about the rationale for MC, so I won’t go into that here at any length. But there are three distinctions that tend to get muddied or omitted in the contemporary debates yet which I find useful in sorting out questions about what difference mayoral control does or does not make. These distinctions have to do with: formal versus informal powers; differences in agendas versus implementation versus educational outcomes; and push versus pull factors in the adoption of mayoral control itself.

*Formal and informal power and politics.* Part of the theory underlying the arguments in favor of mayoral control rests on formal differences between mayors and elected school boards and their appointed superintendents. Because they have formal authority over other agencies of municipal government, mayors in principle should be better placed to coordinate and enforce cross-sector approaches to meeting students’ needs and addressing achievement gaps. Some argue, too, that centralizing responsibility in the mayor’s office provides for greater democratic accountability.
Another part of the theory, though, rests on informal attributes of mayors versus school boards and the political dynamics that distinguish the two arenas. Mayors, in general, are more likely to have a visible bully pulpit and be better networked into state and national parties. These attributes might make them better placed to champion schools to a local electorate that needs to be convinced to spend more money, and, within intergovernmental arenas, to ensure that the city maximizes its share of competitive grants. Compared to school boards or superintendents, the electoral and governance regimes assembled by mayors tend to be broader and bring more resources to the table; they include business and various civic and nonprofit groups that may have only an indirect interest in schools, giving mayors an edge when it comes to mobilizing a wider array or energy, resources, and expertise. Some argue that mayors—or at least “new-style” mayors—are also more attuned to the importance of schools for competitiveness in a global economy, more open to transplanting into education management and organizational strategies honed in other agencies or the private sector, and generally more pragmatic about crafting solutions.5

*Types of consequences:* It can also be important to distinguish among three types of consequences that might follow from the institution of mayoral control. One has to do with *setting the policy agenda.* Mayors may not only be better placed to give education prominence on the local governmental agenda, there is a chance that mayors will tend to favor different types of interventions than school boards. In the popular literature, mayoral control is associated with a particular set of initiatives. For want of a better term, I’ll refer to this as the “standard” mayoral control school reform agenda. It is characterized by an emphasis on market-oriented strategies promoting choice and competition, including an
emphasis on charter schools; some more corporate elements such as public-private partnerships and portfolio management models; a combination of centralized policy and management, on the one hand, with decentralization of greater authority to principals on the other; and heavy reliance on test-based accountability, including the incorporation of value-added assessments of teachers into decisions about hiring, tenure, and pay.

One of the key questions of interest is the extent to which this standard reform agenda is somehow “hardwired” into the mayoral control approach, making it much more likely that mayoral control cities will embrace these reforms than other reform models and more likely that they will do so than other cities with more traditional school governance systems in place. The fact that the high profile cases have been among the most aggressive and visible pursuers of these initiatives seems to suggest as much. And there are theory-based reasons why this could be true. Compared to traditional school boards, mayors oversee a much wider array of agencies and have long had familiarity with a range of policy tools—such as contracting out, performance assessment, and data-driven decision-making—that remain somewhat alien and threatening to many school boards. Also, because the electoral and governance regimes constructed by mayors are much more likely to include businesses and other interests that are partial to market- and corporate-style approaches—either because they use those strategies themselves or are purveyors of those strategies and supporting services and so have a direct stake in their expansion—mayors are more likely to get reinforcement for pursuing such initiatives, or even direct lobbying from needed allies.

A second kind of consequence concerns policy implementation. Education in the U.S. is typically characterized as a “loosely coupled” system in which it is especially
difficult to convert policy on the drawing board into policy in practice. Even if they pursue the same set of policies, as school boards, mayors may have more expertise, motivation and tools for ensuring effective implementation. Mayors have more of an incentive to be cost-effective, theory holds, because they are more attuned to two kinds of opportunity costs of education spending. One set of opportunity costs relates to taxes; inefficiencies in education delivery presumably make it harder for cities to hold the line on taxes, and mayors are thought to be more sensitive to this because they are charged with maximizing the city’s economic growth. Another set of opportunity costs relates to other demands on local revenues. Because their electoral regimes incorporate single person households, older residents who no longer have a direct stake in schools, a families that send their children to private schools, mayors have to give due consideration to rival claims on the public purse.

Related, but conceptually and in real terms distinct from cost-effectiveness, are two other dimensions of implementation: speed and degree of change. New style mayors are considered to be more oriented than school boards toward change, seeing “disruptive” change as liberating rather than destabilizing, and, whether due to sincere belief that any delay in improving schools is morally suspect or because speedy accomplishments gain them notoriety and greater prospects for reelection or election to higher office, more likely to adopt a “damn the torpedoes and full speed ahead” approach to school reform. And because teachers unions are a less critical element of their electoral and governance regimes (although certainly still relevant!), mayors are seen as freer to challenge those groups that are often protective of existing practices even when those do not generate clear pay-offs in results.
Finally, there is a chance that mayors would be better able to induce more positive educational outcomes than tradition school governance arrangements even if they pulled the same school levers and did so with the same speed and force. In addition to being especially loosely coupled, education has been characterized as a field with an ill-defined, nonconsensual core of knowledge about how to make children learn, especially how to close educational gaps rooted in race and class. With both the translation of policy into practice and the translation from practice into educational gains being problematic, it can seem far-fetched to imagine that mayoral control will demonstrate clear impacts down the long and attenuated causal chain that leads toward measured achievement and gaps. Yet, here again, there are coherent arguments supporting the notion that mayoral control may have demonstrable consequences for student educational gains. The primary reason advocates of mayoral control believe that it can lead to better outcomes is that they think that mayors will opt for better policies and implement them with greater fidelity and vigor, but there are also reasons to believe that mayoral control might lead to better outcomes even if mayor-led administrations pursue agendas that are not much different from those being pursued elsewhere. The most compelling arguments in this regard have to do with administrative coordination and comprehensiveness that is more likely to occur if there is a centralized decision-making process overseeing a range of local services including schools.11

There are also reasons to expect that cities that do a good job constructing and coordinating programs in housing, social services, recreation, law enforcement, and public health may show gains in student outcomes even holding K-12 schooling policies
constant. That could be the case if non-school, municipally directed programs have a direct effect on children’s academic performance and educational attainment or if healthier children from better situated families and neighborhoods respond better to schooling. It could also be the case if mayors are able to get better bang for the buck out of general revenues by calibrating costs and benefits across the range of local agencies and policies, moving money around based on aggregate net benefits for the community rather than as calculated within bureaucratic silos. Mayors—because of their electoral savvy, political skills, and tall soapbox-- also may be better situated to maximize “co-production,” the added efficacy of programs that comes about when citizens behave in ways that support policy initiatives rather than simply passively consume services.

*Push versus Pull Factors:* Theoretical arguments have probably played much less of a role in driving the adoption of mayoral control than idealized notions of rational-comprehensive decision-making might lead us to expect. Elsewhere, Elisabeth Fraser and I have drawn the distinction between “pull” and “push” factors when it comes to the adoption of mayoral control. To a nontrivial extent “the movement toward mayoral control can be explained as simply the latest in a series of reform impulses broadly characterized as ‘anything’s got to be better than what we have now.’ Elected school boards, particularly those elected by wards, have been criticized for a range of sins, including petty politics, micromanagement, amateurishness, lack of imagination, kowtowing to the teacher unions, corruption, and waste.”

Certainly, this kind of push pressure was a factor in the District’s two-step movement from an entirely elected board to a partially appointed one in 2000 and then to a fully appointed one in 2007. Anticipating the planned return to local control of schools
following the period in which the Congressionally-created District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority oversaw many aspects of local governance, including schools, the Washington Post editorialized:

> The damage done to District children on the elected school board's watch was almost criminal. As divided and self-indulgent board members played ward politics and squabbled over office space, staff and job perks, SAT scores plummeted, the majority of sixth-, eighth- and 11th-grade students scored far below the national average on a comprehensive test of basic skills, almost half of all high school students dropped out or abandoned the public schools, classrooms went without textbooks, and cafeteria food was terrible.¹⁶

The view that the elected school board was fundamentally dysfunctional was not shared by all DC residents; some continued to believe that an elected board was more democratic and more attuned to local needs and interests. But the sharply critical perspective was broadly shared and this aversion to “going back to the bad old days” arguably played as much of a role in generating momentum toward the governance change as did some intrinsic appeal of mayoral control or theory-based belief in its superior qualities.

The fact that mayoral control has sometimes come about through a casting around for something different—a means to work around recalcitrant leaders, dysfunctional school boards, or obstinate resistance to reform ideas—has implications. First, it means that the shift in governance arrangements often takes place without the kind of broad and sustained debate that more typically accompanies major governance shifts such as those carried out through municipal charter revisions or state constitutional amendments. As a
result, the goals and animating ideas may be ill defined, the lines of public support and opposition arranged hastily and based on immediate circumstance and impression. Just as significantly, it means that places that adopt mayoral control—or have it imposed upon them—-are often different from those that do in ways that may have their own implications for the policies adopted, implementation capacity, and outcomes achieved. From the standpoint of policy assessment, in other words, there is often a significant “selection bias” in terms of where and when the intervention takes place. Both of these facts—the lack of deliberative decision-making behind the initial adoption; the ways in which places with mayoral control may differ in relevant ways from those that retain conventional structures—are important parts of the story about why it can be difficult to determine what difference, if any, mayoral control makes.

**Confounding Factors**

*Multiple causes (and selection biases):* The literature on governance institutions makes it clear that while structure is important it is not all-important. Governance structures affect policy, implementation and outcomes by tilting the field of probabilities, primarily by giving some kinds of interests modest advantages in access during the agenda-setting and implementation stages. Elsewhere, I’ve likened governance institutions to the rules of the game in sports. Changing the height of the basket, or the length of the three point arc, or the width or the court would alter the relative advantages of tall players versus sharp-eyed shooters and those who are speedy and great passers. But it would not necessarily determine who wins, especially over the long haul as team owners and couches adapt. Similarly, mayoral control might give an inside track to certain business interests or lead to a more responsive reaction to ideas and arguments.
more familiar in municipal governance and party politics than in more buffered school-focused arenas. But those differences in tendency and inclination might not be determinative when played out in complex settings.

Other things also matter, and some of them matter a lot. This includes things like levels of accessible resources (and competing demands on resources); leadership skills and leadership styles; administrative capacity; historically evolved interest group relationships; social capital; and governance regimes. While we know these things are important, most of them are difficult to pin down empirically and we don’t know much about how they are distributed across cities. To simply compare policies, implementation, and outcomes between mayoral control and other urban districts, in the hopes of finding out what difference it makes, we would have to pretend that they are more or less randomly distributed and not systematically correlated with the adoption of mayoral control. And that is simply not credible.

There is every reason to believe that cities that have adopted mayoral control of schools differ systematically from those that have not and, importantly, that these differences are in areas that matter. From a research design standpoint, this creates a selection bias. Interestingly, the selection bias could run in two opposite directions. A positive selection bias would be one in which the factors that lead a district to adopt mayoral control are also likely to have independent positive effects on the adoption of a reform agenda, effective implementation, and/or good educational outcomes. This is especially likely when the decision to adopt mayoral control was generated at the local level or had, at the least, a strong and influential local constituency. Because inducing structural change is politically challenging, accomplishing the shift in governance, in
these places, signals that a community has attained a certain level of civic capacity, in which disparate interests and perspectives have been mediated or moderated, pathways and habits of collaboration have been established, and education has been broadly recognized as a local priority. A negative selection bias, on the other hand, might be in play if mayoral-control is systematically more likely to be found in districts that are particularly dysfunctional in core political dynamics and civic well being. This could be the case if mayoral control is imposed upon districts—for example by frustrated state legislatures—precisely because those outside agents have concluded that the system is incapable of healing itself. When we widen our scope of vision to include traditional mayoral control cities, a different kind of negative selection bias might come into play. Places like Trenton, Yonkers, New Haven, and the like might have retained mayoral control because they lacked the will and capacity to shift to elected school boards in the early 20th century, when Progressive reformers pushed that model as an anti-Machine reform, and that internal dysfunction might continue to exist and serve as a rival explanation of poor performance today.

Sorting out positive and negative selection biases can be tricky, especially since they can in principle work both ways at once. Consider DC. The switch to mayoral control in the District was catalyzed by Congress—in its creation of the Control Board, which first drew future mayor Anthony Williams to DC and then directly intervened in the schools, bringing in General Julius Becton to run the school system. Both the initial intervention and the subsequent concern about handing the reins back to local institutions depended on the perception of historic school board dysfunction, as illustrated in the Post editorial referenced earlier. But this external pressure did not so much nullify local
politics as it placed a thumb on scales of competing internal factions, lending added force to an emerging pro-school reform coalition comprising the downtown business community, a growing gentrifier community that saw better schools as a key to whether they would stay in the city or exit to the suburbs, and, importantly, some long-standing and local civic organizations, foundations, and social service groups that also had become disenchanted with the status quo ante. This pro-reform constituency narrowly won the referendum to move to a partially appointed board, in which general public divided and racial lines sharply drawn, and then also played a role in the subsequent election of Adrian Fenty.19

This political coalition stands as a powerful rival explanation for the policy agenda subsequently pursued under Rhee and now Henderson. As a result, it is open to legitimate question whether some of the subsequent reform impulses would have emerged—eventually if not as soon, selectively and in more moderated form if not as dramatically—even if the governance structure had not been formally altered. After all, charters schools, one of the elements now considered to be part of the standard mayoral control agenda, were put into place and had taken deep root even before mayoral control.

Timing matters: The emergence—some might say re-emergence—of mayoral control has taken place at a particular time in the unfolding of American school reform. The past twenty-five years have witnessed tremendous surges in attention to school choice, test-based accountability, alternative modes of certifying teacher and principals, teacher merit pay and value-added assessments, and other elements in what is not considered the standard school reform agenda. It is more than coincidence that the birth of mayoral control in Boston, the enactment of the nation’s first charter school legislation
in Minnesota, and the launch of Milwaukee’s voucher program all were compressed within a narrow window in the very early 1990s. The first generation of state test based accountability systems in places like Kentucky, Maryland, and Texas date to the mid-1990s. And the push from the federal government—initially via NCLB, then Race to the Top (RttT) and the conditional approval of NCLB waivers—created its own tailwinds for this package of reforms. This is not simply coincidental; all of these interventions draw inspiration and support from a widely shared sense that the existing systems were not up to the task of bringing about the requisite commitment to change.

Such simultaneity in timing further complicates the task of determining the independent causal role of mayor control. Rather than an independent structural precursor to a reform agenda, it is possible that mayoral control is best understood as just one more in a grab bag of reform elements: one arrow in the quiver of hot reform ideas rather than the quiver itself.

Time matters: Serious students of public policy understand that policies do not emerge from the legislative processes that birth them full blown and permanently defined. Enactment initiates a process in which rules and regulations are drawn, implementation is planned and executed, learning occurs through formal evaluation and informal feedback, and new political pressures are brought into play either as backlash or in the form of a new supportive coalition.

In case of mayoral control, consideration of time brings to the fore the importance of distinguishing the real and settled implications of control from those that might be ephemeral or might take different shape as:
• administrative changes unfold and get routinized within districts (which could make for more efficient operation or settling in to new forms of rigidity and self-satisfaction);

• principals and teachers get accustomed to new accountability patterns and new responsibilities (which could lead to more flexible, innovative and context-appropriate leadership and instruction or could lead to more sophisticated gaming);

• first generation reforms either do or do not flourish (e.g. chartering and contract oversight may gradually weed out poor performers or new schools and initiatives may lose luster as pioneers burn out and philanthropic funding diminishes); calls for giving it time to gel.

• or new interest groups solidify their access and influence or long-standing interest groups regain their footing (which could lead to a more systemic privatization and a growing role for non-local actors like foundations and national Charter Management Organizations or might generate a reactive coalition comprising educators, unions, and parents who favor a different less-market-oriented, more neighborhood-grounded vision of school reform).

Learning From Other Cases

Despite these complications, in this section I do my best to draw some general implications by means of comparisons to other urban districts with types of governance that differ from one another and from DC in ways that inform—though not settle—judgments about causal inference. We’re handicapped in doing so by the fact that the
literature becomes much thinner as soon as one moves away from a handful of high profile cases. There has been quite a lot written about school reform in Chicago, New York City, Philadelphia, and DC; less so about some other mayoral control cities like Boston and Cleveland; and very little at all about other mayoral control and traditionally governed districts that provide useful points of comparison. Even in the high profile cases, most of what has been written focuses on their policy agenda, with little information about the nitty-gritty of implementation. Outside of those participating in NAEP-TUDA, the data on outcomes is limited as far as making cross-case comparisons.

For these reasons I’ll focus primarily on the policy agenda—what cities are trying to do. Because the term “reformer” has been politically charged, following Kirp I’ll occasionally use the term “transformation” to refer to the deliberately “disruptive” package of market-oriented, corporate, and accountability interventions that have been associated with change proponents who believe that traditional school systems are too bureaucratic and resistant to needed change. This leaves room to recognize, as I’ll discuss, the fact that there is an alternative reform paradigm that puts greater emphasis on professional development and support, non-school levers, coalition building (including unions), and steady progress over sharp and disruptive change. Table 1 provides a summary overview of some of the points discussed in greater detail below.

*New style vs. Old style:* Discussion of mayoral control focuses almost exclusively on districts that have switched in that direction since Boston led the way in 1992. But these contemporary cases coexist with a set of districts that have long practiced mayoral control. Such historical cases include Jackson MI, New Haven CT, Philadelphia, Trenton NJ, and Yonkers NY. In some of these cases public schools are situated, relative to the
mayor, in much the same way as other municipal agencies. In some other cases—pre-reform Baltimore; pre-reform Chicago—the mayor long had strong formal role via control over their budget or other mechanisms. If the formal attributes of mayoral control were sufficient to prompt a more transformation oriented agenda, more efficacious implementation, or better educational outcomes we should in principle see some of those benefits in these cases: indeed, given the fact that the advantages would have had more time to accumulate and take root one might legitimately expect them to be revealed more emphatically there.

These traditional mayoral control cities are rarely cited as exemplars in policy, implementation or outcomes. New Haven comes closest to having received some positive attention. Unlike the other traditional mayoral control cities it has embraced some of the key trappings of the standard reform agenda. In 2009, Gareth Harries, who had served previously in the Bloomberg/ Klein administration in NYC, was appointed deputy superintendent, and in 2013 he became superintendent. In NYC, Davies had overseen the office responsible for overseeing the cities portfolio management model, and in that role worked both in closing low-performing traditional schools and recruiting new providers. Because the state provides limited funding, Connecticut is in general not a hotbed of charter school activity and no large EMO or CMO networks are operating there, but New Haven, under Harries, does appear to be embracing and actively promoting parental choice among a diverse array of schools (with intra- and inter-district magnet schools key components). 23 But the New Haven model of reform also incorporates some differences in framing and style that may matter. Rather than posing reform in ways that seem to pit the district and teachers unions on opposite sides of a war zone, New Haven has been a
visible promoter of a model of district-union collaboration. Mayor (now former mayor) John DeStefano, Jr. self-consciously sought to make the city “to make New Haven a proving ground” for less divisive style of reform. “An astute politician,” one journalist reports, DeStefano “had taken note of what was happening in Washington, D.C., where the AFT was reeling from a bitter fallout with Schools Chancellor Michelle Rhee over teacher tenure and pay.”

He invited Weingarten to New Haven to try a more collaborative approach. Weingarten seized the chance to prove her union could be part of the solution to fix public schools. She declared the approach, where changes were negotiated in a union contract, successful: “New Haven is a gold standard in terms of how you do things right.”

Whether this is generating successful outcomes is open to question. The most recent test scores were characterized as “mixed bag” by a local newspaper. Grade 3 scores in 2013 on CT Master Test showed 42.3% “at goal” in reading (vs. 72.4% for the state) and 58% at goal in Math (vs. 82.7). “Overall, the announcement … marked a sobering contrast to the ambitious goal-setting and rosy test-score press pronouncements of past years, especially during last year’s mayoral election campaign.”

The story for places like Trenton is bleaker. Mayoral control of schools there is wrapped up in a system of local political corruption that makes it clear the “new style” mayors about which Kirst and Bulkley write are not ubiquitous. Twenty months after the FBI raided his house and a year and a half after he was arrested, in early February 2014 sitting Mayor Tony Mack was convicted of official extortion conspiracy, attempted
extortion, accepting bribes, mail fraud and wire fraud.\textsuperscript{27} And performance is dismal as well. On the 2013 New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge, 17\% of the city’s fourth graders were proficient and only .3\% advanced in English Language Arts (compared to 51.0\% and 8.4\% for the state) and 34.4\% proficient and 6.1\% Advanced in Mathematics (compared to 43.8\% and 44.4\%).\textsuperscript{28}

To my knowledge there has been no scholarly research or even in-depth national journalistic coverage of education under mayoral control in Jackson, Mississippi. But there’s no evidence that it is a quiet success story. Mississippi has a famously low threshold for declaring students basic, proficient or advanced. For example, what the state defines as proficient on its own testing metrics is generally equivalent to a below basic score on the National Assessment of Educational Progress.\textsuperscript{29} So when the state announces that 13\% of its third graders are below basic in Language Arts and 8.9\% in Math, that’s likely a grossly understated estimate of where they’d stand on a more rigorous exam. In Jackson, the comparable figures are much worse: 19.1 and 17.5 percent.\textsuperscript{30}

Yonkers similarly was by-passed by the 20\textsuperscript{th} Century Progressive reform movement to take control of public schools out of the hands of mayors, who were generally regarded as machine politicians and party hacks. But the fact that school board members are appointed by the mayor hasn’t sufficed to generate coherent policy or clear lines of accountability. Despite having appointment power, the current mayor is complaining that the board is not sufficiently under his control. His answer is to call for even greater, budget-related control. Test scores are mediocre at best. On a performance
index compiled by the New York Times, in which the state median was 100, Yonkers 8th graders scored 50 across all tests.31

While some accounts present Baltimore as a contemporary case of mayoral control adopted in 1997, arguably it should count as an historical one. As Marion Orr, observes, pre-19977 Baltimore “had in place the kind of mayoral-dominated school structure many reformers and state level officials advocate,” with elements going back to 1899.32 Ironically, the changes instituted in 1997, which gave the mayor a shared role in appointing the board, were meant to dilute the historic centrality of the mayor’s office, a slap at Mayor Kurt Schmoke whose high profile reform efforts were perceived to have failed. Schmoke’s predecessors, including the flamboyant W. Donald Schaeffer, had neglected the public schools, preferring to focus in stead on other more traditional areas of mayoral attention like housing and economic development. Baltimore’s governance change, in other words, represented a repudiation of a historic tradition of mayoral control.

Second and third generation mayoral control: Until quite recently almost everything we knew about the contemporary version of mayoral control was based on first-generation mayors: those who were in office at the time when the governance shift took place.33 As I alluded to earlier, there are good reasons to expect that these first generation mayors might differ from their successors in ways that matter. First, they are personally and politically highly committed to education; typically asking for, or energetically embracing, the expansion of power and the responsibility that comes with being held responsible for school performance. Second, they come into office with the support and backing of state legislatures that were sufficiently enthusiastic about their
potential that they were willing to grant them stronger authority and, of perhaps more lasting importance, have an institutional interest in backing them up as effective partners. Third, first generation mayoral control regimes have had unusually strong backing from an array of national education foundations and other philanthropists, that have provided them with additional and largely discretionary resources that have helped them to launch their programs quickly and often without needing to win city council or state approval. Fourth, these first generation mayors gained office at a time that education was high on the state and national agendas and when local history and frustration with elected school boards, provided them with supporting coalition, including business and civic leaders.

The last few years have seen the end of some of the long-lasting, high-visibility first-generation mayoral control regimes. Daley stepped down in Chicago and was replaced by Rahm Emmanuel in 2011. Menino stepped down in Boston and was replaced by Martin Walsh in 2014. Bloomberg’s administration came to its term-limitation, and Bill de Blasio succeeded him also in 2014. Somewhat less in the public eye have been second and even third generation versions of mayoral control in places like Philadelphia (2008), Hartford (2010), and Cleveland (2002; 2006).

It is still too early to read the story of generational succession clearly. Taking stock now, one might argue that Cleveland, Chicago, and Boston—like DC—tell a story of substantial continuity rather than sharp redirection. In Cleveland, for example, mayoral control took roots, even after its first-generation mayor left office, and while the second-generation mayoralty was somewhat lackluster on the school reform front, the third generation seems to feature the mayor in a prominent role. Michael White surprised
observers by choosing not to run for another term after getting mayoral control, and so never really had the chance to establish the stronger reform agenda he’d envisioned and his successor showed little traction over the schools. But Frank Jackson, the current mayor, recently helped to launch a major new reform plan, winning a battle to pass a controversial bond referendum that will raise substantial funds and underwrite a “reinvention” of the Cleveland district. The “Cleveland Plan” includes expanding the number of charter schools, providing traditional district schools with “charter-like” flexibility, eliminating seniority as a primary factor in personnel decisions; making it easier for the district to terminate teachers who are rated "ineffective" for two successive years, and self-consciously adopting a portfolio management model. In one aspect though, Jackson’s approach veered off the more recognized style of mayoral control; although the plan was initially shaped without involvement of the teachers union, Jackson subsequently invited the union to the table, and the collaboration and support arguably contributed to the passage of the referendum and started the process of on a less divisive course than is associated with the Klein-Rhee style.

In Chicago, the theme of continuity applies not just to substantive policy but to the transformational, no-patience-for-incrementalism style that has characterized the standard mayoral control approach. Mayor Rahm Emanuel has aggressively maintained the Daley regime’s focus on charter schools and even upped the ante on school closures and willingness to take on the teachers union head on.39

At least based on the election campaign, the Boston story appears to be one of continuity as well. While the major candidates sought to distinguish themselves to some degree on the education issue, both embraced both mayoral control and much of the
Menino legacy. Walsh’s chief competitor, John Connolly, was the more vocal and enthusiastic proponent of a market-oriented, non-incremental restructuring of the system, and he had the support of outside reform groups like Stand for Children and Democrats for Education Reform. But Walsh himself served on a charter school board. In favoring a more collaborative and somewhat more incremental approach to reform, he tried to distinguish his from the Daley/Bloomberg/Emanuel approach, but in doing so was largely promising to continue that which Thomas Menino had piloted.

The Hartford story is too complex and in flux to allow for easy inferences. Eddie Perez, the first-generation mayor granted control in 2005, presents a complicated case in his own right. Perez was given the authority to appoint the majority of the board in 2005, and he promptly decided to appoint himself, giving him a direct and hands on role and ensuring that he has a degree of information that other mayors likely lack. Perez exhibited aggressive leadership, ousting the sitting superintendent in short order, reaching outside the city, to Cincinnati, to bring in Steve Adamowski, a charter proponent who considered himself a change agent. Adamowski sharply trimmed the central bureaucracy and immediately began to promote a portfolio management model that would encourage charters while also incorporating the districts existing array of intra- and interdistrict magnet schools. But Perez also demonstrated elements of “old style” mayors, and in 2010 was convicted of attempted extortion and accepting a bribe from a city contractor, in the form of improvements to his personal home. He resigned shortly thereafter, and the next year Adamowski stepped down, raising questions about whether the reform agenda was being set off course.40
Pedro Segarra who succeeded Perez very quickly signalled his intent to continue the practice of strong mayoral leadership. That included announcing that Adamowski’s deputy, Christina Kishimoto, who had taken the reins when Adamowski stepped down, would not have her contract renewed. But Segarra has explained this not as a reconsideration of the reform path initiated by Perez/Adamowski but as a reflection of his concern that Kishimoto would not be aggressive enough in pressing for additional change. In the meantime, though, Kishimoto is an apparent lame duck, no replacement has yet surfaced, and at least some local observers worry that the city is treading water or losing ground.

In considering the record of post-first generation mayoral control cities it may be important to remember that in several cities the first generation prompted a reconsideration and eventual stepping back from mayoral control. Detroit is the most familiar case. Mayoral control there was short-lived indeed. Its initiation, in 1999, had depended heavily on key individuals. Governor John Engler pressed for the change, motivated by what he saw as the complete dysfunction of Detroit’s elected school board and drawing inspiration from the Chicago switch to mayoral control four years earlier. Mayor Dennis Archer was initially hesitant, but eventually came on board, and there seems little doubt that his participation made the switch more politically palatable: compared to Coleman Young, Archer was seen as a new style mayor who ran and governed in a de-racialized way, making him an acceptable partner to white legislators, but as a back leader with his own local constituency, Archer was able to blunt some of the fears in the black community that mayoral control was a white conspiracy. Yet, as Jeffrey Mirel observed, by January 2003, after Archer opted not to run again and Engler
had to step down because of term limits, “the two men who helped launch the Detroit reform effort would not be in office to help direct its course.” Kwame Kilpatrick the next mayor, was somewhat ambivalent about mayoral control of the schools. The system, faced with deep structural problems, failed to show signs of improvement and when, in 2004, voters got the chance to weigh in on whether to continue mayoral control, they voted overwhelmingly to return to an elected school board.

As in Detroit, Harrisburg’s original 2000 switch to mayoral control was initiated by the state. Things did not go well. In 2007, the local newspaper characterized the latest test scores as poor was too mild, adding “in some cases, ‘appalling’ would be a more apt description.” In 2009, the newly elected mayor, Linda Thompson, announced that her first priorities would be firing the sitting superintendent, hiring a more traditional educator to fill that role, and beginning to lobby the state to return the city to an elected school board form of governance. The city returned to an elected school board later that year when the original state legislation that established mayoral control expired.

For those wondering whether mayoral control is hard-wired to a specific set and style of reforms, New York City is the most important case to consider right now. New York style mayoral control, as defined and practiced by Michael Bloomberg, was the poster child for the high velocity, big change, market and corporate style full-speed ahead reform approach that has come to capture what many consider to be the epitome of what mayoral control is all about. Bloomberg and Joel Klein, his first appointed schools chancellor, wasted little time in dismantling the existing system and moving to one in which charter schools were prominent, school closures were common, battles with the
teachers union over high stakes, test-based accountability were protracted and often nasty.

One reading of the New York City case supports the story of continuity. Despite opposition by many parent and community activists, the NY State legislature extended mayoral control when it was scheduled to sunset after its first eight years. In the 2013 campaign to succeed the term-limited Bloomberg, candidates often criticized the style and priorities of the Bloomberg education regime, but even his strongest critics generally steered clear of calling for a broad return to an elected school board.

Yet the election of Bill de Blasio, who was indeed one of those strong critics highlights the possibility that the governance system of mayoral control might prove, over time, to be compatible with a school reform approach that is sharply different from the standard one in both substance and style. de Blasio campaigned as a decided skeptic when it comes to charter schools, indicating that he wanted to slow their expansion and promising to begin charging rent to charters that had been given free space in traditional system school buildings under the Bloomberg regime. He, and his first chancellor Carmen Farina, have expressed unhappiness with the high stakes, standardized test-based culture of the city and state. And, perhaps most importantly, de Blasio has made economic inequality his main focus and universal pre-school education his signature education issue, shifting the weight of his office away from the “schools can do it” philosophy toward a view that tackling education requires addressing broader social issues and using a fuller range of policy tools.

The book is still out on whether de Blasio can deliver on his agenda and whether doing so will have the impacts he projects, but there are signs for now that proponents of
a different face for school reform may be looking to his style of mayoral control as a model just as others looked to Daley and Bloomberg a decade ago. And if that’s the case, what we initially thought of as THE mayoral control reform agenda might prove to have been just one variant that came to the fore at a particular time.

Reform regimes in non-MC cities: The high profile cases of Chicago, NYC, Philadelphia, New Orleans, and Washington DC—fed in part by the personalized media fascination with sharp-edged leaders like Vallas, Klein and Rhee as well as their disproportionate ability to attract national political and foundation support—has obscured the fact that there are urban districts with traditional structures that are also engaged in the reform process. In some cases (LA & Denver) the agenda is largely indistinguishable in terms of the key interventions (although style and pace may differ from the disruptive model). In others, there is evidence of a less brash, more politically modulated version—less anchored in market rhetoric, more oriented toward using tests and data as formative than high stakes summative tools, broadened to accommodate collaboration with teachers unions as meaningful partners and a source of helpful expertise.

Los Angeles flirted with mayoral control under Mayor Antonio Villagairosa, who sought such power, but he was able to obtain only a much-diminished version. Despite this, LAUSD has embraced a number of the reforms generally associated with MC cities. The National Alliance of Charter Schools “market share” analysis ranks LA first in the nation in the total number of charter schools students (with over 120,000), seventh in market share growth, and 13th in overall market share. The district was a national leader in the application of value-added measures to assess teachers, and took the lead in the whole country in publicly releasing such scores despite union’s protestations. LA has
been a national leader in pursuing the portfolio management model although with some twists, and its partnership with Apple and Pearson to provide a new common core oriented curriculum via IPads makes it a leader in the adoption of a corporate/technology approach. And John Deasey, the superintendent appointed by the elected school board, has adopted some of the in-your-face style associated with appointed district leaders like Rhee and Klein.

Denver also lacks formal mayoral control. Nonetheless, it has been a leader in elements of the reformer/transformer agenda. While the district initially fought charters by 2000 the district’s attitude shifted. Despite lacking formal authority over schools, mayors like Federico Peña, Wellington Webb, John Hickenlooper, and the current mayor, Michael Hancock, have been prominent cheerleaders and coalition builders in supporting public education and school reform. Denver is a leader among the districts self-consciously adopting a portfolio management approach and was one of six districts that the Gates Foundation offered grants specifically to support school district collaboration with the charter school sector. In November 2013, the reform-oriented clique on the elected schools board expanded its majority after a campaign that attracted substantial attention and donations from around the country.

In addition there is a potentially long list of traditionally governed schools districts that appear to have compiled enviable records despite hewing to a reform strategy that plays less heavily on markets, competition, high stakes accountability and rapid change. Some of these are not typical big city districts, but large and diverse suburbs with enough racial, ethnic and class diversity to serve as reasonable bases of comparison. David Kirp highlights Aldine Texas—a large district (111 sq miles; over
8,000 employees)—with more students than Washington DC (64,000), incomes about half of the state average, student enrollment that is 70% Hispanic and 25% black, and about 85% low income.\textsuperscript{51} “In the mid-1990s, Aldine schools were a disaster area,” Kirp reports, but test scores and graduation rates have been rising rapidly and the district is now second best in state for black students and third for Latino students.\textsuperscript{52} In 2009, Aldine won Broad Prize for Urban Education.

Aldine does not fit well within in the standard mayoral control narrative either in terms of governance structure or the main agenda and implementation approach that led to its current success. The district is governed by a seven member school board, whose members serve four year terms, and the superintendent who led its transformation was a traditional educator, who began teaching in 1977, became a teacher in Aldine in 1982, and gradually moved up the career ladder within the district bureaucracy. She spent six years as assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction before she became superintendent in June 2007, and rather than competition, charters, markets, and high stakes testing, her emphasis appears to have been a more traditional one of strengthening curriculum, aligning curriculum and assessments, investing in professional development, and using data as a formative tool.

Montgomery County, Maryland is another example: one familiar of course to residents of Washington DC. While generally affluent, the district includes a high number of low-income back and Latino students, including many immigrants from central America.\textsuperscript{53} Governed by an elected school board (mixed at-large and district based). The district has been regarded as a reform leader, particularly in the distribution of resources in order to turn around high need schools.\textsuperscript{54} But while it has a legacy of magnet schools,
they were formed to increase school integration not spark competition, and only one of its 202 schools is a charter school. Data-based decision-making is emphasized, but again the focus is more on using data to inform decisions than mechanically applying data to reward or punish schools, principals or teachers. The current superintendent has been an outspoken proponent of delaying the implementation of high stake testing associated with the Common Core. Although the teachers union is strong, the relationship with the district has been a large collaborative one. And at least some of the County’s apparent successes in school performance are attributed to non-school policies, such as its long-term commitment to promoting economically diverse neighborhoods through housing and planning policies.55

“Style points”: Throughout, I have noted how the dominance of a few high profile cases in defining the public face of mayoral control, has helped to create an impression that there is a single, well-defined set of policy interventions that constitute the mayoral control transformational agenda. This is a policy agenda—combining market strategies (choice & competition), corporate elements and framing (portfolio management model; partnership with large for-profits and nonprofits), and performance accountability models drawn from both the private sector and public agencies outside of schools (test-based accountability for school and teachers)—combined with a stylist approach emphasizing speed and comprehensiveness of change and a combative stance relative to unions and parents who express concerns. This penultimate section reinforces these points by looking more carefully at differences even among first-generation contemporary mayoral control cities. Boston is always recognized as a national leader in the adoption of mayoral control, but receives far less attention than most other first
generation cases, in part because the Menino style of school reform was lower key, less hyperbolic. Union City, a mayor control city that is only recently coming into public attention, exhibits some of the same elements. In both cases, the mayor at the helm was more of a traditional elected politician, someone attuned to real work politics and the kinds of wheeling and dealing that sometimes are needed to broker deals, and to build and sustain a local constituency.

Kirst and Bulkely noted almost fifteen years ago that the first generation leaders in mayoral control were a “new style” of mayor: more technocratic, more comfortable in the corporate and foundation boardrooms, less prone to ideological and partisan posturing, less steeped in traditions of electoral politics, community organization, and the civil rights movement. Rather than technocratic and anti-political, the reform style in Boston and Union City appears to have been built more on politics, bargaining, relationships, and a dose of old-fashioned political power. Combined with the patterns discussed throughout this memo, the result is a more multidimensional view of mayoral control: one which treats the link between formal governance and policy as less determined, more dependent on leadership and local circumstance.

“In a mayor-centric system,” John Portz observed, “the mayor’s political style shapes the debate and discussion about school matters.” Thomas Menino was not literally the first generation mayor in Boston’s system; Raymond Flynn, who shepherded in the change stepped down very shortly thereafter, though, and it was Menino who put his stamp on the Boston model over the next 20 years. Menino was sometimes referred to as an “urban mechanic,” his orientation was less one of replaces city agencies with more corporate entities and dramatically new blueprints, but of understanding how city
government worked and making it work better. In finding his first superintendent, he looked for a strong educator, not a nontraditional leader presumed to be unencumbered by familiarity with a system that had to go. Thomas Payzant took on the position in 1995, immediately after serving in the US Department of education, and he set about the task of improving the system by focusing on core issues. “Unlike superintendents in places such as Philadelphia and New York,” Governing magazine wrote in reflecting on his first ten years in office, “Payzant hasn’t attempted to revamp the district’s management or structure. Instead, he has increased the focus on basic subjects such as literacy and math while investing heavily in teacher training.”

Menino handled the politics and external battles, leaving Pazant a freer hand to focus on the inside challenges. And where Boston had had a legacy of divisive, racially and confrontational, racially divisive school politics, Menino generally succeeded in introducing a “more consensual, elite dialogue.”

Lest we overstate the importance of the mayoral control structure or Meninino’s personal style and predilections, it is worth noting that Boston, entering the 1990s, was primed by its history to react favorably toward—and lend support to—a leadership style that soothed some of the open wounds of its tempestuous history of divisive school politics. Desegregation battles in Boston were fierce and destructive, and the school board was more often the fanner of flames than a vehicle for rational debate, fair negotiation, compromise and the building civic capacity.

Some reformers still think Menino was too much of an incrementalist and traditionalist. Paul Grogan, president of the Boston Foundation admits that schools improved under Menino’s regime, but argues the mayor “stayed very long with what I call the incremental approach — really wanting to believe that the system could retain the
structure that it’s had and systematically improve over time. And that really hasn’t occurred.”

But if Boston under Walsh keeps on the general Menino path while New York City under de Blasio veers in a different direction than Bloomberg, gung-ho reforms may need to recalibrate their assessment and consider the possibility that the Menino style is the tortoise to the Bloomberg hare.

David Kirp’s, widely praised study of school reform in Union City, New Jersey tells a story that also shows that mayoral control can take different forms. Despite high poverty, high rates of children from non-English speaking families, a virtually all minority population, Union City has been having substantial success, and Kirp attributes much of the credit to mayoral control, and to the particular mayor who has been wielding that control. Mayor Brian Stack was elected in 2000 and two years later was given the power to appoint the school board. As a result, Kirp writes: “Here school politics and city politics are tightly intertwined…”

Stack is not just an unabashed politician, he is a politician squared. He serves simultaneously as mayor and as state legislator, and Kirp characterizes his political base as “old-style politics, with a twist—it’s machine politics with a one-man machine.”

Unlike old-style machines, which have been criticized for being focused on maintaining power to the exclusion of wrestling with social issues, Stack has a strong school reform agenda. But as in some of the cases discussed above, it is an agenda that departs from some of the standard elements associated with mayoral control: it features heavy emphasis on pre-school, locally designed curriculum, locally raised teachers and locally groomed school leaders, heavy data usage but for school and teacher learning not the management of incentives, and a strong emphasis on families and communities. But
mayoral control and the special talents of Brian Stack may not tell the whole story of Union City’s successes. Union City has also been the beneficiary of the New Jersey Supreme Court’s intervention in education funding via its Abbott decisions. As Kirp observes, “Abbott opened the spigot, and the money started to pour into Union City.” 65 Savvy leadership and the ability (and raw power) of the mayor to impose a vision helped make sure that money was devoted to instruction rather than frittered away, but money has mattered to be sure. And the reliability of extra state funding under Governor Christie is problematic, adding an element of uncertainty about where the spigot will remain open.66

Final Thoughts and Implications for DC

The comparisons discussed above raise in my mind some questions about the simple association between mayoral control as a formal governance option and this reform approach. To summarize some of the points:

- Formal adoption of mayoral control is not sufficient to catalyze school reform: Cities with longstanding mayoral control systems for the most part have not adopted the policy agenda associated with the high profile contemporary cases; nor are they, as a group, regarded as national leaders in education outcomes;

- Mayoral control is not necessary to establish a reform oriented agenda: There are multiple examples of traditionally-governed school districts that also experimenting with charters, choice, portfolio management models, data-based decision-making; providing greater discretion to schools and principals (empowerment).
Mayoral control does not lead to a self-perpetuating model of reform. The evidence from second and third generation administrations following the contemporary adoption of mayoral control is still taking shape. In some places the structural change, once adopted, has developed its own protective constituency and the core elements of the reform approach have been carried forward. But in others mayoral control was abandoned after its perceived failures or, as in the case of NYC, appears to have spawned a different reform approach—one suspicious of market competition and charters, reluctant to close schools, and more oriented toward reform levers outside traditional K-12 education.

Although less visibly part of the national debate than it was in the Rhee Era, DC remains very much in the thick of things in terms of our evolving understanding of what structural governance reform does and does not mean. Vincent Gray built his electoral coalition in very different soil than had Adrian Fenty, but while his jettisoning of Rhee suggested the possibility of redirection, the appointment of Kaya Henderson, her deputy, sent a strong message of continuity. Some speculated at the time that this was a pragmatic capitulation to pressures from outside political and funding communities that threatened to pull back on resources and support if Gray turned in a sharply different direction, but her tenure is now approaching the three-year mark—an accomplishment in the high turnover realm of urban superintendents—suggesting either that more than expedience was involved or that the Mayor and Chancellor have found that each provides some benefits to the other.

From the standpoint of policy, DC’s story seems to be one of continuity for the most part, but as noted in many of the cases above, there may be meaningful shifts in
tenor and implementation pace. Like NYC and Boston—but unlike Cleveland, Detroit, Harrisburg, and Philadelphia, DC’s school reform regime benefits from a generally healthy local economy and a business/civic community that is looking to a pathway to continued revitalization, not frantically seeking to forestall massive disinvestment and a spiral of decline. While structure is important it does not deliver anything on its own. When implemented in the context of broad fiscal and economic challenges of disinvestment, adopting mayoral control as the answer to schooling challenges is like spitting in the face of a strong headwind.

What’s unclear in DC right now, perhaps, is the extent to which the lower temperature is just a personal style shift or reflects something that might be more lasting and substantively important. Early proponents of mayoral control, for example, spoke optimistically about the potential to use the mayor’s office to mount a more comprehensive approach to educational, one extending beyond schools alone. For the most part that potential has gone unrealized, although we may be seeing a movement in that direction in NYC and some of the other mayoral control cities as their regimes mature and as conditions and national understanding of the challenges evolves. Kaya Henderson believes that access to the mayor’s office is helping her to mount a multi-tool approach, for example citing partnership with the Department of Behavioral Health and the Department of Health to provide a mental health professional and a nurse in every low-performing school. And the friendlier face she presents toward long-time DC advocates and community-based organization suggests the potential to broaden the base of civic capacity and generate a less volatile political climate.
But at least from the distance, it remains unclear whether these represent signs of a new policy direction or just signs of a recalibrated communications style. It is not apparent that community is broadly engaged in thinking about goals and measures; indeed, it may be that the relative lack of controversy and the shift toward growing respect for the professionalism and technical knowledge of the district leadership staff (a shift at least when measured against the perception of incompetence and politicization that characterized the system previously) has contributed to a situation in which the center of deliberation and decision-making is being pulled back inside the education bureaucracy. In place of broad debate on structure—whether or not to retain mayoral control—what the city might most benefit from is a broad debate on values and vision for the education and community it would like to build for the future.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Summary of comparisons and basic lessons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historical vs Contemporary Mayoral Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison cities to consider*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does formal MC produce different policies?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of other factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The passage of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Those in italics are discussed in the report*
References


Mirel, J. (2004). Detroit: "There is still a long road to travel, and success is far from assured". In J. R. Henig & W. C. Rich (Eds.), Mayors in the Middle: Politics,
Race and Mayoral Control of Urban Schools (pp. 120-158). Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.


Notes:

1 Abbott notes the longstanding tendency of Congress to treat DC as its own “testing ground” (Abbott, 1999).
3 S. Paul Reville, Helen Malone and I emphasize this as a potential way out of the stale debate over whether schools can close educational gaps without also addressing things like concentrated poverty, social services, public health (Henig, Malone, & Reville, 2012; Henig & Reville, 2011), and I expand on that line of argument in (Henig, 2013).
4 This is the position that Mayor Bloomberg’s supporters staked out during the debate over whether to extend mayoral control in NYC. Critics argued, in contrast, that democratic accountability is blurred because the multi-issue responsibilities of mayors makes it impossible to determine whether the electorate is thinking about schools or other issues when it casts its ballot (Gold, Henig, Orr, Silander, & Simon, 2011).
5 (Kirst & Bulkley, 2000). On the emergence of mayors as pragmatic and entrepreneurial reformers in non-school issues see (Barber, 2013; Katz & Bradley, 2013)
6 The portfolio management model involves districts overseeing a diverse array of schools, usually including charters but also including private contract schools, and magnet schools, or other public schools granted meaningful school level decision-making authority. The central office plays the role of portfolio manager, regularly evaluating school performance, closing low-performers, recruiting new providers, and rebalancing the portfolio to maintain diversity and high levels of effectiveness (Bulkley, Henig, & Levin, 2010; Hill, Campbell, & Gross, 2013).
7 (Weick, 1976)
8 See (Peterson, 1981) for the classic presentation of the argument that the permeable boundaries of cities mean that they (and their elected leaders) have no choice but to prioritize lowering the tax/benefits ratio for above average taxpayers who might otherwise exit.
9 (Berkman & Plutzer, 2005) discuss the demographic attributes of households that are less supportive of school expenditures, including the “so-called “grey peril”: the threat that older residents will impede school funding.
10 (Christensen, Johnson, & Horn, 2008)
11 (Meier, 2004)
12 (Duncan & Murnane, 2011; Schwartz, 2010; Wolff & Gordon, 2008)
13 (Henig, et al., 2012)
14 (Levine, 1984; Sharp, 1980)
15 (Henig & Fraser, 2009)
16 (Editorial, 1999)
17 (Henig, 2013)
18 (Stone, Henig, Jones, & Pierannunzi, 2001)
19 (Henig, 2004)
20 (McDonnell, 2004; Mintrop & Sunderman, 2013)
21 The literature on regulation and that on implementation are voluminous and familier. The literature on political feedback is more recent and less well incorporated into conventional ways about thinking about policy changes over time. (Mettler & Soss, 2004; Patashnik, 2008; Soss, 1999)
22 (Christensen, et al., 2008; Kirp, 2013)


Data downloadable at http://solutions1.emetric.net/cmtpublic/Default.aspx

http://www.newhavenindependent.org/index.php/archives/entry/mixed_bag_on_school_scores/


Data downloadable at http://www.state.nj.us/education/schools/achievement/13/njask4/


Mississippi Curriculum Test scores are downloadable at <http://ors.mde.k12.ms.us/report/lettergrade.aspx>


(Orr, 2004)

Or almost immediately thereafter in case of Menino replacing Raymond Flynn in Boston in 1993.

The NY State legislature might not have been enamored of Michael Bloomberg, but it was much more favorable to granting him control of schools than his predecessor, Rudolph Giuliani. The U.S. Congress would never have granted mayoral control in DC if Marion Barry was the sitting mayor. Dennis Archer in Detroit was regarded with far more confidence by the Michigan legislature than it felt for Coleman Young. Michael White, Cleveland’s sitting mayor when the office was granted mayoral control, also was regarded favorably, although it is a little less clear in that case whether some of his predecessors, like George Voinovich, the sitting governor when Cleveland was fgranted mayoral control, had formerly served as Cleveland’s mayor and was eager to see Michael White succeed. "I was frustrated as mayor, he told a local newspaper, “because I didn't have control of the school system and I had to put up with the shenanigans of the school board…I told Mike, 'You're going to have to really get involved. We'll help you get the job done.' "


Sarah Reckhow empirically demonstrates the tendency of large foundations to direct disproportionate support to cities with contemporary forms of mayoral control (Reckhow, 2012). The Fund for Public Schools, raised hundreds of millions of dollars to help the Bloomberg/Klein administration launch some of its initiatives. For example, at least $80 million went to support the NYC Leadership Academy, which the administration established in order to quickly train a cadre of principals that would have the knowledge and orientation to effectively use the greater discretion that the administration planned to devolve to schools as part of its reorientation toward a portfolio management model (Gyurko & Henig, 2010).

Pedro Segarra stepped in to succeed Eddie Perez, who abruptly resigned after his conviction on felony charges, in 2010 and took office for his first full term as elected mayor in 2012.

Jane Campbell succeeded Michael White in 2002. She was succeeded by the current mayor, Frank Jackson, in 2006.

His conviction was overturned in December 2013, although he still faces likely retrial.

(Mirel, 2004)

Ibid., p 139.


Compared to some cities, LA’s version of the portfolio model appears to be putting more emphasis on locally-based providers and incorporate a stronger role for a community voice (Marsh, Strunk, & Bush, 2013).


While the overall population is about 57% white, school enrollment is 32.0 percent White, 27.4 percent Hispanic/Latino, 21.4 percent Black and 14.4 percent Asian.

(Children, Doyle, & Thomas, 2009)

Schwartz, 2010)

Portz, p. 116.

(Dentler, 1981; Formisano, 1991; Lukas, 1985)
62 http://www.wbur.org/2014/01/03/menino-legacy
63 (Kirp, 2013) p. 117.
64 Ibid., p. 123.
65 Kirp, p. 85
66 Kirp, 183.