



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

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

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

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11 **WHEREAS**, the State Board established an ad-hoc Board Governance Committee in February  
12 2021 with the passage of SR21-2, “On the Establishment of Committees”;

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

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

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





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

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

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

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

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

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





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

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

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

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

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 106 Date Adopted: 12/21/2022 Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
 107 *Jessica Sutter, President*

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

