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Mayoral Control of the New York City Schools

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David Rogers
Emeritus Professor of Management and Sociology
Leonard N. Stern School of Business
New York University
New York, NY 10025
USA
drogers@stern.nyu.edu

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Acknowledgments

I am pleased to have had the opportunity to re-visit the New York City school system nearly four decades after my first book on the subject. The opportunity was largely at the initiative of my long-time friend and colleague, Ivar Berg, who proposed the book for the series, *Studies in Work and Industry*, and who co-edited it with Arne Kalleberg at Springer. Ivar and I began our friendship as graduate students, both committed to a sociology that would contribute to a better understanding of political/institutional trends in modern industrial societies. I thank him publicly for his strong support of this project.

Writing this book has enabled me to think once more about future reforms in an institution that was long a prime example of organizational dysfunction. It has had some excellent educators and administrators, but they were often severely hampered by the system's "sick bureaucracy" that stifled efforts to provide effective education.

The building at 110 Livingston Street in downtown Brooklyn that had become synonymous with all that was dysfunctional about the Board of Education has been sold to a private developer. His transformation of the building into elegant residential apartments ends the NYC Board of Education.

Now the title of the public school headquarters is Department of Education. It is located in Manhattan, in the beautifully restored Tweed courthouse. More important for the day-to-day work to be done, Tweed is next door to city hall, the location of the mayor's office. The new address signals that the governance of the public schools is the direct responsibility of the mayor. Exciting changes, prospects, and as this book points out, some difficulties and disappointments, have come with mayoral control.

As was the case in my previous studies on the NYC schools, I have interviewed a wide array of involved persons – parents, teachers, principals, school administrators, union officials, elected city and state officials, consultants, and academics – on the subject of how mayoral control is working. I am grateful for the willingness of these people to be interviewed and especially for their time and insights they provided me.

Although gaining access was not easy, I want to acknowledge the cooperation of the chancellor and several of his senior managers and consultants. I regret that I was unable to reach the mayor. However, I have found his policy speeches and book informative of his values and perspectives on leadership.

A number of senior managers from the years preceding mayoral control provided information on the old and new governance arrangements. Their comparative historical perspective provided valuable insights and context for understanding the changes that are taking place.

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Introduction

This is a book about the ambitious reform strategy known as mayoral control initiated to transform the dysfunctional system of urban education in the United States. I use the term dysfunctional to refer to the inability of urban school districts over the past 50 years to reduce the learning gap between poor students and their middle class peers, despite a host of reform efforts including desegregation, compensatory programs, and decentralization.

Since the mid-1990s, the idea of mayoral control has generated considerable interest. Several large cities have introduced it such as Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Baltimore, and Washington (Henig and Rich 2004; Wong et al. 2007). Although the latter have completed a quantitative study of mayoral control's impact on student performance in over 100 cities, a case study of the New York experience nevertheless illuminates the capacity of this tool for transforming urban education. Because of the size of the NYC system – roughly 1.2 million students – and its economic, social, and ethnic diversity, it faces the myriad problems of urban education writ large that impede efforts to implement change in these schools.

Under New York City's version of mayoral control, the mayor holds ultimate responsibility for the school system, appoints the chancellor, and in turn delegates to that person the oversight of staffing and curriculum as well as pedagogical and organizational decisions. The mayor is then held accountable for the results, as measured most commonly by scores on standardized reading and math tests and graduation rates. In addition, the mayor has a 13-member policy panel, eight of whose members he appoints. This panel serves as an advisory group with no formal authority.

Several months after the start of his first term in office, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg took on the daunting and hugely important task of improving the public school system. In fact, Bloomberg made the undertaking his clarion call.

This book offers an assessment of key strengths and weaknesses of mayoral control in NYC for the years 2002–2007 by using sociological perspectives on managing change in large, complex professional organizations. A central theme of mayoral control in New York and elsewhere is that it seeks to restructure urban school systems by incorporating rational management practices widely used in the business sector and assumed to contribute to effectiveness. Thus, the book presents a case study of mayoral control pursued largely as a management modernization strategy.

The introduction and first two chapters outline the wider context of urban education: a review of why past reforms have failed (Chap. 1) and a framework for assessing mayoral control in New York (Chap. 2). The second part of the book assesses mayoral control in New York City from its inception in 2002 until the fall of 2007. It considers Bloomberg's success obtaining mayoral control (Chap. 3); the vision Bloomberg and the chancellor Joel Klein followed (Chap. 4); how that vision has informed the strategy (Chap. 5); the implementation style (Chap. 6); and implications for the future of mayoral control in New York City and elsewhere (Chap. 7).

Historical Perspective

Because of New York City's massive demographic changes, the schooling of new populations became a critical issue by the 1950s. My earlier book, *110 Livingston Street*, (1968), analyzed the city's school system in its professional governance stage. (For an explication of the concept of school governance regimes, see Shipps 2006:180–182.

The system's headquarters, which I referred to as a "sick bureaucracy," victimized and alienated educators (teachers, principals, administrators), parents, students, state education officials and employers, as well as mayors and city and state legislators. This failure exposed a larger shortcoming of the system, namely, its inability to implement effectively major reform proposals in governance, personnel policies, and curriculum.

The failure, in turn, led to demands for a new mode of governance under which the schools would be more responsive to the educational needs of students from poverty backgrounds and the middle class. These demands sought decentralization of the system into community districts in order to better serve the schools and their communities.

In 1970, New York City changed its school governance from a professional control paradigm under centralization to a more lay form of control under decentralization, put in place through elected community school boards and districts. This transformation corresponded in part to what Shipps (2006) has labeled an empowerment regime, except that the power of elected parents and community leaders was ambiguous and implemented poorly in many places (Rogers and Chung 1983; Rogers 1990). For example, the new powers of community school boards to select a superintendent and principals and to develop curricula were limited by concurrent powers of the chancellor. In addition, headquarters failed to play the supportive role needed to make decentralization work by inadequately training community school board members and district staff to take on new roles and ineffectively monitoring district and school operations.

Despite leading to some important positive outcomes (e.g., a movement toward small schools and the hiring of more minority staff), the city's experience with more than 30 years of its hybrid decentralization had enough failures that the mid-1990s witnessed increased pressure from city and state leaders, elected public

officials, and citizen groups to begin recentralizing the system. Nepotism, corruption, and multiple, poorly articulated curricula at the district and individual school level became increasingly commonplace. Moreover, community boards set up to increase parent access to the schools soon got taken over by public school educators, political clubs, and religious groups (parochial school interests), to the exclusion of parents and contrary to the goals of decentralization's advocates.

Meanwhile, headquarters did not disappear, and its mismanagement continued. In fact, it may have become worse. The absence of accountability and the fragmented authority at the Board of Education and between it and City Hall, and the resultant buck passing, remained serious problems. If these organization problems did not become more pronounced under decentralization, they certainly became increasingly obvious.

Clearly, the city was ready for a change in governance, and it came in 2002 with the state legislature granting mayoral control. One lesson from the 60 years of centralization that culminated in the 1960s and the 30 years of a more decentralized model that followed is that a periodic shakeup is imperative.

Methods

Research in preparation for writing this book is similar to that of my previous work. For this one, I collected archival materials ranging from media coverage to studies and reports. I have also conducted 120 interviews averaging 80 min each with New York City educators, state and city legislators, City Hall officials, parents, civic organization staff, consultants, business leaders, and academics and foundation staff.

Early in the study, one striking observation was how polarized the politics of the city had become during the first years of mayoral control. For example, senior managers and staff at Tweed, the department of education headquarters, often perceived what was happening quite differently from others. A case in point is that the former complained that *The New York Times* called attention to the mayor's "mistakes," thereby overemphasizing the downside of mayoral control, while at the same time NYC educators and other interested parties saw the same coverage as too sympathetic toward the mayor and chancellor.

Though I interviewed a wide range of people, about two in three were conducted with those who were disappointed in decisions being made or felt disenfranchised. By contrast, people representing and/or working collaboratively with the mayor or chancellor were less willing to be interviewed. Early on, the mayor reportedly informed many of his staff not to talk with book writers and pundits. The chancellor, however, made himself available and on his instructions, several top staff as well. Unfortunately, most interviews at Tweed were limited in time and depth by two considerations. One was the physical layout that resembled a trading floor, allowing for little privacy. As one consultant explained:

> There are no offices, reflecting the new spirit of openness. Instead, all private meetings are out in the open and people look over their shoulders to see if they are being watched.

A second constraint was a result of the work habits of the top and middle management group at headquarters:

> The Tweed staff is perhaps the hardest working of all city agencies in terms of time put in. They are on a mission and in a hurry. You see them running around with their blackberries incredibly long hours.

Summary

The story line of the book is:

1. Mayoral control emerged in large cities in the 1990s and early 2000s as a new strategy for restructuring urban schools. It did so out of the failure of past reforms and the increasing frustration of policy makers, educators, and citizen groups with how the schools were performing.

2. The main body of the book addresses the strengths and weaknesses of mayoral control in New York City.

3. Based primarily on this case study, I conclude that mayoral control is a conditionally good change strategy, though I have serious reservations about how it has been managed thus far.

4. I recommend retaining mayoral control and suggest what should happen under a new mayor to sustain the momentum for change Mayor Bloomberg and Chancellor Klein's promising reform strategies and programs generated.

Chapter 1
Why Past Reforms Failed

When an institution becomes as dysfunctional as today's urban school districts in America, piecemeal reforms will not make it better. Instead, these efforts become a string of repeated failures that discourage subsequent reformers by contributing to a climate of pessimism. This chapter highlights the failures of past reforms from that perspective, leading to the emergence of mayoral control in the 1990s and 2000s as a new strategy, based on its potential for enacting the systemic change that was largely absent from previous reform efforts.

A Systems View

The failures of urban school districts that systems-oriented management thinkers cite are the result of a complex set of factors, including a dense network of embedded institutions outside school districts as well as relationships, procedures, mindsets, and habits within (see, for example, Senge et al. 2000; Ouchi 2003). Together these factors have contributed to the emergence of a highly problem-ridden institution, exemplified in its most dramatic form in America's big cities. The perpetuation of a wide learning gap since the 1950s between poor and middle-class students, despite numerous efforts to reduce it, is a manifestation of that. Policymakers and academics are coming to an increasing consensus that a deeper diagnosis, sometimes referred to as a systems perspective, may help clarify the problems and eventually lead to solutions.

This systems analysis looks at organizations as a totality of interrelated elements: strategy, structure, people, culture, management systems, and an historical trajectory. (For other examples, see Mintzberg 1979; Miller 1998; Mintzberg et al. 1998.) Systems thinking has gained much acceptance in the business and management consulting communities since the 1960s and 70s, when big corporations such as General Motors and US Steel started losing market share to foreign competitors and soon realized that piecemeal approaches were not providing solutions. Subsequently, many corporations have overcome lost profitability and even bankruptcy through substantial system redesign. In recent years, policy analysts have increasingly been trying to apply a similar approach to public education. (Senge et al. 2000 and Ouchi 2003 are good examples.)

This is not to say that there are no successful schools in big cities, even in some poor, minority communities. New York City, the subject of this study, has many such schools. It is to say, however, that they are not typical of the system's traditional workings or representative of the whole.

Diagnoses of Dysfunctional Urban Schools

A dysfunctional system of urban education has several components. They may be described as an interrelated network of external and internal factors. The external ones include inequitable state funding for city schools vs. their more affluent suburban counterparts, contributing to overcrowded and understaffed schools; and the concentration of minority populations in big cities, many living in extreme poverty, that puts them at a cumulative disadvantage when they enter a city school.

Internal factors, however, figure even more prominently in many systemic critiques of urban schools. They include top-heavy, headquarters bureaucracies; protective union contracts, often developed to protect teachers from autocratic bosses; low expectations among some educators about the ability of poor, minority students to learn; limited ties to the home and other local institutions and agencies, because traditionally schools have acted as independent islands in the community; scarce resources for improved staffing, curriculum, and school facilities (e.g., in science, the arts, and athletics); and a history of low priority directed to research and development.

One example highlights a serious staffing problem. The least-experienced teachers are often assigned to the poorest performing schools in poverty-stricken areas, while their more seasoned colleagues hold positions in high-achieving ones. Ailing schools also suffer from severe overcrowding, as big cities lack the needed resources for maintaining adequate school facilities.

There have been many public policy debates on how to weight these external and internal factors. Some critics have argued that emphasizing external forces, including the demographics of cities, their poverty, and limited school financing relative to need, is a "cop out" for the schools, allowing them to avoid responsibility for failures. Ryan (1971) referred to it as "blaming the victim" in his book of that title.

Supporters of the schools, understandably defensive in the face of continued attacks on their failures, and occasional teacher- and principal-bashing, point to the schools' limited resources as the biggest barrier to improvement. The debate has continued for several decades with too little improvement. The educators, as well as their critics, have a valid but limited interpretation of the problem.

It is appropriate to begin the discussion by acknowledging that both sides are right. The schools are partly to blame for their failures. Society is also partly to blame for the perpetuation of poverty that contributes. Meanwhile, instead of mutual recriminations, interested parties must collaborate in finding solutions, or a perpetuation of the schools' failures and their attendant economic and social costs will continue to weigh heavily on our nation.

To understand how and why mayoral control has emerged as a promising approach to a solution, it is important to present the diagnoses and proposed reforms of some of its main predecessors. Most are partial solutions, contrasted with the potential, at least, of mayoral control to offer broad systemic solutions, thus providing some hope of escaping from the disappointing treadmill of past reforms.

Not Enough Resources

Perhaps the most widely espoused past approach to reform has been money. The argument is that the biggest obstacle to the improvement of urban schools is limited funding for needed staff, school space, facilities, and research and development, and that significant infusions of resources to reduce these deficits would go a long way toward improving student performance. The plea from advocates of this approach is that if we tried just once for vast infusions of money into this ailing institution, we could at least give it a chance of succeeding.

Even if one agrees that we have not yet given the "more resources" strategy enough of a chance, its application on an even bigger scale than in the past will not likely change the basic underpinnings of urban schools. It keeps reappearing, in part, perhaps because it does not threaten the status and power of many educators (teachers, principals) as would a more radical restructuring.

An example of this approach relates to New York City's receiving additional funding for its public schools in late 2007, as a result of a state appellate court ruling that the State had abrogated in the past the constitutional rights of city students to a "sound, basic education" by underfunding the city schools ("Billions More to be Sought in School Deal," *The New York Sun*, December 1, 2004). Immediately, various groups in the city drew up their "wish lists" on how to spend the additional funds: smaller class size, bigger educator salaries, pre- and after-school programs, more schools. These are all important, worthy causes, but they divert attention from the larger issue of how to begin restructuring the entire institution. It is as though reformers see the latter task as so complex and difficult to generate political support for, that it cannot be addressed with any hope of success.

No Broad-Based Coalitions

Another diagnosis and reform strategy, emphasizing the politics of urban education, is that the failure of past reforms has been due to the inability of reformers to develop broad-based, enduring coalitions to support their proposals. Political scientist Clarence Stone and colleagues are among the leading advocates of this view (Stone et al. 2001). They describe a common experience of urban school reformers since the 1960s as having high hopes for success, but then not mobilizing the needed political support for effective implementation. From this perspective, school reform is characterized as a perpetual cycle of failure: big plans; short bursts of

vigorous activity, followed by limited long-term involvement among the key players inside and outside the school system as improvements are slow in coming; then leader burnout, as it becomes increasingly clear that little sustained change will take place.

The key requirement for effective urban school reform from this perspective is what these authors refer to as "civic capacity," i.e., the ability of a community to come together to address its problems and sustain commitment to action. It involves key stakeholders collaborating over many years to create better schools.

Even cities that score relatively high on this quality, however – Pittsburgh, Boston, and Los Angeles – are yet to demonstrate a significant impact on student learning as measured by test scores and dropout rates. In addition, these researchers find that education professionals see fewer problems in the schools than do outsiders. (Presumably, many educators blame exogenous factors such as poverty for the failure of reforms to improve student performance in urban schools.)

As the pace of change appears painfully slow to key participants, relative to their expectations, they tend to sense defeat and start to withdraw. Mayors, for example, usually serve for a limited time. Two exceptions are Boston and Chicago, where there are no term limits and mayoral control has been in effect since the mid-1990s under mayors Thomas Menino and Richard Daley respectively. Business leaders, especially those in large corporations who are used to facing pressures from institutional investors for short-term results, are impatient for rapid improvements. This is sometimes referred to as the "quick-fix" mentality. The result is that enduring coalitions that include these stakeholders are difficult to maintain. As Stone at al. (2001) conclude:

> Successful action requires a marathon, not a sprint, and people must be willing to settle in for the long run (p. 168).

Poor Management

Since the 1980s, various peak associations of American business have become increasingly dissatisfied with the public schools' failures, and they attribute them largely to poor management. This view has a long history, dating back to the 1890s, when reformers first became involved in trying to make schools more "businesslike." Cuban (2004), among others, points out that business leaders at that time saw schools as factories making a standard product and thereby requiring the same principles of organization and job design as did production lines. A driving force behind this managerially oriented school reform movement of the 1890s was the fear of business leaders that America could not compete in world markets against such strong industrialized nations as Germany and Britain. They saw schools as an arm of the US economy producing the labor force needed to help the nation compete.

One hundred years later, in this era of global competition, we are witnessing a resurgence of this view. Several organizations, including the Business Roundtable, the Chamber of Commerce, the National Alliance of Business, and the Committee

for Economic Development, have expressed their concern through policy papers, studies, and conferences about what they see as the nation's second-rate public school system (see, for example, "CEOs Reflect on 10 years of Helping Schools", *Education Week*, May 26, 1999). They joined with such public-sector groups as the US Conference of Mayors, the National League of Cities, and with local citizen groups to lobby for better, more efficient management of the public schools as a key to restoring the nation's global economic strength.

There are at least two components to American business leaders' diagnosis of the poor management of public education. One focuses on school districts as lacking a unified chain of command, performance standards, and accountability, resulting in weak central leadership and in much "buck passing" by school officials in the face of outside criticism. The proposed solution is strong leadership, with the CEO of the school system (the chancellor or superintendent) and the mayor responsible citywide and the principal acting as a CEO at the individual school level.

Not only is a new, more streamlined and centralized administrative structure being proposed, but rational systems to evaluate school performance are also part of the agenda. This is to identify poorly performing schools and classrooms and take immediate corrective action, while at the same time finding high performers and spreading their "best practices" where possible. More generally, it is to increase efficiency by controlling costs. The standards movement and the pressure for more accountability, leading to the federal No Child Left Behind legislation, derive from this diagnosis.

The other related theme pertains to what are seen as faulty personnel practices manifested as constraints on the effective management of public schools. Management-oriented critics and business leaders note the absence of any systems of pay for performance, as well as of differential pay to attract teachers, as in specialized fields such as science and math and in high-need/low-performing schools, both of which are handicapped by serious staffing shortages. Beyond that, teachers as well as principals are seen as rewarded for seniority and for completing traditional graduate courses in education, rather than for on-the-job performance. The critics point out that poorly performing teachers were protected to such a degree that in cities such as New York it might take years for a principal to remove them or transfer them out when remedial efforts proved ineffective.

In defense of these practices, teachers unions argue that they are protecting their members' rights in face of harsh and arbitrary treatment that teachers have faced historically and continue to face from principals and central administrations. Union leaders maintain that teachers, as professionals, should be given much autonomy in the classroom, made possible in the past only as a result of strong union pressure.

Over all, education reforms were seen from this managerial perspective as facing such severe constraints – such as having to provide differential pay to attract teachers to schools and classrooms where there was a teacher shortage or to reward high performers – that it was almost impossible to implement the reforms. The combination of limited accountability for failure and negative personnel practices thus made urban school systems a target for reformers, particularly, though not limited to, business leaders.

Monopolies with No Incentive to Change

A parallel diagnosis to poor management is that public schools have traditionally functioned as monopolies and, as such, have had little incentive to adapt. From this perspective, the most effective way to make them responsive is to create a competitive market system that offers consumer choice. Such competition would give parents the opportunity to select alternative schools, including charters and other small schools within the system of public education or for-profit private ones outside, the latter through vouchers. Both types of consumer choice have faced resistance from educators' unions, concerned that hard won teachers' rights might be eroded in such alternative schools whose management might want to bypass the union and/or have more flexibility in hiring, assigning, and paying teachers than the traditional collective bargaining agreement for the district would have allowed. Educators' unions have strongly resisted vouchers on these grounds and have been wary of charter schools as well, sometimes opposing lobbying efforts to allow districts to increase the number of such schools.

Economist Albert Hirschman (1970) maintains that individuals have three main ways of dealing with large organizations that may be oppressing them: voice, choice, and loyalty. (Also see Seeley 1981, Chaps. 9–11, for an application of these concepts to school reform.) Voice and loyalty involve staying within the organization, either expressing one's interests more aggressively than in the past (voice) or complying with organization dictates (loyalty) and making the best of it. Choice calls for the right to exit.

In the early 1960s, the conservative economist Milton Friedman was perhaps the first to offer this diagnosis to explain why public schools have failed to adapt. He had already proposed in 1955 that parents should have vouchers allowing them to choose private schools for their children (Hendrie 2005b). And the strategy has gained increased support, though still resisted strongly by many educators, their unions, and other advocates of public education (Friedman 1962).

Voucher supporters include conservative economists and other advocates of the free market, and many business and political leaders, especially Republicans, while educators, their unions, the wider labor movement, and many liberal politicians, including the Democratic Party, have tended to oppose them.

The public policy implications of the monopoly diagnosis have been to increase consumer choice through a proliferation of small, alternative schools and charter schools, and, via vouchers, religious and for-profit schools. Such options have increased in number over the past decades but at present still account for a miniscule segment of student populations in inner cities. Small schools and charters, operating within public school districts, have gained much support across the political spectrum, while that for vouchers remains limited. In general, blue states such as New York strongly oppose vouchers, while those from red state regions such as the south and parts of the midwest and mountain and mining areas farther west have been more likely to support them. Opponents of vouchers argue that they siphon money from the public schools, thereby abandoning them, and that they violate the principle of separation of church and state in those situations where school choice

includes private, religious schools. Supporters of vouchers contend that they offer more options for parents who are dissatisfied with the public schools and that they provide healthy competition and an incentive for the public schools to improve.

Political scientists Chubb and Moe (1990) provide further support for Friedman's monopolies diagnosis in their book *Politics, Markets and America's Schools*. Their research compared public and private high schools serving the same student populations and concluded that the latter had consistently higher student performance. Their explanation was that bureaucratic systems of government control in public schools impose external policy constraints (e.g., regarding curriculum) that market-driven private schools do not. Private schools are much more autonomous, flexible, professional, and decentralized, subject as they are to market controls of competition and consumer choice. Public schools, by contrast, subject to bureaucratic systems of democratic control imposed by the state, are much more rigid in their structure and operations. Chubb and Moe's (1990) solution to problems of low-performing urban schools, then, is to demonopolize public education, putting it in the marketplace and providing scholarships (vouchers) to consumers who choose to opt out of the public system.

Insulated, Dysfunctional Bureaucracies Instead of Open Partnerships

Still another diagnosis of why urban schools have failed to reduce the gap between middle-class students' performance and that of the poor is that these schools have followed an overspecialized, top-down, bureaucratic paradigm that has isolated them from many other agencies and institutions that also play an important role in educating children. In their search for the "one best system," they have become wedded to a narrow "service delivery" approach to education that involves the educators as the main producers delivering education to their consumers, students and their parents. Moreover, the educational bureaucracies in which schools are embedded are seen from this perspective as so oriented toward uniformity and standardization in approaches to curriculum and instruction that they inhibit rather than promote creative approaches. They become, in the words of sociologist Max Weber, an "iron cage" or machine-like institution that limits teachers to narrow, prescribed approaches to the enormously complex and uncodified task of teaching (DiMaggio and Powell 1983).

Advocates of this diagnosis argue that while the public schools should be held accountable for educating their students, they cannot do so alone. Schools must establish partnerships with students' families, community organizations, and city government youth agencies, this argument goes, because school districts must change from being isolated, bureaucratic institutions to more organic, locally based partnerships.

A main exponent of this view is Seeley (1981). He argues that public education in America has been structured since the nineteenth century as a highly specialized, bureaucratic institution and managed through a process of top-down service

delivery by educators, the sole producers of these services, to a group of compliant consumers, namely, students. No matter how well financed they may be, he asserts, schools cannot possibly provide high-quality services on their own but only in partnership with the family and community as indicated above.

Seeley (1981) contrasts what he regards as the stultifying, hierarchical organizations of traditional education – those that seek bureaucratic control through rules and supervisory/administrative staff, enforcing the delivery of a standardized product – with more informal, collegial, and nonbureaucratic, partnership relations formed to create a better system of education. In this paradigm, students are not just consumers of standard products bureaucratically imposed by the state but active producers of their own education through partnerships with these many agencies, working with the schools. This model is designed to provide schools with a much wider range of resources to do the job.

Many small schools and charters provide a setting for such partnerships. A prime example is the alternative schools established in the decentralized East Harlem district of New York City in the 1970s, under the joint leadership of Superintendent Anthony Alvarado and Seymour Fliegel, director of the district office responsible for those schools. Their emphasis on school autonomy and on bypassing the constraints of headquarters and of union contract work rules provided the institutional setting under which such partnership-oriented schools could be developed (Fliegel and MacGuire 1993).

Mayor Bloomberg and Chancellor Klein's intensive program since 2004 in New York City to support charter schools and to convert large, impersonal, low-performing high schools into smaller, more personalized ones is an indication of the partnership concept articulated earlier by Seeley (1981).

Little Classroom and School-Driven R&D

Still another urban school reform focuses directly on the classroom itself: the curriculum, pedagogy, and upgrading of the quality of teachers and principals. This approach aims to put in place an R&D infrastructure to initiate improved educational practices.

One proponent in New York City has been Alvarado, former community school superintendent first in East Harlem (district 4) in the 1970s and early 80s, then in Manhattan's East Side (district 2) in the late 1980s and 90s. He parlayed much of that latter experience to become chancellor for instruction in San Diego in 1998, having also served briefly as chancellor of the New York City schools in 1983–1984. After leaving San Diego in 2002, he became an education consultant who served in 2004–2005 as executive director of the New York City Council's Commission on the Campaign for Fiscal Equity. The commission's first two reports provide a comprehensive statement of this diagnosis (Report of the New York City Council Commission on the Campaign for Fiscal Equity, Part I, April 2005, and Part II, October 2005).

Other diagnoses emphasized macro/institutional and political aspects of school reform, e.g., coalitions, governance, management, markets, and school partnerships,

whereas this one is directed to interactions of teachers and students in classrooms and the leadership role of principals in effectively supporting this emphasis. The commission was established to advise New York City's mayor and chancellor on the allocation of new funds the public schools would likely receive from the State, resulting from an appellate court ruling that the latter had short-changed the city in the past ("Judge Steps in to Prod State on School Aid," *The New York Times*, August 4, 2004). It urged the city not to spend the money in the same old ways, arguing that past reforms on major policy issues had brought repeated new programs that merely went over the same ground as their predecessors and consistently failed. One reason for this, the commission reports stated, was that repeated reform initiatives over many years provided similar solutions to the same problems, without taking into account why their predecessors had failed. The only thing different was the program name. Sometimes they were introduced on a systemwide basis, but never with the infrastructure required to make them work.

Taking the high school dropout example, the report notes seven major programs to deal with that problem from 1985 to 2005, each announced with much fanfare. Yet, the high school dropout rate increased from 42 to 47% during that time. The same scenario was repeated for other reform efforts as well: programs for special education students; English language learners; eliminating automatic student promotions; upgrading teacher quality; leadership training for principals; school governance; parent engagement; and career programs with business and nonprofit organizations.

Several explanations are given for these repeated failures. Most of the proposed reforms did not spell out an explicit instructional improvement agenda. No systematic evaluations were made of the programs' implementation as base-line data for their diffusion. And the reforms were often scaled up to large parts of the system with no infrastructure to support them (Report of the New York City Council Commission on the Campaign for Fiscal Equity, Part II, October 2005: 9–38).

The Commission's proposed change, building on this diagnosis, was referred to as "reengineering reform" and followed a standard R&D methodology often used in high-tech firms. To illustrate how education compares, 15% of hi tech company expenditures go for R&D, 3% of health service agencies, and 0.01% of education (Whittle 2005).

In sum, the reform strategy emerging from this diagnosis has three main components: selecting experimental sites where innovations are introduced, what the report labels as lab schools; setting up wider networks where they are first scaled up, with an infrastructure to facilitate that; and establishing an independent R&D center outside the school system, providing the database and programs for doing so. This entire activity represents a rare collaboration of researchers and practitioners. The authors of the report refer to this as a "structure of continuous improvement," reinforced by a "culture of data and results-driven reforms" (Report of the New York City Council Commission on the Campaign for Fiscal Equity, Part II, October 2005: xiii).

The education improvements where this R&D approach may be applied may include universal, prekindergarten programs, teacher upgrading, principals leadership development, special education, English language learners programs, parent engagement, governance, various student supports (e.g., dropout prevention, managing school

violence), programs with business relating to work and careers, and any other curriculum initiatives not included in these areas.

This is not just another ad hoc list, but emerges in large part from Alvarado's experience managing educational improvements in New York City's East Harlem and East Side school districts, and in San Diego. The agenda is compelling in the attention it gives specifically to education – the classroom, the professional development of teachers and principals, and a data-based R&D methodology that brings together academic researchers and educators in the development, evaluation, and implementation of innovations.

Decentralization

Reflecting the politics of the 1960s, decentralization represented still another reform proposal based in large part on the diagnosis that urban school systems were over-centralized and unresponsive to citizen concerns. Unfortunately, the implementation of decentralization in New York City, instead of making the system more responsive, exacerbated its already infamously fragmented authority. Such key players as the mayor, the chancellor, the central Board of Education, borough presidents, and community school boards often checkmated one another, thereby limiting the schools' capacity to take actions necessary to improve classroom learning. A "blame game" played out whereby each participant blamed others for delays and poor execution of needed reforms.

Moreover, some locally elected boards and their districts, given more power under decentralization than before, became, as opponents of that reform had predicted, rife with nepotism and corruption, and subject to proliferating localized curricula. The latter made it particularly difficult for students who changed schools often in elementary grades to have any continuity in their classroom experience.

Mayoral Control as Potential Solution

The diagnoses presented above provide insights into what is wrong with urban schools, and the reforms they generated all have merit. Yet, none of them has resulted in the kind of systems change that I, and many others, increasingly regard as essential for significant improvements. A big part of the problem is that many of the reforms provide piecemeal solutions at best. How do we break out of the resultant "treadmill" of turning from one reform strategy to another and from the confusion of trying several at once, all resulting in so little improvement in student performance?

I believe that one way to do so is to support the new governance system of mayoral control that now exists in more than 100 urban school districts around the nation. This is not just the latest fad. For a variety of reasons, mayoral control has the potential to move urban school districts toward the needed systemic change that has not resulted

from past reform strategies. Moreover, it may do so by incorporating the strengths of each of the other strategies, rather than dismissing them as failures.

I wrote this book in large part because I believe that mayoral control can begin to reverse the sense of frustration and hopelessness that resulted from the limited impacts of previous reform strategies. Several arguments support this view (Usdan 2006; Kirst and Edelstein 2006; Wong 2006; Hill 2006; Simmons et al. 2006). First, there is an increasing consensus among government officials at all levels, business and civic leaders, and students of urban education that a new, more nonpartisan breed of urban mayors has emerged, more interested in improving services, not in reinforcing the status quo (Usdan 2006). These mayors function in that respect more as managers and problem-solvers than their predecessors, having redefined the role of mayor to emphasize goals of efficiency, integrated city services, economic development, and forming close alliances with the city's business and civic leaders in the process. For these "new mayors," fixing the schools has become an increasingly integral part of their job. The question for them is not whether they will become involved in the public schools but how.

That involvement brings several potential benefits. One is a single point of accountability, as it has become increasingly clear that buck passing and fragmented authority have contributed in the past to the schools' failure. A second is that the mayor, more than anybody else, controls the workings of city agencies and may use the authority of the office to bring those agencies' resources to bear in providing needed social services (e.g., physical and mental health, family assistance), particularly to students from disadvantaged backgrounds, that may enhance their capacity for learning (Usdan 2006). Mayors can also be a focal point in outside fund raising from governmental and private sector sources to help the public schools. In all these respects, then, the mayor has become the catalyst for integrating the public schools into the cities' economic future and enhancing the cities' quality of life, particularly by ensuring that they are committed to a human capital development strategy.

This new mayoral role in urban public schools is a complete reversal of what it had been throughout most of the twentieth century, as urban reformers of the Progressive Era pressed to isolate the schools from undue political influence. A concern of that reform movement was to establish public schools as meritocracies, making them increasingly efficient through centralized bureaucracies with their standardized rules regarding staffing and curriculum. Nonpartisan management was to replace the political machine as a basis of running public schools and that meant, in particular, insulating them from all political influences, including city hall.

The possible costs of mayoral control relate to what some observers fear may result from bringing city hall back in. One is that this may compromise local democratic control, as schools and local boards no longer have authority over curriculum and staffing decisions. Related to that is the fact that educational policy decisions may not only be increasingly centralized, but be made with little openness or transparency. Parents and civic groups thus may have little input into these decisions. Furthermore, public school educators may have little input as well, as they become increasingly subordinate to city hall staff. Still another cost is that minority communities may

become increasingly marginalized, fearing that their jobs in the school system, as teachers, principals, and administrators, will be threatened by the restructuring that mayoral control brings.

Finally, urban mayors, particularly through their close ties with the cities' business leaders, increasingly use management concepts and techniques as solutions to the poor performance of the public schools. This often involves bringing in management consultants, lawyers, and business executives whose substantive knowledge of education policy issues, the city, and its neighborhoods and politics is limited. One result may then be to increase conflict between the mayor's staff and supporters on one side and, on the other, various critics among educators, parents, civic groups, and city and state legislators. As the book will show, the first several years of mayoral control in New York City have witnessed such a conflict between pro- and antimayoral control forces.

One reason for the rift is that in the first years the mayor and chancellor have sought out macro organizational and managerial solutions developed by outsiders, while some educators and civic and parent activists have argued for microsolutions related directly to improving classrooms. The latter have tended to emphasize smaller class size, school safety, and giving teachers flexibility to adapt pedagogies and curricula to their students' needs. In response, the mayor, chancellor, and their supporters have stated that their approach does and will facilitate improved classroom learning.

A second reason is that the mayor and chancellor have pursued their reforms with a style that provides for little input from teachers, principals, parents, and community leaders. In that sense, the implementation of mayoral control has been a power struggle over who would manage the system and which levers should be pulled in doing so. Mayoral control advocates argue that without organizational restructuring initiated by strong leaders, i.e., a mayor and chancellor, there can be no lasting improvements in the schools. Opponents counter that the restructuring, in and of itself, creates upheaval, drift, and turbulence at the school and classroom level, all of which impede learning and that input from principals, teachers, and parents would help minimize some of these problems ("What Really Matters in Schools," *The New York Sun*, February 6, 2007).

The larger issue that this struggle reflects is how best to manage change. In New York City, the mayor and chancellor have a transformational approach. The teachers union, by contrast, has a more incremental one. Other opposition groups also follow the incremental approach, based in part on their negative perceptions regarding how the mayor and chancellor are managing the schools. This book examines both approaches.

In brief, I wrote the book with a bias in favor of mayoral control, seeing its many potential strengths, while recognizing that to be successful the mayor and chancellor would have to manage the conflicts that it was likely to generate. The book deals with how mayoral control proceeded, how the conflicts arose, and how the mayor and chancellor dealt with them. Ultimately, my interest is to see how urban school systems may experience the benefits of mayoral control, while at the same time take into account the concerns and interests that the opposition expressed.

Chapter 2
Framework for Assessing Mayoral Control

Mayoral control in New York City may best be analyzed as a case study in the management of organizational change. Bloomberg and Klein stated early on that the most important issues to be grappled with in their attempts to transform the school system were managerial and organizational. They explicitly incorporated management concepts used widely in business in pursuing their reform. Thus, my assessment of their efforts takes this as a central theme.

There are three questions related to their change-management strategy that I regard as problematic: (1) How effective is such a change-management effort when the main production activities of the target agency are those of professionals, i.e., teachers and principals? (2) Are the management styles and organization designs required to manage public-sector agencies the same as those in business? In other words, can one automatically transfer styles and designs from one to the other and expect positive results? (3) Are there models of how big-city school districts should be structured and run that may be used to assess mayoral control in New York?

I draw initially on the social science and management literature related to organizational change. Although some of that literature deals with schools, little of it examines their governance and administrative structure, with two exceptions to be addressed later in this chapter.

Managing Change

The mayor and chancellor's efforts may be assessed in the context of what the academic literature indicates are the main components of that process. They include (1) providing a diagnosis of what is wrong with the organization, (2) developing a vision of what it should be, (3) creating a strategy to carry out the vision, (4) undertaking the implementation, and finally, (5) assessing the results. These steps are not completely linear. Modifications may take place at any stage, leading to changes in others (Hornstein 1971).

An early formulation of this subject was termed organization development and it focused on the human aspects of organizations and on how to change behavior. It began in the 1940s and 50s with the classic experimental studies of the German social psychologist Kurt Lewin (1946) on the impact of three styles of leadership – authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire – on the behavior of followers in small

groups. Lewin's work and that of other researchers studying leadership styles were then applied to organizational behavior in the writings of such management-oriented academics as Douglas McGregor (1960) and Rensis Likert (1961). Their focus was the impacts of authoritarian and participative management styles on morale and productivity in industrial and clerical work groups.

Second and third generations of writings on the management of change then became much more organizational, focusing first on how the process should be carried out in departments, divisions, and/or total organizations. This included the work of such organization development writers as Miles (1964), Greiner (1967), Beckhardt (1969), Hornstein (1971), and Huse and Cummings (1985), all of whom take into account the need to obtain support from lower- and upper-level employees experienced in the workings of the organization.

A key principle from many of these works is that authoritarian, top-down leadership alone is not effective in managing change. It generates short-term compliance with mandated changes rather than a long-term commitment and sense of shared purpose. Employees at middle and lower levels may become increasingly resentful that the CEO and other senior managers failed to consult them and simply mandated changes and perhaps even micromanaged the implementation as well. The result often is an unwillingness to support the changes, an increasing sense of alienation, and a strong desire for new leadership.

Rather, what is needed is leadership to establish an initial vision and impetus for change and bottom-up efforts for needed ideas and support from experienced employees. This combination takes longer than a purely top-down approach would, but it has more sustainability.

The most recent generation of change-management writers has concentrated on the organization itself, developing profiles of what adaptive and "learning" organizations do. It has moved from a concentration on the human aspects of the organization to one on the strategic and business aspects as well. This includes descriptions of how adaptive organizations are structured, patterns of communication within them (vertical and horizontal), how they manage groups and other forces in their environment, and the change-management style of the CEO and his or her cadre. Much of what is now called organization theory and organization development deals primarily with these issues, related to how organizations manage change, since that skill is increasingly required in today's turbulent environments.

In addition, there is a recent, more applied literature that deals with managing change. Three insightful books in this genre are Kilmann et al. (1988), Tushman and O'Reilly (1997), and Hambrick et al. (1998). All three deal with how to implement organizational and strategic changes in the context of increasing global competition.

Schools as Professional Organizations

An added perspective on the mayor and chancellor's transformation efforts is that they have pursued them in a professional organization where the main producers are teachers whose work is too complex to be tightly controlled. Sociologist Charles

Perrow notes that professional work must be managed through what he calls a non-bureaucratic organization (Perrow 1970: esp. 80–91). Given the diversity of cases or problems professionals work on and the complexity of their tasks, they need the right to exercise discretion, authority, and autonomy to be effective. Their work cannot be preprogrammed and micromanaged. How they proceed depends in large part on feedback they receive from the people they work with and from others with whom they may coordinate their activities. Although many organizations attempt to pigeonhole activities, thereby codifying their operations for greater efficiency and continuity, particularly as they grow larger, some types of professional activities such as those associated with medicine, law, and research and development require the use of what Perrow (1970) calls "novel techniques," because of their complexity. They should never become factory-like and routinized if they are to remain effective.

Examples of such organizations – what Mintzberg (1979: Chap. 19) calls "professional bureaucracies" – include schools, universities, and accounting, law, and management consulting firms. People in these organizations are most effectively managed not so much by bureaucratic authority or rank within an administrative hierarchy as by legitimacy based on their expert knowledge. Their training and internalization of codes of conduct, including ethics, and enforced by peers through professional associations are what control their behavior in organizations, at least in theory.

Mayoral control in any big-city school system must be managed with an understanding of this complex relationship. Without making legitimate demands for increased teacher productivity and accountability, this reform approach will come up short. But at the same time, big city mayors and their chancellors must accept the fact that teachers need autonomy and support services – e.g., mentoring and training, curriculum materials, adequate facilities, small class size, and school safety – to do their work effectively.

Schools as Public-Sector Organizations

Public school systems are not only professional organizations; they are also governmental ones. The application of management concepts to the public sector is not new, but such a transfer to the largest public school system in the country is new. In New York City, there had long been complaints and criticism of an encrusted bureaucracy that could not even get blackboard erasers, much less modern textbooks, to schools by opening day in September. From that perspective, it heartened many frustrated constituencies and observers that mayoral control was being spearheaded by two proven former private-sector leaders who were strongly public minded.

Although this management transfer approach is taking place in many big cities in the USA, there are at least two reasons for its prominence in New York. First, both the mayor and the chancellor are former CEOs and by virtue of that experience alone have tended to see management and organization restructuring as essential levers for improving the schools. Second, there is much folklore in America about how poorly managed government is compared with business. As Professor Hal Rainey, a student

of public management, has noted, we live in an antigovernment age in which privatization is seen as a solution to many public-sector problems (Rainey 1991: Chap. 1).

In that sense, the public sector is often viewed as corrupt, inefficient, bureaucratic, and overly political, and to be eliminated where possible or, at best, "made into an efficient business." This may be as much ideology as anything else, since many businesses have in fact been poorly managed, including large corporations such as General Motors and US Steel that have been unable to compete in global markets and others, such as Enron and Tyco, that criminally deceived employees, shareholders, and the wider public. As Rainey (1991) put it:

> Many candidates for political office call on one of the hackneyed phrases in the political lexicon when they promise to "run the government like a business." This usually means little, since many businesses are very badly run (p. 260).

The view that business is more efficient than government has existed in the USA at least since the Progressive Era of the 1890s and early 1900s. It was applied to public education at that time in an attempt to incorporate Frederick Taylor's (1947) scientific management concepts by standardizing the curriculum and pedagogy, to make the "one best system." Some of those ideas are being reenacted today in standards-based testing under the federal law No Child Left Behind. At least implicitly, these initiatives are based on the view that government can be made much more efficient through using business concepts. Mayoral control in New York may be seen as driven by many of these ideas.

The public sector is more than just an inefficient business, however, and it differs from the corporate world in other ways that are relevant to consider in determining how to manage change in the schools. Public-sector agencies require checks and balances, transparency, and frequent public reviews of their operations, lest they betray the public trust. There are thus more demands in the public sector for openness, responsiveness, and for its accessibility to interest groups and the media. For example, government agencies must disclose their budgets and consultant contracts, while that is not required in the business sector. There is also a wider network of intergovernmental relations, in the sense that state and federal officials oversee and make demands on public schools (e.g., for compliance with legislative demands). These conditions impose a series of constraints to the point where the authority and power of the CEO in the public sector are weaker than they are in the business sphere.

Private businesses face such constraints as well, but not to the same extent. Political scientist Wallace Sayre has dramatized this point in his oft-quoted statement that public and business administrations are very much alike, [pause] "in all unimportant respects" (Bozeman 1993: 3). Finally, the public sector often experiences more delays and interruptions in the implementation of its programs, as it faces a more diverse set of players, more shifting coalitions, and more competing stakeholder demands. Any attempt to transform a public-sector agency must accept some of these requirements to be open, accountable, and representative while at the same time trying to challenge others, e.g., the red tape, rigid civil service rules, and weak incentive structures.

Such public-sector realities as checks and balances, public accountability through open reviews of budgets and contracts, and overall transparency are long-standing

traditions in American government. They are not subject to change, certainly not over the short term. The dilemma is that although they provide for openness and honesty, they also act as constraints on efforts to transform public-sector agencies to make them more efficient and effective.

School Autonomy

Two organization writers have used management principles to study how successful public schools work. Their writings are particularly relevant to an assessment of mayoral control in New York. I refer to Ouchi (2003), who studied 223 schools in six cities, one of which was in Canada, and Senge et al. (2000), who examined the principles and practices of successful schools in the USA. Both authors use a "systemic" perspective that I indicated in Chap. 1 is a productive way to proceed in pursuing transformative change. They conclude that a decentralized, nonbureaucratic structure is conducive to successful schools, the direction that Bloomberg and Klein have implemented in September 2007 for the entire New York City school system.

Ouchi's (2003) main conclusion from his comparative studies undertaken to ascertain what conditions make for effective and ineffective schools and districts is as follows:

> What is called for, and what the successful districts have done is to uproot the existing top-down way of doing things (p. 13).

This involves decentralization within the district to the school level, with the principal acting as the CEO and entrepreneur of the school. Indeed, his first key to school success is that "every principal is an entrepreneur," (ibid., 51) – a radical departure from how schools are traditionally run.

A point Ouchi (2003) has made along with educators, researchers, and civic groups is that the more control a principal and school have over their budget, the more opportunity they have to adapt programs and staffing to fit their particular needs and the greater the likelihood of the teachers, parents, and the principal working together to improve the school. Another conclusion is that the principal, teachers, and parents should be held accountable for student performance. In that regard, he notes the importance of a school becoming a learning community, with teams of educators working together to share information, develop curriculum, and have senior teachers mentor less experienced ones. Still another essential component is developing a common culture among parents, educators, and students as to what the school represents, with the school integrating itself into the community as much as possible.

Although many of his conclusions may seem obvious, tight centralization has more often been the norm, both in financially challenged big cities, and in wealthy, suburban districts. He cites Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York as three examples of this. He describes Los Angeles as

> The habit is top-down. Many principals and teachers in LA are still bitter about the top-down, strong arm methods (ibid., 76).

In Chicago,

> People use the rhetoric of decentralization at central office sometimes, but the reality is
> very tight central control over the budget and finances (ibid., 72).

Accompanying this style is a tendency to treat teachers as low-level employees,
rather than as professionals:

> In fact, most teachers unions have become strong chiefly to protect teachers against the
> whimsy and caprice of thoughtless or even cruel bureaucrats (ibid., 92).

Elsewhere he states:

> Accountability often becomes a negative kind of teacher bashing (ibid., 106).

He described a bureaucratic mindset so typical of American public schools his-
torically in explaining what he called the "seven rules of change" (ibid., 241).
Basically, they relate to his argument that a bottom-up, participative style of decision-
making is a critical ingredient of successful schools. He argued that the top-down
mentality often leads to an adversarial, antichange position of many teacher unions.
He concludes:

> It's a truism that, in the U.S., adversarial unions typically arise in response to abusive man-
> agements. Of the districts in our study, LA is the most centralized and bureaucratic. It's no
> surprise, then, to find that it also has developed the most contentious relationship between
> the teachers union and the management (ibid., 244).

Or, at another point:

> Business groups never invite the union leadership into their dialogue, and by leaving them
> out, they leave out one of the deepest wells of experience – not to mention a major potential
> ally (ibid., 243).

His argument is that successful districts bring in teachers and principals as active
participants in school-based planning.

> By including the teachers and principals in your planning group, you'll have ready access to
> the natives who know the culture well—and once they've learned to trust you, they can tell
> you all about it, because you're already decided that the problem is the system rather than
> the people, they will be inclined to trust you and to want to work with you (ibid., 248).

Does this mean that effective change at the school and district level only takes
place from the bottom-up? Not quite. Ouchi argues that there must be a balance
between bottom-up and top-down, with the central headquarters helping to create
the vision and climate within which key school constituencies can work.

> We need tough accountability from the central office and flexibility at the level of each
> individual school. These two forces are not incompatible; both are necessary for healthy
> schools (ibid., 259).

His work merits attention because it is one of the few empirically derived models
of successful districts and schools against which to assess mayoral control. New
York's was one of the centralized school districts that he examined and he deter-
mined that a school's success or failure depended largely upon whether it was
bounded by or free of central controls. Having advised Chancellor Klein in the
early years of mayoral control, Ouchi (2003) acknowledged that the centralized

organization Klein established and maintained for the first years of mayoral control was too rigid:

> Those of us who study large organizations... know the first reaction of a new CEO is to … control everything, because they don't want anything to go awry ("New York Rethinks Its Remaking of the Schools," *The New York Times*, April 9, 2006).

Although his findings and conclusions make much sense, their effective application can be problematic. As a reviewer of his work points out (Trujillo 2004: 2), districts and individual schools that follow his model of success require principals and teachers who are trained in the skills of effective management. The availability of such able leaders can be quite limited. These educators must be able to collect and use data to inform their decisions regarding pedagogy and curriculum. Parents, meanwhile, must have the motivation and financial resources with which to choose the schools that best fit their children's needs and/or to participate in school-based councils to improve school programs. Parents also need the political skills to influence the structure of their district. These conditions have been met in such cities as Edmonton, Seattle, and Houston, but it takes considerable leadership within a city and its school system to achieve such success.

Writing about business strategy and organizational change, Senge (1990) developed a model of learning organizations that he has applied to public education. In many respects, his model parallels Ouchi's (2003) concept of successful schools and uses the same "systems" analysis. As summarized in Mintzberg et al. (1998), Senge (1990) draws insights from the literature on strategic and organizational changes, concluding that a learning organization is

> the antithesis of the old bureaucratic organization: It is decentralized, encourages communications and encourages individuals to work in teams. Collaboration replaces hierarchy, and the predominant values are those of risk taking, honesty, and trust. These strategies are sufficiently open-ended to allow for the unexpected, so that their capabilities of organizational learning can deal with rapidly changing situations (p. 215).

Applying these concepts to public education, Senge et al. (2000) have worked with schools and districts throughout the nation, in organizational development efforts to establish sustainable schools that learn. They argue that a decentralized, nonhierarchical organization is more appropriate for postindustrial societies than the industrial age system of education that has evolved since the mid-nineteenth century and continues to exist in many cities. The industrial-age paradigm is based on top-down management and overly standardized curricula. It is delivered in assembly line fashion, with strong controls through performance standards and continued testing, and with services delivered by specialists who communicate sanitized knowledge and work in relative isolation. He concludes that this model fails to adequately prepare students for careers in postindustrial societies.

> It's just not possible any longer to 'figure it out' from the top, and have everyone else following the orders of the "grand strategist." The organizations that will truly excel in the future will be the organizations that discover how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at all levels in an organization (Senge 1990: 4).

More specifically, schools that learn depart from the antiquated nineteenth century model. As Ravitch and Viteritti (2000) conclude:

> New York is one of the last and perhaps the most conspicuous remnant of factory model schooling left from the previous century. As stubborn as it might be, New York is destined for change. It must change in order to maintain its position as a world class city; it will because the city can no longer tolerate a dysfunctional command structure that saps initiative from educators; it should because right thinking people cannot justify a system that educates only some of its children well (p. 14).

In sum, the literature on the management of change presented here provides a framework for the case study that follows. This framework is useful for sensitizing interested stakeholders to critical issues that must be considered in assessing mayoral control in New York.

Centralization vs. Decentralization

An issue raised in the above discussion of Ouchi (2003) and Senge (1990, 2000) bears on the relationship between mayoral control and centralization. My support of mayoral control may appear to indicate a bias in favor of centralization. In contrast, the discussion of Ouchi's and Senge's work in this chapter may suggest a bias in the opposite direction. My answer is that there is no contradiction. Rather, the basic issue in effectively managing the transformation of urban school systems through mayoral control is how to maintain an appropriate balance between centralization and decentralization.

As the following chapters will indicate, mayoral control in New York is in a second phase with regard to such a balance. The first 5 years involved considerable centralization of decision-making, contributing to problems of implementation and legitimacy for the mayor as he pursued a strong top-down management style. In September 2007, however, with mayoral control in existence, the entire school system became more decentralized, with many decisions on budget, staffing, and curriculum delegated down to the school level.

My point is that where decision-making authority is located and how it is balanced between headquarters and the schools are critical to the success of mayoral control. Many of the conflicts over mayoral control that arose in New York relate to that issue.

Chapter 3
Bloomberg Assumes Mayoral Control

As reported in Chap. 1, mayoral control of the public schools was already in effect in several large cities before it began in New York City in 2002 (Henig and Rich 2004). Rudy Giuliani, Bloomberg's predecessor, had proposed it when he was mayor, but the state assembly rejected the idea (Gehring 2002). A state legislator interviewed for this study put it this way:

> Giuliani said he was only interested if we eliminated the central board and community school boards and made education a mayoral agency, with the chancellor as commissioner. Basically Giuliani wanted the whole thing, lock, stock, and barrel. But he was not liked or trusted by the assembly, and there was no action.

In addition, some legislators feared that Giuliani did not strongly support public education, citing his interest in vouchers and other forms of privatization. He had proposed a voucher program for which the overseer would be City Hall, not the Board of Education (Walsh 1999; Hendrie 1999a).

The voucher initiative put Giuliani in conflict with the City's school chancellor at the time, Rudy Crew, who strongly opposed the idea. When Giuliani argued that the "whole system should be blown up and replaced with a new one," he antagonized Crew, city educators, and the Democratic-controlled state assembly to the point where these stakeholders objected to all his proposals (Hendrie 1999b). Crew, the chancellor from 1995 to 2000, soon resigned (Johnston 2000; Barrett 2000; "Not-So-Public Part of the Public Schools: Lack of Accountability," *The New York Times*, September 13, 2006).

How and Why Bloomberg Succeeded Where Guiliani Did Not

From the start, Bloomberg's relationship with state legislators was opposite that of Giuliani's and the end result was that Bloomberg, who took office in January 2002, was empowered 6 months later with mayoral responsibility for the city's schools. Mayoral control in this instance ranged from selecting the chancellor to converting the Board of Education into a city agency (Gewertz 2002c).

To win over the Legislature, Bloomberg marshaled an effective negotiating team in Albany, led by his deputy mayors Marc Shaw and Dennis Walcott. He also formed

a task force of business, legal, and civil rights leaders who strongly supported his efforts. Walcott, a former head of the New York Urban League and member of the Board of Education, met with caucuses of Black and Latino leaders to encourage their support of mayoral control. Shaw was an effective negotiator in Albany.

Some of Bloomberg's advisors, it should be noted, urged him to agree to incremental changes, saying it was unrealistic of him to expect that he would be given all the authority he was requesting. Reportedly, he told them that he had no intention of compromising, and he amazed them with his success. As one insider explained:

> We didn't think he would get it all or even try to get it all, but he would not compromise and kept saying he would not cut a deal and he didn't.

The governance changes included dismantling the central board and replacing it with a relatively powerless 13-member advisory panel, eight of whom the mayor chose. The five he did not appoint were parents, one from each borough, chosen by their respective borough president. Most important, the panel would be "barred from daily management, in a nod to the widespread frustration over the prior Board of Education's attempts at micromanaging the system" (ibid.).

Bloomberg selected a chancellor to serve at his pleasure and by June 2003 he planned to eliminate the school boards, subject to approval by the US Department of Justice. (That approval was given after the department determined that the voting power of minority groups was not weakened in the new governance arrangements.)

Notwithstanding the effectiveness of the mayor's lobbying effort, one might still question why Bloomberg was so successful in obtaining authority to transform school governance. One explanation that many close observers shared was that most New Yorkers had lost any remaining confidence they might have had in the schools by the time of Bloomberg's election. Story after story had appeared in the press over the years about corruption and nepotism on community school boards under decentralization. Mayor Giuliani had expressed much dissatisfaction (some would say rage) with how the schools were managed and had turned against two chancellors in a row, Cortines and Crew. Meanwhile, the performance gap persisted between the poor and middle class.

Ravitch, who would become a later critic of mayoral control, was quoted as saying: "There was little opposition to this [mayoral control] because the status quo has no defenders" (ibid.). Even Weingarten, President of the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), whose members faced uncertainty about their future job rights under mayoral control, voiced wholehearted support.

No other mayor in recent memory had given such high priority to the schools. Bloomberg, with no prior experience in public office, much less in the maelstrom of New York City politics, said unequivocally before and after his election that he wanted to be evaluated as mayor largely on how he was able to turn around the public school system. As part of his preparation to run for mayor, he reached out to people who knew about the city's schools and youth service agencies and could brief him on problems and priorities. Like many New Yorkers, he realized the impact schooling has on one's life chances and, more generally, the city's economy and that of the nation. Moreover, in support of human services and the city's minority residents, Bloomberg met immediately after the election with the heads of

the UFT and the United Hospital Workers Union, the latter of which has a significant representation of minorities in the city's labor force.

Use of Management Concepts

One difference from previous governance changes in the New York schools is that management concepts from the private sector drove this one. Chancellor Joel Klein turned to management consultants, including academics, for advice on how to proceed. Past chancellors and boards had also used consultants, but not to this degree. The consultants helped shape Klein's early decisions on organizational design, on setting up systems of accountability to evaluate schools and classrooms, and on preparing the way for principals to become, in effect, CEOs. This included training them in leadership skills and attempting to radically amend the contracts and working conditions of the school custodians, teachers, and principals to give the principals increased flexibility.

Unlike his predecessors, Klein spoke the language of management and organizations in public statements describing his change efforts. Although he spoke before many audiences – education interest groups, the City Council, the Carnegie Corporation, parent and civic groups – he made one of his most prominent speeches at the 2006 meeting of a leading association of business school professors, who specialize in organizational theory and research (Klein 2006). No other schools chancellor had articulated his views to such a specialized audience.

Start-Up

Much of the first year of mayoral control was spent putting in place a new organization and senior management staff. In June 2002, the state legislature passed the new mayoral control law. A month later the mayor appointed Klein as chancellor. By early September, Klein had appointed his senior management team.

A few key elements in the start-up stand out. First, Bloomberg had strong support from critical constituencies, namely, the teachers union and the state legislature. Weingarten, whose union opposed Bloomberg in the election, praised him, saying that he had "inspired the city with his leadership" (Gewertz 2002a). The fact that the Democratic-controlled legislature granted him the power it did, after it had consistently opposed mayoral control in the recent past, was an extraordinary act of endorsement.

Second, Klein, though an outsider in the sense that he had never worked in the schools, was knowledgeable about New York, having grown up in the city and attended its public schools. Most recently he had been the divisional CEO of Bertelsmann, the publishing conglomerate, as well as former Assistant Attorney General in the Anti-Trust Division of the Justice Department. The fact that Klein had been a CEO no doubt contributed to his emphasis on management and organizational change initiatives. The city had never before had a CEO as chancellor. Professor Robert Berne of New York University, a political scientist and expert on school finance, called Bloomberg's appointment of Klein "a gutsy, out of the box move" (Reid 2002).

Signaling his sharp break with the past, Klein appointed a senior management team of almost all "outsiders" who had little or no experience in New York City's public schools. Early in 2003, one insider said:

> I'm not sure that us old guys with experience from the past are really that important in this. Yes, we have judgment that is worthy of being called on, but Klein is doing well [without us].

Another disagreed:

> Klein's predecessor, Harold Levy, identified strong inside people and then leveraged their skills. Some were able, but this regime under Klein seems to assume that those who were there in the past have little to contribute.

One important appointee who soon became quite controversial was Diane Lam, the new Deputy Chancellor for Curriculum and Instruction. Lam had previously been chancellor in Providence, Rhode Island, Dubuque, Iowa, Chelsea, Massachusetts, and San, Antonio, Texas. Her conflicts in each city with local groups, including the teachers union, were widely known, especially in San Antonio, where they were so intense that the city bought out the rest of her contract for $800,000 to get her to leave. Klein commented later that Lam's differences with local groups in those cities, especially with the teachers unions, showed that she was a transformational leader whose style would fit well with his. It did to some extent, but it also led to her alienating parent groups and educators by her autocratic leadership, her policy pronouncements on curriculum, and her critical comments on the gifted and talented programs (Kolker 2004). As it turned out, scandal defined Lam's tenure in New York. In March 2005, after just 18 months on the job, she resigned after city investigators stated that she had tried to secure a job for her husband in the schools ("Top Deputy Resigns School Post over Effort to Get Her Husband a Job," *The New York Times*, March 9, 2004).

Outside Consultants and Insiders

Early in Klein's tenure, with the assistance of new young management consultants and lawyers, he redesigned the school system to include the following: (1) a new regional structure that consolidated the 32 decentralized community school districts and boards into 10 regions and 6 operating centers; (2) a new standardized curriculum and progressive pedagogy in all but the 200 highest performing elementary schools; (3) a salaried full-time position of parent coordinator in each school to serve as the principal's outreach and to give parents a voice; (4) a principals' leadership training academy; and (5) an end to the policy of automatic or social promotion of third grade students, later extended to fifth and seventh graders ("Grading the Mayor on Schools," *The New York Times*, February 9, 2004).

Headquarters implemented these new structures and policies in a top-down way through the regional offices to the schools. When critics contended that this new regional system was simply replacing an old bureaucracy with a new one, the chancellor and senior managers argued that they were shifting resources from adminis-

tration to the schools and that strong leadership was required to change the dysfunctional old system into an effective new one.

A number of reactions from powerful groups inside the New York City school system accompanied these changes. The teachers and principals unions complained about not being consulted in the planning of these strategic decisions. They saw themselves as being downgraded in respect and power. Their complaints were valid, in that the mayor and chancellor had indeed centralized power, reflecting a view that the unions' power in the past was one of the system's most glaring weaknesses.

Small Schools, Charters, and School Choice

In 2003, the mayor and chancellor began offering parents and students more school choice within the system, especially at the high school level. Their plan called for creating 200 small high schools, with the first ones to open in fall 2004 (Cavanagh 2003). By the fall of 2007, there were more than 200 new small schools, with Gates funding supplemented by grants from the Carnegie Corporation and the Open Society Institute.

A critical turning point in the mayor's and chancellor's reform efforts was a new strategy of school autonomy, initiated in September 2004 and directly related to a broader small schools initiative. It started with 30 schools that were insulated from the centralized control of headquarters and regional offices. Roughly half the schools were new and most were small. They became part of a new autonomy zone, established under the direction of a headquarters administrator and former principal, Eric Nadelstern, who developed the idea. Headquarters announced the initiative as the start of a multiyear push for small, personalized schools (Hendrie 2004).

The other component of this choice strategy was the establishment of new charter schools, having even more autonomy than the original autonomy zone ones. They often had their own funding, were free from headquarters controls regarding curriculum, and their teachers were not bound by the union contract. As of fall 2007, there were 67 charter schools in New York City. Both the mayor and chancellor have lobbied vigorously with the State to lift the cap it had imposed that allowed only 100 charters statewide, and the then Governor Eliot Spitzer announced his intention to allow another 150. Strong opposition came from the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and NYC's United Federation of Teachers (UFT). Both unions were dismayed that charters had moved away from the original vision of Albert Shanker (former president of the UFT and later of the AFT). His original vision was that new schools should be opened that are free from stifling bureaucratic controls and that was a precursor to modern day charters. Union leaders felt that charter advocates perverted Shanker's vision into one that was anti-union and anti-public school and was at least implicitly demonizing the union contract. Recently, the union has opened two charter schools to demonstrate that it is open to charters and that the union contract does not hamper charter school effectiveness (Hendrie 2005a).

Since 2004, the number of charters, small schools, and autonomy zone schools has increased steadily, and in January 2007, the mayor announced plans to restructure the system so that all schools were more autonomous. In other words, instead of just having a separate group of newly autonomous schools, the entire school system would be the equivalent of an autonomy zone (Gewertz 2007).

The overall dynamic in the first 5 years of mayoral control is that many stakeholders supported it initially in the abstract, but as it was implemented, they complained about the substance of the changes and the failure of the mayor and chancellor to consult with them. Teachers, principals, parents, and many city and state legislators were among these stakeholders.

In brief, mayoral control proved to be a gigantic complex change-management undertaking. The remainder of the book is devoted to providing an understanding of that complexity.

Chapter 4
Vision for the Transformation

Leaders intent on transforming an organization often articulate a vision to guide their actions. Their ensuing strategies tend to be both preplanned and emergent, particularly in politicized and volatile organizations such as the New York City school system. Leaders may have some guiding vision to begin with, but the successful ones keep refining it as early results unfold. As Lampel (1998) writes:

> Organizations that are capable of learning from their experience do better than organizations that simply adapt to their environments …. Their strategies are sufficiently open-ended to allow for the unexpected, so that their capabilities of organizational learning can deal with rapidly changing situations (p. 215).

In assessing Bloomberg and Klein's efforts to transform the school system, one may ascertain the larger vision that informed those efforts from critical speeches, written statements, and decisions made on major policy issues and programs. Two examples are cited here. Bloomberg (2003) summarized his vision of educational reform in an address at the New York Urban League's Martin Luther King Jr. Symposium in Harlem. In August 2006 at the annual meeting of the Academy of Management, the chancellor delivered a speech entitled "Changing the Culture of Urban Education," in which he stated the mayor's and his vision after 3½ years of implementation (Klein 2006).

Early on, Klein had said that he sought to establish a "system of excellent schools" rather than an "excellent school system," thus making individual schools, not the institution itself, the focus of reform ("Schools Chancellor to Give Principals More Autonomy," *The New York Times*, January 20, 2006). That statement certainly qualifies as part of a vision. He later explained: "I can't emphasize it enough: the schools need to be where the action is, not the central or regional offices."

A consultant who served in the beginning of the administration agreed that this statement expressed the chancellor's strong desire for "school autonomy," but he added the following:

> We weren't informed what the goals were, and that was frustrating to many staff at Tweed who had just arrived. We wanted to know how our work would lead to basic changes and in what direction a year or two down the road. We wanted to know what is our strategy. It was never articulated. School autonomy and student choice were stated often. More efficiency was mentioned, as was introducing new accountability systems.

Another, who was a consultant at the same time, was more critical:

> There are two parts of the job that Klein has not emphasized, at least in my judgment. One is to establish a vision or indicate some direction where we were going. The second was to deal with the key constituencies, to establish trust and good feeling.

A closer study of Bloomberg and Klein's strategy may best be seen as a series of themes that characterize their reform initiatives. Some have remained unchanged since mayoral control began in 2002, while others represent a shift, paralleling the move from a highly centralized to a more decentralized system.

A New Bureaucracy, Consolidated and Regionalized

Mayoral control was in some respects a reaction to the perceived weaknesses of decentralization. These deficiencies manifested themselves at two levels. One was local, where community school boards and districts, set up to make the schools more responsive to parent and community needs, failed in many locales to do that. The other was citywide, where a dysfunctional headquarters bureaucracy with multiple fiefdoms inherited from the predecentralization era persisted and may even have worsened, since newly empowered local fiefdoms were layered on to those at headquarters. On both levels, there was little accountability and much evasion of responsibility by the educators for the failure to improve student performance.

With mayoral control, the system was to be streamlined. A clear chain of command was to be established, with the mayor ultimately in charge and accountable for school performance. As the mayor described the new legislation:

> It put an end to decades of diffused and confused educational administration, in which the buck stopped nowhere…. By the beginning of the next school year, these notorious bureaucratic dinosaurs [the system's many separate bureaucracies] will be extinct. In their place – will be one, unified, focused, streamlined chain of command (Bloomberg 2003).

A regionalized, middle management, field structure was to be set up, to implement policies (curriculum, pedagogy, staffing) from headquarters. The regions, existing as smaller headquarters, were designed to increase efficiency and develop more uniformity in implementation of the curriculum. The entire structure was set up to shift resources as much as possible from the level of central administration to that of schools.

Transformative Change, Top-Down, Nonparticipative

It was clear from the very beginning that the mayor and chancellor wanted to transform the school system, not to make incremental changes in selected parts of it. Their diagnosis was that the New York City public school system was broken and that the problems were systemic. The organization needed a radical overhaul in governance, design, control systems, culture, staffing, curriculum, finance, and politics. No amount of tinkering would be adequate to the task.

The mayor enunciated the view early in his administration that the school system needed to be transformed, and the chancellor expressed similar views on numerous occasions. Newcomers to New York City school reform, they articulated the perspective of many critics, including academics, such as Rogers (1968, 1990), Viteritti (1983), and Ravitch and Viteritti (2000).

It is not surprising, then, that there was widespread legislative support for mayoral control in early 2002 and that the mayor was re-elected with 59% of the vote for a second term in November 2005, having identified himself as an education mayor. Other reasons for his re-election included the city's economic rebound, the decline in crime rates, improved race relations, and his overall reputation as a political independent who brings results ("Mayor Unleashed Poised to Offer an Even Broader Agenda," *The New York Times*, November 9, 2005). As in any change of such magnitude, however, there was to be ebb and flow in support, depending on the specific change and how it was implemented.

The leadership style of the mayor and the chancellor was clear at the outset. It was to be a centralized effort from City Hall and school headquarters. As Klein (2006) described it in retrospect:

> Given the chaotic and dysfunctional organizational structure we inherited, our first task was to lock the system down, establish some control, and bring coherence to the system.

Bloomberg's (2003) phrasing was this:

> It's time to have a unified way of teaching our children …. In September [2003], we will bring coherence to the way the majority of our schools teach reading and writing, so that citywide, our teachers will all employ strategies proven to work. For these schools, the chancellor's office will dictate the curriculum and pedagogical methods.

To overhaul the system, Bloomberg called for rapid implementation, with little public review and limited participation by such key stakeholders as educators, parents, citizen advocacy organizations, and state legislators, the latter of whom enacted mayoral control in the first place.

Along with several colleagues at Advocates for Children, an organization that assists poor families secure equal education services, Clara Hemphill described in a report the management style of Bloomberg and Klein, after visiting more than 400 public schools during the previous school year. Praising the mayor for taking on the leadership to transform the schools and Klein for introducing a rich, new curriculum, she and her colleagues wrote the following:

> At its best, the new curriculum encourages both teachers and children to explore new ideas and craft lessons around their own interests …. In too many cases, however, the curriculum was introduced as a set of orders from on high, with mandated lesson plans scheduled minute-by-minute…. Leaders of the teachers and principals unions, and the United Parent Association each expressed frustration that Tweed has made little effort to include them in decision-making, to heed their suggestions, or to acknowledge their concerns …. These groups … so central to the success of Bloomberg's reforms, say they feel excluded, alienated, and angry (Hemphill et al. 2004: 3, 6).

The mayor's experiences in the private sector, successfully building a major corporation, may well explain some of this style. He wrote in his memoir:

> Companies in the end need direction, not discussion …. Someone must have a vision and take others along, not the reverse (Bloomberg 1997: 145, 147).

Later in this book he said:

> I tend to just do my thing and apologize for not posting others after (ibid., 179).

Again, this reflects his management style, which, as mayor, was likely reinforced by the need to act quickly. He had at most 8 years (two terms) in which to implement systemic reforms. Also, the legislation establishing mayoral control had a sunset clause, requiring a review in June 2009 to determine how it should be modified or even discontinued, if the opposition proved strong.

The political context, then, also played a role in the strategy. One argument supporting the mayor and chancellor's approach was that the system was facing, as were other urban school districts, such a crisis in performance and confidence, that it needed strong central leadership to be turned around, in preparation for other major changes at a later date. Mintzberg (1979), for example, has argued that organizations facing extreme crisis and unable to adapt must temporarily centralize to survive.

Another possible justification for this management style is that if Bloomberg and Klein were to follow a participative, collegial leadership approach, significant change would be difficult. The very groups that had opposed past reforms and/or failed to work well together would likely reproduce the old dysfunctional structure that had contributed so much to the poor performance in the first place.

Thus to the mayor and chancellor, change required strong, central leadership. They saw many veterans of the old system as committed to a culture of excuses rather than to what they considered a more basic cause of breakdowns: the system's mismanagement. Its deep-rooted pathologies, they argued, included poor staffing policies for recruiting, training, evaluating, and compensating educators – reflecting a universal lack of accountability. As Klein (2006) explained in an address to management professors:

> The public sector is full of people working hard to do the right thing. What they need is a structure that brings out their best—that liberates their talents and at the same time creates powerful incentives for excellence and consequences for failure.

Change managers often face the dilemma of which and how many of an old guard they should retain, particularly in an organization as dysfunctional as the New York City school system. Following the adage *a new broom sweeps clean* may make sense if one assumes that most veterans of the old system do not have the vision, the skill, or the will to change in ways the new leaders think best and would most likely delay and water down proposed reforms. Conversely, their cumulative experience, particularly that of understanding the system's operations, could be invaluable to a new leadership group.

However, several high- and middle-management administrators at school headquarters, as well as principals and teachers, believed that the new regime had too negative a view about their expertise. As veterans of a discredited "old system," they felt that the chancellor and his staff saw them mainly as being part of the problem, not the solution.

One former top administrator recalled the following:

> Basically, Klein wanted all newer people. Many able veterans of the system were fired, sometimes blamed for a series of Tweed mistakes that were not their doing. They recalled being pitted against new management consultants and other new, young staff members in deliberations about various reforms and often losing out.

Another was particularly bitter:

> When Klein arrived, his view was that anybody here before him had screwed up badly. I told him that I had busted my chops for many years in the system and many of my colleagues did as well. He said he didn't mean anything negative about us and was in that sense apologizing if he created the wrong impression …. He drove some of the most dynamic educators out or underground. Many of the latter simply shut up.

Some veteran educators had celebrated mayoral control when it first began, anticipating that they might finally be able to get good new programs implemented under a more streamlined, receptive structure. But as it turned out, few reported being given that opportunity.

Their retention might well have facilitated the more effective implementation of the new regime's reforms. Again, Hemphill and her colleagues described the process as follows:

> In the course of our research, many people complained that the top-down management style of the Bloomberg administration is driving out seasoned, competent administrators—people the mayor and his chancellor desperately need if they are to succeed. We were told repeatedly that senior Department of Education officials—many of whom come from the world of business rather than education—were dismissive of successful educators …. Of course, in any shake up as big as the one New York is undergoing, many people are bound to leave .... However, it is indisputable that the system is losing an alarming number of talented people (Hemphill et al. 2004:5).

State legislators also expressed concern. In an interview conducted in the spring of 2003, one explained:

> There is now a sufficient threshold number of parents all over the city, both middle class and minority parents, capable of communicating with state legislators to the effect that the mayor's plan is bad. The mayor's administrative changes to set up ten regions, replacing the old community school districts, were made without any consultation with the legislature or the communities. Both believe the regions are illegal.

The chancellor and the mayor knew that to transform the system, they had to move quickly. To consult with many stakeholders was to invite delay and a watering down of their decisions for systemic change. On the other hand, there was the danger that without putting together a broad-based coalition, it was going to be increasingly difficult to transform the schools and sustain the changes already put into effect. Teachers, parents, and legislators would have to be part of such a coalition, and if enough of them felt alienated from the new reform regime because of how they perceived they were being excluded from policy decisions, they might form their own counter-coalition to modify or reverse mayoral control when it came up for review. Also, they might actively subvert the effective implementation of policies and programs enacted under mayoral control.

One of the ironies of the early years was the disparity between the mayor's vision of the partnership with parents he wanted the new school system to have and the one some parent advocacy groups and city and state legislators perceived. The mayor expressed his deep commitment to parents becoming "full and active partners in the education of their children," defining such a partnership as one of the core elements of his vision for a new school system. As he stated:

> The entire school system, from principals up to the Chancellor, will be held accountable for effectiveness in engaging parents, and responding to their concerns. Every school will become parent-friendly. Administrators and teachers will be expected to exhaust every avenue in making parents part of the school environment. In each school there will be a "parent coordinator," whose sole job will be to engage parents in their children's education, and be the ombudsperson in the school. Parent engagement also will be a significant factor in principal performance reviews (Bloomberg 2003).

The fact that parent leaders and legislators expressed widespread frustration and anger at not having a voice in the schools is hard to reconcile with the mayor's statements. There are several possible explanations. One is that the mayor's vision was not well implemented, with the imperatives of first centralizing the system to develop some control over it and of standardizing its operations taking precedence over parent partnerships. Another is that in the transition to a centralized system there was a temporary vacuum at the school and regional level as the new system was just being set up. Still a third is that my sample of parent leaders and legislators is unrepresentative of the majority and does not reflect the views of these stakeholder groups.

While the third in particular is worth considering, its validity is negated by the fact that the legislators sued the mayor and chancellor in early 2003 for going beyond the mayoral control law by eliminating the districts. Both sides claimed victory and the court took the suit seriously enough to rule that the mayor and chancellor had to restore the district offices as a place where parents could bring complaints and to set up community education councils of elected parents in each district ("Albany Attacks Bloomberg's School Plan," *The New York Times*, April 23, 2003; Baum 2004; *Insideschools.org*, January 6, 2004).

School-Based Reform

Though the school system was to be driven by strong, centralized leadership, the mayor and chancellor's goal was to downsize headquarters and cut administrative costs by shifting resources to the schools. Thus, the mayor stated as another core element of his vision the importance of "ending the bureaucratic sclerosis that prevents resources and attention from going where they are needed: the classrooms." To underscore this commitment, he added the following:

> We expect a significant reduction in nonpedagogical staff over the next few months as this centralized structure is implemented. Unclogging these administrative arteries will also permit us to reorganize the individual schools around their core mission: classroom instruction for students, not jobs for bureaucrats (Bloomberg 2003).

This was the opposite of how the system had been managed prior to mayoral control. Now the vision was to improve classrooms and schools, though disenfranchised

stakeholders did not always see it that way. They felt that they were just dealing with a new bureaucracy.

The goal of school reform led to the chancellor's early focus on identifying those schools most in need of curriculum development, staffing, and leadership. Although education in the schools was to be emphasized, teachers, among the stakeholders noted earlier, criticized the micromanagement of the schools during the early years of mayoral control. Such management extended even to the arrangement of students' chairs, what went on bulletin boards, and the pedagogy to be followed in reading and math instruction (Robinson 2006). Local instructional supervisors from the regional office visited classrooms regularly to ensure that curriculum and instruction regulations were in use. Weingarten, President of the teachers union, was quoted as saying of Klein: "Joel sees teachers as cogs in a factory model, not professionals worthy of respect." She reportedly claimed that Klein had tried to turn the schools into a "paramilitary system" (Heilemann 2005).

In interviews, senior managers at Tweed maintained that they were much more flexible than critics charged. They denied that the new pedagogies and curriculum were rigidly enforced, claiming that principals and teachers had more discretion than critics charged. Headquarters administrators also stated that the handbook of detailed teaching instructions that Tweed prepared for principals and teachers on reading, writing, math, and classroom management were intended for guidance, not to be followed to the letter. A senior administrator at Tweed explained:

> We do not have rules about anything that are mandatory. We have a handbook, but it is mainly suggestions and guidelines and not a series of musts. We have made every effort to be helpful.

School leadership became a special focus of the mayor and chancellor's reforms. In their principal-as-CEO model, this person was to be responsible for their school's educational program, including recruiting and training teachers and, in collaboration with teachers, developing the curriculum. An excerpt from the mayor's 2003 speech reinforces this statement:

> Freed from the dead hand of bureaucracy, principals will become instructional leaders – a sea change on the front lines of the system: the individual schools (Bloomberg 2003).

The emphasis on the principal's educational leadership role, as contrasted with his or her administrative tasks, increased over time. At the same time as this speech by Bloomberg, the chancellor was setting up what was called the Principals' Leadership Academy. It was designed to train principals to assume leadership roles in the new structure and later became a critical component in the reform strategy to increase school autonomy. (See Chap. 5 for a discussion of the Academy.)

New Management Consultants/Lawyers at Headquarters

The chancellor began the massive restructuring of the school system without a cadre of associates. The early information he received from City Hall, past reformers, civic groups, and veteran staff of the school system reinforced the view that reforming

the schools would be a formidable task. On the basis of both those reports and his personal commitment and the mayoral mandate to become a transformational leader, Klein had to decide whom to recruit to help him get underway.

Effective leaders are only as strong as the staff and senior managers they bring in. Frank Macchiarola, for example, one of the system's most effective chancellors (1978–1983), brought with him a staff that helped him immeasurably to build a strong coalition to develop early momentum for change. His prior experience as a community school board president, a faculty member, and administrator at the City University of New York, as well as a leader in the Brooklyn Democratic Party, also helped. By contrast, Fernandez, Cortines, and Crew, three chancellors in the 1990s, who, like Klein, came from outside, did not arrive with such a cadre and, as a result, were more vulnerable to political pressure from the mayor and others.

As the mayor's appointee, Klein had Bloomberg's strong support. Over time Klein recruited his own staff that included lawyers and management consultants, many of the latter recent MBAs. A state legislator described the staff this way:

> Klein brought in a small coterie of primarily MBAs, and they came up with a corporate model for the system.

Klein's staff, with periodic changes in composition but always with a core of people from management consulting and legal backgrounds, was to be decisive in shaping his strategies for reform. They were critical to his bringing in a new management culture of accountability and performance, as well as a more streamlined organization design. Writing about educational reform nationally but having particular relevance for New York City, Viteritti (2005) picked up on this point:

> In the most recent generation of reform, the MBA has replaced the Ed. D. as the credential of choice (p. 321).

Two staff members at Tweed volunteered that they and their colleagues were recruiting actively from business schools in the New York metropolitan area for MBA graduates with management training.

New Human Resources Policies

Some of Klein's most impassioned statements about what was wrong with the schools dealt with changing the system's organizational culture, particularly as related to the productivity of teachers and principals. He said the following:

> Modern public sector reform efforts must accomplish three fundamental culture shifts (Klein 2006):
>
> 1. from a culture of excuses to a culture of accountability;
> 2. from a culture of compliance to a culture of performance; and
> 3. from a culture of uniformity to a culture of differentiation.

These themes relate to eradicating the negative impacts of a civil service and trade union ethos that some critics of the public sector argue have come to dominate municipal employee behavior in the schools. Several traditional practices in the

New York City schools regarding the management of teachers illustrate the ways the old culture hampered reforms. For example, low-performing teachers often received satisfactory ratings if they agreed to transfer to another school.

In the past, when chancellors and boards of education proposed a policy of differential pay for teachers – to attract people in specialties such as math and science where the supply of teachers was limited, or to attract them to teach in failing schools, the union had objected. Union leaders argued that seniority and formal education [graduate credits] should be the main criteria for determining teacher salaries, to protect them from arbitrary treatment by principals, a pattern characteristic of the preunion era. As a result, some teacher shortages were not easily managed, and schools with predominantly poor students were staffed disproportionately by beginning teachers with little preparation who often experienced early "burn out."

The UFT contract in New York City until recently consisted of more than 200 pages, much of it in the form of work rules specifying teachers' job rights. One such set of rules, known as Circular 6, freed teachers from lunchroom, schoolyard, hallway, and homeroom supervision so that they could have more prep time for their classes. These were settings, however, where teachers could get to know the students on a personal basis.

All these traditional labor practices, many of them embedded in the teachers' collective bargaining agreement, became targets for Klein in his efforts to develop a "thin contract." He was especially interested in introducing more flexibility into how teachers are deployed and paid. He pointed to tenure, seniority rights, and uniform pay scales as what he called the "three pillars of nonmeritocracy" ("Klein Assails Job Protection for Teachers," *The New York Times*, October 17, 2003).

The union has defended itself against Klein's charges and offered to cooperate in developing more flexible labor practices. It accused the chancellor, the mayor, and Councilwoman Eva Moskowitz, who had conducted hearings on the union contract, of demonizing the union and making it a scapegoat for contractual agreements that past mayors had negotiated. It also accused Klein of negotiating in public and of disrespecting the union by failing to attend the only negotiating session in several months, well after the 2002 contract had expired. It should be added that the union later proposed a process for handling cases of poorly performing teachers that would take a few months rather than years to be resolved.

A Standardized, Uniform Curriculum

Klein justified the centralized bureaucracy in part by stressing the need for a standardized curriculum for elementary schools throughout the city. Decentralization gave schools flexibility to adopt curricula and pedagogies that they judged would be most appropriate for their students. Having been liberated from the controls of curriculum staff at headquarters, the educators under decentralization exercised their new powers, resulting in schools in different districts having radically different curricula. That was the case even in the same district.

There was an obvious cost to that flexibility. Students who changed schools found it difficult adapting to new curricula. Not surprisingly, the least privileged students felt that burden most strongly, since they and their families were the ones most likely to move each year.

Not only did Tweed standardize the curriculum, but the reading and math pedagogies adopted were progressive ones that plunged the Department of Education into ideological wars with a small but highly vocal group of outside critics. The critics called for a back-to-basics pedagogy, emphasizing phonics in reading and drilling in math, rather than the conceptual approach that Tweed mandated. At the same time, some middle-class parents liked the new curriculum but disliked what they saw as the rigid way it was implemented. As one described it:

> We love the progressive approach and how Tweed has got away from "drill and kill," but it has been implemented coercively.

Small Schools/Charter Schools

Early on in their change-management efforts, the chancellor and his staff embarked on a school-choice strategy, creating small schools and charter schools that would compete for students with traditional ones. The main difference between the two is that small schools, mainly at the high school level, are carved out of large schools and run by New York City licensed principals. Charter schools, primarily elementary, are often founded and run by outsiders.

Though some may say these alternative schools are a half-way step toward a system of vouchers, I would argue that vouchers are a passport to schools outside that represent an abandonment of the public system. Not so for the small and charter schools. They afford choice within the system, giving parents and students opportunities they never had in the past.

Management 101: A Management Transfer Approach

Much of the reform initiative in New York City under mayoral control reflects Bloomberg and Klein's respect for management principles that they see as having worked well in the business sector. Both shared that perspective, a likely factor in Bloomberg's originally appointing Klein as chancellor. "Mike and I are similar in our analytic approach," Klein was quoted as saying, "We look for management solutions" (Heilemann 2005). The extent of this application of management principles to reforming the schools has made New York a leader among cities in this regard.

It raises the question, however, as to the direct transferability to an urban system of what worked in the business sector. A basic principle in organization theory, especially as taught in MBA programs, is that "there is no one best way" to manage organizations. Referred to as contingency theory, it argues that the appropriate

design and management style for an organization must take into account on the context and history, i.e., its product, employees, and legal and competitive environment. Being a leader in the movement to incorporate business management practices into school system may not always be a good thing. At the least, many participants in New York City schools saw mayoral control as imposing, at times, an inappropriate corporate model when one with checks and balances, transparency, and educator and client participation would have been more appropriate. Debate over this issue in New York was (and is) a critical part of the politics of mayoral control.

Schools as Data Driven: New Accountability Systems to Measure Performance

Managing effectively involves generating information on critical inputs, processes, and outputs and then using that information to improve performance. It may also help to locate beginning problems before they magnify and thereby help an organization become self-correcting and adaptive.

The new management and performance culture was dramatically illustrated in Klein's introduction of an accountability system. There has been more interest in, and technical work undertaken on, developing systems of accountability during the Bloomberg/Klein years than ever before. Each school is evaluated by such measures as reading and math scores, student attendance, and teacher turnover. In fact, students are tested on reading and math proficiency in such a way that it is possible to ascertain improvement or lack of it during the school year.

To measure a school's climate and culture, surveys are conducted of student and parent satisfaction and of teacher appraisal of in-school mentoring programs. These data are intended to give "context and depth to the numbers" and to offer "valuable information about what is really happening in a school" (Klein 2005: 12). Once Tweed has compiled all the data, it gives each school an annual grade ranging from A to F.

As expected, there has been controversy in New York regarding these accountability measures, with some participants raising serious questions about the meaning and validity of the measures. Nevertheless, consensus exists that developing and using various performance measures are essential for reforming the city's schools (Bloomfield 2007).

A Strong Equity Agenda

While management and accountability systems have been central to Klein's vision for improved education, he is also committed to establishing a strong equity agenda. Two examples of this are his continued emphasis on narrowing the performance gap by putting extra resources into struggling schools or, in extreme cases, closing them down and creating new small schools and charter schools.

The school system's leaders face a perennial problem, however, of balancing the resource needs of high- with low-performing schools. Unlike many cities, New York has some of the most academically advanced public schools in the country. Some of these, such as Stuyvesant High School, The Bronx High School of Science, Brooklyn Technical High School, LaGuardia High School of Music and Art, and The High School of Performing Arts, go back decades. Others have opened more recently to expand the range of career interests, e.g., in the health professions, where one may gain training at the high school level. In addition, there are new elementary and middle schools – some for students categorized as gifted and talented and others expanding the choices for schooling (e.g., charter/small schools), especially in neighborhoods with more limited school options. Thus, Klein is seeking to correct the problem every chancellor before him has faced, namely, to offer good schooling across class lines.

Has the Vision Changed with Empowered Schools?

Recall that my description thus far of Bloomberg's and Klein's strategy for the school system applies mainly to the first 4 years of mayoral control. As of September 2007, all schools were given more authority regarding staffing, curriculum, and pedagogy and they were given budgetary powers they never had before. Correspondingly, the system went from highly centralized to highly decentralized, with the principal now held accountable for each school's performance, as measured by the school rating system described above. Indeed, this is the most far-reaching decentralization to the school level in New York City's history and, in fact, in that of any US urban school district. Compared with the previous decentralization of the New York schools, this one is being implemented without community school boards. The overall vision of giving the schools that much autonomy while holding them accountable for their performance could become a model for urban education throughout the nation.

The most important change will be in the relationship between headquarters and the schools. The new structure involves headquarters playing much more of a service than a controlling role. As Kristen Kane, Klein's former chief of staff, was quoted as saying, "Imagine a system with schools at the top?" ("Schools Chancellor to Give Principals More Autonomy," *The New York Times*, January 20, 2006). Operationally, this means giving principals much more authority while holding them accountable for their performance under a sophisticated mentoring and data-collection system for evaluating schools. In addition, new principals will not have tenure and all principals are subject to losing their positions if, after a few years, evaluation of their school shows highly inferior performance, or such poor performance that the school is closed down.

Principals thus are encouraged to become more entrepreneurial under a less bureaucratic system, accompanied not only by a shift from control to service from headquarters but also by the elimination of most regional administrative offices and staff. Under this decentralization, schools group themselves together

into administrative units, based on their perceived affinity in curriculum and pedagogical preferences. If they choose to do so, principals may affiliate with their past regional office. Otherwise they may affiliate with one of the several local nongovernmental affiliates that Klein has put in place to provide newly decentralized schools with various support services. As of September 2007, principals have retained four of the ten original regions (Cramer 2007). A basic question arises about the extent to which principals have the knowledge and skills to run their schools effectively under such an empowering arrangement. This question is all the more critical because most urban public schools nationwide have been subject to top-down management such that leadership at the local level has been not only discouraged but not permitted. In addition, how much knowledge and technology exist that can provide guidelines for their doing so immediately or getting the necessary professional training in the near future? In brief, empowering principals with greater authority and heightened accountability may be an important first step in setting up an organization design and system of governance that encourages entrepreneurship and adaptability in schools and classrooms. But it is imperative that principals have the skills and confidence to take on this new responsibility and independence. In this regard, Tweed created the Principals Leadership Academy in January 2003 to prepare increasing number of principals for their new opportunities and responsibilities. This subject is addressed in the next chapter. And in the final chapter, further steps are considered, that may be needed to provide resources to principals in order for them to be effective under such an empowered system of schools.

Chapter 5
Strategy

Having reviewed the main themes that informed the mayor and chancellor's vision, we turn now to the specifics of their initiatives. We do so with particular emphasis on the management concepts that informed them. A basic question of the chapter is: To what degree did the concepts that Bloomberg and Klein follow support their efforts to transform a public-sector organization whose main service delivery activities are carried out by professionals?

Governance

The concept of unified authority and accountability, a standby in classical management theory, guided the mayor and chancellor's reform efforts the first several years. The mayor would often speak of a direct line of authority from the classroom to his office ("Mayor Hails 'New Era' in Schools Amid Crowding Fears," *The New York Times*, September 5, 2003).

Business leaders also endorsed this concept. A staff person for the New York City Partnership explained:

> We had a bunch of CEOs who were partnership members and had for years focused on public schools, here and elsewhere. Our key notion is that the schools need accountability, and for many years we had a great interest in mayoral control. Several of our people served on the state assembly committee on school governance. We felt that once we created a clear chain of command and focused accountability, then we could go to work on improving the curriculum in reading, math, and various subjects.

In addition to the mayor and the city's business elite, the governor and state legislators, including members of the Assembly's Education Committee, also saw faulty governance as an important cause of the school system's poor performance. A member of the Committee said:

> Before mayoral control, the system was vertical, horizontal, and every which way and very confusing. At least now it is more of a vertical chain of command.

Interviews with members of the Education Committee revealed that it had been working on the governance problem before Mayor Bloomberg's election. Starting in 1995, the committee agreed that the governance of the New York City schools was

failing and none of the key participants was satisfied. At that time, it converged on the view that, as one of the participants recalled, "decentralization had failed in every documented way." He cited examples of the failure, from the high incidence of theft and corruption to the low turnout in community school board elections. At best, about 3% of those eligible to vote actually did. The fact that the school board elections were held in May only reinforced the limited turnout. Most disheartening was the continued low performance of poor minority students, as measured by attendance, test scores, dropout and graduation rates. "As noble as the effort was, and for all the right reasons, decentralization was failing," he explained. "Some argued that it was set up to fail and I cannot answer that question. But the result was failure."

Tired and discouraged about the public schools' future, political and business leaders and the general public were all too ready to hear the convincing voice of Bloomberg as he made educational reform central to his mayorality. Both supporters and detractors of mayoral control agreed that giving the mayor the power to select the chancellor and to unify the chain of authority and accountability were positive changes. As a top staff person in one of the citywide civic advocacy groups overseeing the schools put it:

> In the past, chancellors were weak political orphans. They had to satisfy all board members. Now, the chancellor is supported by the mayor.

From a traditional management perspective, this governance change streamlined decision-making. At the same time, as discussed in Chap. 2, concentrating authority in one person violated a public-sector principle of checks and balances, as several critics of mayoral control noted in public hearings before it went into effect (Chair of Education Committee Eva Moskowitz 2002). The borough presidents and leaders of institutions such as Arthur Levine, then president of Teachers College, Columbia University, and Ernest Tolles, director of research and policy, New York City Partnership, made this point. Tolles testified:

> Mayoral control is having different voices in New York City represented and will lead to checks and balances. A corporate structure, however, would leave out the consumer even more than the present one does.

Administration

After the mayor became head of the schools and appointed Joel Klein as chancellor, the latter took on the task of redesigning the organizational structure of the system. Consultants played a prominent role as they worked with Klein to streamline the bureaucracy, making it more efficient and redirecting resources to the schools.

Beginning in September 2003, the structure consolidated the 32 community school boards and district offices into ten regions and six regional operations centers (often referred to as ROCs), overseeing the schools. A rationale for this restructuring was the view that economies of scale would result from consolidating the districts.

The regions were to be intermediate, middle-management structures between headquarters and the schools, each run by a superintendent selected from within the system and consisting of roughly 100–110 schools. Two groups within the regional office were to be its link to the schools: local instructional superintendents, who would monitor the schools to ensure that they were following the new pedagogies mandated from headquarters, and regional instructional supervisors who would serve as coaches (in reading, writing, and math) to train teachers.

Meanwhile, six regional operations centers would provide management support services to the ten regions. These centers were to relieve principals of administrative details (e.g., school repairs, purchasing, and hiring), potentially enabling them to be education leaders in their schools – training teachers and coordinating initiatives in curriculum and instruction.

Management concepts drove these changes as well. One former management consultant who had worked at Tweed explained that these organization design decisions were based in large part on a span-of-control principle. This person recalled:

> They generally followed a 10–10–10 span of control. There were to be 10 regions, each with about 100 schools. Each region would have 10 local instructional supervisors, responsible for 10 schools each.

Other considerations also drove these organization design decisions. Regional boundaries were drawn to assure a mix of high- and low-performing schools in each region, to encourage retention of the middle class. The fact that the regions crossed borough lines was deliberate. It diffused borough power. For example, region 7 included all of Staten Island and two districts in Brooklyn. There was also much diversity within boroughs. Region 9 covered Manhattan's Lower East Side, Upper East Side, and East Harlem; and region 10 comprised the Upper West Side, Central Harlem, and Washington Heights.

Note that there were only six regional operations centers for the ten regions, instead of one center per region, as might be expected. One stated reason, a top headquarters administrator explained, "was not to balkanize around 10 regions."

A critical aspect of this newly regionalized structure was that it supported centralization, with regional superintendents having little power other than to facilitate the implementation of mandates made at Tweed. At the same time, they could block new ideas that principals and/or teachers might develop. When principals of new schools went to a regional superintendent with what they regarded as an exciting idea for a new education program, the superintendent would tell them it had to be cleared at Tweed, with the deputy chancellor for teaching and learning or the Office of New Schools. One school official said:

> They squeezed the entrepreneurial juice out of it. There was a disconnect between Tweed and the regions. Everything had to be approved downtown. There was no flexibility in the regions and schools.

Stated in organization theory terms, this was a command and control bureaucracy, with Tweed dictating policy on such matters as curriculum and pedagogy and regions operating in compliance with those dictates, maintaining controls over the schools to ensure that such compliance extended all the way down the chain of command.

Tweed's office layout symbolically reflected the limited power of regional superintendents. A principal said:

> The regional superintendents had little cubbies down there, while the new consultants, the Yuppies, had bigger offices.

A former Tweed staffer said:

> The field people had no power or discretion.

This limited role of the regional superintendents contrasted sharply with the one the mayor enunciated at their swearing-in ceremony. There he announced that they would be part of a policy-making group that would establish the curriculum for the city's schools ("New Leaders Of Schools Are Called Demanding," *The New York Times*, January 28, 2003). Instead, the power for doing so became concentrated in the office of the deputy chancellor for curriculum and instruction.

The Principal

An emphasis on the leadership role of the principal coincided with the new governance and organization design. Early in the restructuring, the mayor and the chancellor announced that the principal was to become the CEO of the school, and the new organization design was to facilitate this change. This sounded like a school level version of the "command" and "control" bureaucracy that the mayor and chancellor had already established.

Specifically, the school system would outsource management support services to the new operations centers to insulate principals from the "firefighting" and "administrative overload" they had before. Principals were to have an opportunity to become "school-based entrepreneurs," particularly after they were provided with effective leadership training. The Principals' Leadership Academy, established in January 2003 and funded by private-sector grants, was set up for this purpose.

In fact, however, in some ways, the newly centralized structure gave principals less authority than before. They were hemmed in by many constraints. First, there were the literacy and math coaches who exercised authority over principals, followed by the local instructional supervisors who made monthly monitoring visits to ensure compliance with Tweed curriculum and pedagogy policies. In addition, there were the regional operations centers that had control over management support activities, including the recruitment of teachers.

Principals also reported having to deal with unprecedented numbers of memos and meetings that took valuable time away from running their schools. Aaron Listhaus, principal of Middle College High School in Queens was reported to have said:

> They [regional officials] would show up without making an appointment, and so we would not be prepared to deal with them.

Listhaus went on to say that he reduced the time spent dealing with regional officials from 30% to 10% of his work week, once his school became autonomous (Witenko 2005).

A director of a citywide education organization explained the dilution of the principal's authority:

> The McKinsey people took away the business management function, limiting the principal's capacity to be an educational leader. It did away with the associate principal for management and operations that used to take care of administrative matters. The supervisors and coaches are great, but they are not under the principal's authority. The principal reports to the regional office where these people are employed. How can the principal be a change agent of the school, as some people at Tweed like to call him, when he has to report to all these people?

Another education program director said:

> The principal is designated the CEO of the school, but the mandated curriculum and the detailed pacing requirements for teachers in the classroom leave the principal little leeway. It's like being on a stop watch. They had loaded the deck from Tweed, while talking about leadership for the principal. It made no sense.

A researcher/program director went further:

> There is a contradiction from Tweed between the principal as leader and multiple controls over him, including reporting requirements. Also, the separation of instruction from operations is dead wrong. It doubles the principal's work.

Other critics regarded the separation of education from administration as artificial. One stated:

> The principal is overwhelmed. The consultants at Tweed figured it all out in management theory terms, that they should allow principals to focus on instruction and farm out the rest to the operations centers. But there is a fuzzy line between education and administration.

The Principals' Leadership Academy

Supporting this new role was the Principals' Leadership Academy. There were several reasons behind its creation. Turnover among principals had escalated since the 1999–2000 school year; additional principals were needed in the many new small schools and charters as well as those planned for the future; and Klein was not eager to continue an existing program despite its having done well under his predecessor. (A discussion of the successful program that he cancelled appears in "From Distinguished to Extinguished," *The New York Times*, May 25, 2005.)

The academy became another component of the chancellor's transfer of private-sector management concepts and practices to the public schools. Its advisory board consisted, among others, of Jack Welch, the retired CEO of General Electric, Walter Shipley of the Wallace Foundation and formerly the chief executive of Chemical Bank, and Time Warner CEO Richard Parsons. Klein served as the academy's president. Welch made available GE's management training facilities in Ossining, New York, and periodically gave lectures.

As start-up funding for the first three years, the academy received $75 million in contributions, including a grant of $30 million from the New York City

Partnership, an organization of CEOs of big corporations, and another $15 million from the Wallace Foundation ("Class Is in Session", *The New York Times*, July 8, 2003). The Partnership's executive director, Kathy Wylde, gave the academy a strong endorsement. She termed the program and its first director "an unqualified success," while Partnership members were quoted in the press as saying, "a dose of private-sector practicality and intensive training is exactly what is needed to turn the school system around." A member of the academy board, Sy Sternberg, the CEO of New York Life Insurance Company, reflected the mayor and chancellor's management style, as he asserted: "You need the middle management to really translate the directions from the top" ("Taught to Be Principals and Now Facing the Test," *The New York Times*, September 8, 2004).

The Principals' Leadership Academy immediately became a critical component of the reform strategy, with its emphasis on classroom instruction and on-site mentoring by accomplished principals. Classroom instruction involved skill-development exercises through case analysis and simulations of typical situations that principals face. In addition, there was an internship with a high-performing principal for an entire school year. The combination of classroom instruction and an internship became the centerpiece of the academy, covering about 14 months, with classroom work preceding the internship. In addition, there was an early effort to recruit educators from around the country to become trainees, but that part of the program was dropped after a couple of years because of few applicants. There is also follow-up in the form of support work for program graduates, many of whom return periodically for further coaching.

The academy began on a controversial note with a speech by Welch in which he presented as a model his policy at GE of always looking to eliminate the lowest performers throughout the organization to keep revitalizing it. This statement caused some public school educators to fear that mayoral control would be the end of their jobs. As one staff person at the academy recalled:

> At the beginning, we were seen as Klein's minions and as representing the philosophy of Jack Welch and how he fired the bottom 10% and what that meant. The public scrutiny of us started on day one after Welch's press conference. It looked to people as part of a corporate takeover.

Indeed, the academy became in its early years a lightning rod for critics of Bloomberg and Klein's approach. The strongest opposition came from the principals' union and past principals training programs. By contrast, Bloomberg and Klein's corporate and foundation supporters endorsed the academy. Controversy over its viability reflected a classic insider–outsider battle. The former felt, in the words of Barbara Bartholomew, a former Department of Education official, that "the academy was part of a misguided policy of 'disbanding an operable system that required thoughtful reform, not dissolution,'" ("Inexperienced but Trained," *The New York Times*, August 16, 2006).

The chancellor's establishment of this leadership academy was thus part of a larger strategy of changing the entire culture of the system. The academy was meant to provide the kind of training in management and leadership skills needed in a new structure where the principals would be called on increasingly to introduce

new educational programs and staff to their schools. Skills associated with being an effective change agent and often taught in management courses in business schools were emphasized, in addition to the more traditional ones of managing budgets and training teachers.

Klein hired Robert Knowling as the first executive director. Knowling was an entrepreneur, who had founded and grown a software company, but had no experience in public education. Klein regarded the philosophy and curriculum of the Leadership Academy as central to the redesign of the schools. He planned to finance it through the Department of Education when its 3-year private-sector funding ended. The funds were to come from the state as the result of a court suit that charged the state with underfunding the city. When these funds were delayed, the New York City Partnership continued support of the academy ("City Officials Put Academy for Principals Under Review," *The New York Times*, December 20, 2005).

Meanwhile, Klein recruited Professor Sandra Stein of Baruch College (City University of New York) to be academic dean. From 1998 through January 2003, Stein had been the director of an aspiring principals program at Baruch that she had established and then brought with her to the academy. With a Ph.D. in education and political science from Stanford University, and a student of how principals use their knowledge in their work, she was well suited to the job. In June 2005, Knowling left and Stein became executive director of the academy.

The aspiring principals program enrolled about 90 educators each of its first 3 years. Sixty-nine members of the first class were placed in schools as principals, and all but six would be retained in that role. Klein hailed the program as an unqualified success. At the end of 2 years, 113 of the 180 candidates were working as principals and 33 had dropped out before the training was completed ("Chancellor Vows to Keep Training Program for Principals," *The New York Times*, July 6, 2005). Stein said that the placement and success rates were competitive when judged against other efforts, while Klein again voiced his strong affirmation of the program. "I think it's made enormous sense," he said, "and quite frankly, it's an enormous lever for reform" ("City Officials Put Academy for Principals under Review," *The New York Times*, December 20, 2005).

In addition to Klein and Stein's positive assessments, Wylde of the Partnership has continued to support the academy, and some of the city's top school superintendents said that the program had improved markedly and that they wanted it to continue. Opposition to the academy included Jill Levy, former president of the principals union; Mary Butz, who headed a principals' training program that had won federal grants for its effectiveness and that Klein passed over in setting up the academy; and Betsy Gotbaum, the city's public advocate and long-time critic of mayoral control. Levy wanted the academy to be a career ladders program that would recruit people from inside the New York City schools. She also objected to the fact that its curriculum had been developed unilaterally, with no input from the principals union. Mary Butz said: "Given the fact that the entrance criteria were so rigorous, it's not a good passing rate" ("Chancellor Vows to Keep Training Program for Principals," *The New York Times*, July 6, 2005).

Part of the academy's legitimacy problem was that it was facilitating a generational shift among principals that was already under way. The academy's recruits

were more than a decade younger than current principals, whose average age was 52. Two thirds of the recruits were women, an estimated 27% were Black, and 9% were Latino. Most important, the academy's recognition that computer literacy is an increasing prerequisite for effectiveness as a principal also led to its recruiting a younger trainee group. As a staff person explained:

> The need for using and understanding technology requires people with this skill and they tend to be younger. It's a generational shift, but there has been no youth bias in this program.

It is likely that the academy will play an even more important role in New York City school reform, as principals have more autonomy to become leaders than ever before. If the academy continues to get the financial support it has had in the past, it will remain one of the main professional development vehicles for principals.

Curriculum

Reflecting their commitment to reduce the large performance gap between middle- and low-income students, Klein focused from the beginning on those schools in greatest need. For a decade, the state education department had identified low-performing schools, and New York City developed its own list under mayoral control. Initially, it categorized all but about 200 schools as low-performing.

Neither parents nor educators want their school to have the label of low performer. In New York City, as elsewhere, people move to neighborhoods based on the reputation of the public schools, and real estate prices reflect that. Parents in the city's diminishing middle class whose children are enrolled in public schools stay in residential areas because of the presence of "good" schools, some of them referred to as schools for "the gifted and talented."

Instead of once-a-year test scores in reading and math to rank the schools, Klein took into account improvement or decline during the academic year. For new small schools, their scores were separated out from those of other public schools in the same building. This flexibility resulted in additional schools in poor minority areas designated as high-performing, based on their improvement from the previous year. In the end, both categories (high- and low-performing) had a mix of schools with students from various economic levels.

Klein also set up an appeals procedure for parents and educators who felt that their schools were unfairly categorized. As a result, the original list of some 200 schools labeled high performers increased to more than 300 ("More Schools Are Exempted from New York City Curriculum," *The New York Times*, April 3, 2003). Many new, small schools later got on that list, as did others in low-income locales where test scores were low, but improvement over time was significantly better than that of other schools with the same demographic mix.

Taking into account the complexity of sorting schools into high- and low-performing ones, and the political sensitivity involved, Klein managed the process well. Some of that success resulted from his willingness to hear appeals from schools requesting a hearing.

Overall, classification of low- and high-performing schools served as a tool to address the larger curriculum policy issue of how to manage the two categories of schools. Klein determined that high-performing schools should be free to adopt the curriculum their principal and teachers deemed appropriate, on the assumption that the system should let well enough alone.

By contrast, Tweed mandated a new, standardized curriculum for low-performing schools, and the mayor announced in January 2003:

> For these [low-performing] schools, the chancellor's office will dictate the curriculum and pedagogical methods (Bloomberg 2003).

Of interest, a number of high-performing schools chose the new curriculum, seeing it as a distinct advantage. They reasoned that the increased resources and close monitoring would enhance their high performance.

Another benefit of a standardized curriculum was that it provided for continuity in school experience for students in low-performing schools. Under decentralization, the districts had proliferated many different curricula, making it difficult for students who changed schools (their families moved) to adapt to new situations. This is more likely to be the case with low- than middle- or high-income students.

A Standardized "Progressive" Curriculum

The question then became, what kind of standardized curriculum would these low-performing schools have? Klein, a noneducator, relied heavily on Deputy Chancellor Diane Lam to make that decision. She introduced a progressive curriculum that she had implemented in other cities, e.g., Providence, Dubuque, and San Antonio.

The new curriculum bore similarities to what several of the new regional superintendents had used in their old New York City Districts, particularly those serving a sizeable middle-class student population. Local models included District 2 on Manhattan's Upper East Side, District 10, encompassing the Riverdale and Van Cortlandt sections of the Northwest Bronx, and parts of Eastern Queens. District 2 was particularly emulated, its Superintendent, Alvarado, having achieved a national reputation for his prior leadership in District 4 in East Harlem, where he helped initiate the small, alternative schools movement in the city.

The Department of Education appointed two of its ten regional superintendents from District 2; and a consensus emerged from many New York City public school educators and civic groups that Klein and Lam were in many respects "following in Alvarado's footsteps." Explained one New York City educator:

> You can see his footprints in what Lam and her successor, Carmen Farina, did with curriculum and staffing under mayoral control.

This new curriculum emphasized a whole-word pedagogy rather than just phonics for teaching reading, and called for a "constructivist math" that was conceptual instead of based on rote drills. These decisions soon created much furor in New York City, in the US Office of Education in Washington, and in some segments of the New York press. G. Reid Lyon, President Bush's advisor on reading, said that Month

by Month Phonics, a component of New York's reading pedagogy, was unacceptable to the federal government because its phonics component was too limited, and that the New York City schools stood to lose up to $68 million in federal funds under the No Child Left Behind Act ("Schools Chancellor Stands by His Choice of Reading Program," *The New York Times*, February 26, 2003). Klein and Lam then supplemented their use of Month by Month Phonics with a program used widely in Texas called Voyager Passport that included more phonics.

Educators and parents of liberal persuasion generally supported the curriculum, while those of a more traditional bent tended to be critical. The former argued that an exclusive phonics approach to reading and a structured one in math represent a form of "drill and kill" that destroys students' creativity. To them, traditional approaches involve memorizing sounds (reading) and drilling (math), without pushing students to think about what they are learning. They consider such approaches as instruction, not teaching, and they espouse the philosophy that true education develops skills in critical thinking, learning how to learn, seeing meaning in words, and developing advocacy and problem-solving skills.

The progressives agreed, however, that developing a pedagogy and curriculum around their philosophy requires considerable training on the part of teachers. They also agreed that this approach to teaching reading and math is easier to implement for middle- and upper-middle-class students whose families are more likely to emphasize conceptual thinking, but those for whom this is less the case need more structure and drilling in the early grades. There was some consensus around this notion, suggesting that imposing the progressive new curriculum on low-performing schools was a mistake that should be corrected. Rothstein (2004) summarizes well the research on these social class differences in cognitive styles.

Since February 2003, when the new curriculum was announced, the New York City schools became the site of cultural wars over curriculum and instruction, reminiscent of similar battles in other cities and states over the value of so-called progressive education. Although this New York City version of the conflict attracted little attention in the press, at least a few education writers weighed in strongly. They included Andrew Wolf, a reporter for the *Riverdale Review* and *The New York Sun*, Sol Stern, a journalist affiliated with the Manhattan Institute, a conservative think tank, and the historian Diane Ravitch. All were relentless in their critiques and explicit in seeing the New York City curriculum as a microcosm of national developments. (See, for example, "Klein's Figleaf," *New York Post*, January 12, 2004.)

Staff at the city's Department of Education insisted that they were not as rigid in the pedagogies and curricula they followed as the critics claimed and that they had many approaches, including a version of phonics, as well as providing libraries in schools and much time for reading. In that sense, they said, the critics had overstated their case and were not describing what was actually taking place in classrooms.

Meanwhile, the chancellor emphasized that the organization design of the school system and how it was managed were the key issues for him, not the disputes over curriculum and pedagogy. Klein was quoted as saying:

> I firmly believe that the managerial and organizational issues are a core and indispensable aspect of school reform. If you don't get those things right, you won't succeed ("Schools Chancellor to Give Principals More Autonomy," *The New York Times*, January 20, 2006).

One point of contention between the chancellor and his critics related to the most appropriate levers to press in improving the schools. Critics argued that setting up empowered schools in one of Klein's restructurings did not deal with more basic problems of creating relationships in the classroom conducive to student learning. Klein's position, quoted above, was that there was nothing more basic to improving student learning than to set up a larger structure supportive of teachers and principals.

Evaluating Teachers and Principals

A basic component of that overall strategy was to change the way teachers and principals were to be evaluated. For Klein, a civil service and trade union culture had made the school system difficult to manage. A hallmark of his service as chancellor has been his attempted overhaul of the entire human resources function to provide greater productivity and accountability through incentives to improve performance. He began by emphasizing performance over seniority as the basis for compensating teachers. Specifically, he proposed a system of differential pay whereby shortages of teachers in subject areas such as math and science might be filled and experienced, high-performing teachers might be attracted to underperforming schools.

Klein was committed to reducing, and in some cases eliminating, work rules in the contract. Bloomberg, however, sometimes forced him to hold back. One such occasion occurred in September 2005, when the union threatened to support the mayor's Democratic rival, Fred Ferrer, after not reaching a contract agreement. Another came in October 2006, when the mayor signed a new contract earlier than usual, and without eliminating some of the policies and work rules of the past. Bloomberg was concerned about ensuring sustainability of the reforms through 2009, when his term ended and the mayoral control law would be reviewed. He appeared hopeful that the early contract would make the union more cooperative and prevent it from being the harsh public critic it had been ("Mayor Could be Big Winner in UFT Deal," *New York Post*, April 22, 2007).

Klein was not alone in his pursuit of changing teacher work rules. In November 2003, the chairperson of the City Council's Education Committee, Eva Moskowitz, conducted 2 weeks of hearings on the subject. She asserted that work rules prevented student learning even more than did bad governance and structure (Moskowitz 2006). The testimony in those hearings revealed a host of alarming job protections: Custodians did not paint ceilings or walls above 10 feet, and they fixed door hinges but did not order them. The cost of removing poorly performing teachers was so prohibitive and the time involved so great – four stages of hearings which could take up to several years – that many principals gave up pursuing it. Instead, they would agree not to press charges against those teachers or give them an unsatisfactory rating if they moved to another school. Also, the contract's lock-step salary agreements prevented the chancellor from providing

differential pay to attract new teachers with needed specialties and transfer others to schools with the greatest needs. Meanwhile, assistant principals were so protected by seniority provisions in their contract that principals could neither hire nor transfer them to best meet school staffing needs. In brief, the schools represented the interests of the adults serving in them more than those of the students they were supposed to serve.

Chancellor Klein enunciated his concern in that regard in many public statements, starting in 2003. He strongly endorsed "thin contracts" with the teachers union that would eliminate most work rules and provide for more flexibility in how teachers were paid and deployed. Klein's strategy of incorporating a private-sector human resources culture into the public schools was one that some business leaders and other outside critics shared and argued should be followed nationally, not just in New York.

Terry Moe, professor of political science at Stanford University and senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, was foremost among them. His article, "Management 101 for Our Public Schools," in *The Wall Street Journal*, October 31, 2006, represents this view. He states:

> In any organization, the key to effective performance lies in getting the incentives right …. Only in government, of which the public schools are a part, do organizations hire employees for life and pay them without regard for their performance …. Incentive pay is an idea whose time has come.

The unions are in a vulnerable position and have defended themselves aggressively. UFT leaders accused the mayor, the chancellor, and Councilwoman Moskowitz of demonizing teachers and their union, making them scapegoats for contractual agreements that past mayors had agreed to. Bronx Councilman Oliver Koppel pointed out in the union's defense, for example, that the city provided work rules to teachers when it was unable to give significant salary raises, because of severe fiscal shortfall. Instead, the city provided other perks, for example, more time away from the classroom and administrative tasks. Negotiators for former Mayor Giuliani had added at the end of one previous contract agreement what became known as Circular 6, a sweetener to the contract. It freed teachers from having to do hallway, lunchroom, or schoolyard coverage, under the assumption that teachers would use that time for increased classroom preparation. The union had not even asked for that released time in the original negotiations, and though Giuliani hailed it as a step toward enhancing productivity, many veterans of the system pointed out that these so-called patrol assignments were times when teachers had unique opportunities to bond with their students (Fliegel 2006). Some observers even suggested that Circular 6 was more a show of Giuliani's thanks to the UFT for supporting his mayoral reelection campaign in 1997 than anything else.

Beyond trying to deflect criticism for the work rules by blaming previous city administrations, the teachers union has proposed its own reforms. One relates to suspended teachers whose cases could take years to be reviewed. Weingarten, the union's president, has cooperated in shortening the review time to a few months. Also, the union offered to experiment with a simplified "thin contract" in some schools to see how it worked, rather than immediately adopting it for the entire

system. This was, of course, contrary to the transformation strategy of the mayor and chancellor. Actually, the late Sandra Feldman, the former head of the UFT and later of the AFT, had stated in the 1990s that she was in favor of such pruned-down contracts.

The principals union contract was also characterized by critics as hampering school performance. Top school officials noted that it created a conflict of interest for principals. Both principals and assistant principals were covered by the same contract, and with larger numbers of the latter, their interests were more strongly represented. One result was that principals had limited authority to remove those assistants whose performance they judged as warranting such action. Partly as a result of that conflict, many years elapsed before the awarding of a new contract.

Eliminating work rules may be a necessary but not sufficient means to increase teacher and principal productivity. Another way would be to collect data that evaluate schools and teachers and take corrective actions based on the results. Such an effort has become another centerpiece of mayoral control. Again, this is a strategy to modernize the management of the schools through incorporating systems widely used in business. It further develops the new performance culture that Klein and his colleagues and consultants have begun to introduce.

The consultants working with him, familiar with similar efforts in other urban school systems, including London's, maintain that the ones they are setting up in New York City could become a national model. Klein argues that such an account-ability system would enable principals and higher-level school administrators to have a database to document where learning does and does not take place. It would also give parents added information to help in their choice of schools.

Administrative use of test results, however, is not a simple matter. Critic Sol Stern notes that a 1-year increase in some test scores may be too limited a basis for judging the efficacy of new programs, teachers, and principals, or for that matter the per-formance and electability of the mayor. Former school headquarters administrator Robert Tobias also urges caution: "I'd like to see more evidence before I render the opinion that students are learning more" ("Higher Student Test Scores Mean Progress? Council Wants Proof," *The New York Times*, June 28, 2005).

Small Schools/Charter Schools

The move toward small schools and charters under mayoral control builds on a long history. Starting in the 1970s under decentralization, particularly in District 4 in East Harlem, small separate elementary and middle schools, termed alternative schools, were opened within existing school buildings (Fliegel with MacGuire 1993). Under the visionary leadership of Superintendent Alvarado, and his director of the Office of Alternative Schools, Seymour Fliegel, the District spawned 28 such schools. They shared several features that were to become hallmarks of the national small-schools movement: a strong sense of community within the school; a curriculum and instruction adapted to individual student needs; a staff and students who were there by choice and imbued with a shared commitment to a central theme and

common culture; close ties between the school and home; students as active learners; and schools free of many of the constraints of a district bureaucracy and union contract. Of importance, those that became models had a principal with strong leadership skills, inspiring teachers, parents, and students to collaborate in making the school a vibrant learning community.

In the 1980s, the Annenberg Foundation gave the New York City schools $50 million for change initiatives, half for systemwide reform and half for small, alternative schools. The latter gave further impetus to the concept of alternative schools. At one point, Deborah Meier, one of the original small-schools pioneers, served at school headquarters to promote the concept. The terms *small schools* and *charter schools*, as they are known today, build on this work.

The emphasis on small schools and charters became much more pronounced under mayoral control through Michelle Cahill, the chancellor's senior counselor on educational policy. She and her colleagues saw large, comprehensive high schools as too big and impersonal to permit the development of learning communities and divided many into smaller schools, often housed in the same building. Also, more charter schools were established, under various auspices. As of September 2006, there were more than 200 small schools and 65 charters throughout the city, the latter serving about 15,000 students ("Council Split on Rise in Charter Schools," *The New York Sun*, January 8, 2007). In addition, the chancellor and mayor lobbied in Albany and encouraged groups in New York City to do likewise, to get Governor George Pataki and later his successor, Eliot Spitzer, to raise the state cap on charter schools so that New York City would be free to open more in the future. Spitzer did so.

In early 2007, one proposal in Albany was to increase the statewide cap on charter schools from 100 to 250, with at least 50 to open in New York City. Some members favored it for the reasons noted earlier. The opposed argued that because teachers in the charters were not required to join the union, this weakened it; others called for a moratorium until traditional New York City schools were adequately financed; still others said that charters "creamed" students, by attracting those who took the initiative to get into the lottery. The teachers union not only opposed raising the cap, but began two charter schools on its own with unionized teachers to demonstrate that charters need not be nonunion.

At least two benefits are expected from the charter and small-schools movement. First, these schools are seeds of change in the entire school system, as they develop imaginative programs and attract teachers from all over the country. Second, these schools usually attract private funding that supplements financing from the government. While some traditionalists see this as unfair, such money does provide students with additional opportunities ("Charter School Strives to Live up to 'Promise'," *Amsterdam News*, October 7, 2004).

An indication of how much parents can value charter schools is provided by the experience of the Harlem Success Academy, established by Eva Moskowitz, former Chair of the Education Committee of the New York City Council. The academy began in September 2006 and will open three more such schools in September 2008. As of mid-April 2008, there were roughly six applicants for each place. In all, there are 20 charter schools in Harlem ("Klein vs. Weingarten," *The New York Sun*, April 16, 2008; "Clamor for Charters," *New York Post*, April 17, 2008).

An Integrated, K-12 System

Under decentralization, the high schools remained together in their own division at headquarters. They had borough offices as well and functioned separately from the elementary and middle schools that were under the authority of local districts and community school boards. The high schools were, by far, the most powerful of the three grade level groups. Because of their long tradition of academic excellence they were able to resist political pressure to decentralize. In the Bloomberg/Klein era, the judgment of senior managers at Tweed in curriculum and instruction was that the articulation of the schools would be enhanced by eliminating the high school division as a separate unit and administratively integrating high schools into their geographic regions.

There were losses and gains from such a change. The former meant high schools were increasingly isolated from one another, a change that staff found initially disorienting. The borough offices for the old high school division had been important administrative supports for principals who met there at least once a month and often developed zoning and construction plans for the entire borough. Moreover, headquarters and borough offices had managed such critical problems as student suspensions and school security, but those supports disappeared under the new regional organization. The gains of this consolidation were a potential for more curriculum articulation of the high schools with middle and elementary ones. Also, it eliminated the high school division as a separate power group within the system.

Private-Sector Funding

A strong emphasis on private-sector funding, grants not only from business and foundations but also from individuals, has been a Bloomberg/Klein initiative that has met with considerable success ("New York City's Big Donors Find New Cause: Public Schools," *The New York Times*, December 30, 2005). The mayor drew on his wide network of contacts in the corporate and philanthropic world; indeed, private philanthropy had always been one of the mayor's personal priorities (Bloomberg 1997). The chancellor also actively sought private support. Soon after his arrival, he brought Caroline Kennedy to Tweed to direct the Office of Strategic Partnerships. She became the catalyst for bringing together business leaders, foundations, and citizens to promote change in the city schools. Wylde, President of the Partnership for New York City, said:

> Our money never went directly to the school system before. Absolutely this has made a tremendous difference, basically on Caroline's good name and … credibility ("Kennedy Seeks Her Footing as Schools' Rainmaker," *The New York Times*, June 4, 2003).

By the end of 2005, the Department of Education had already raised roughly $300 million. Although that sum might seem small relative to the school system's $15 billion annual expense budget at that time, the funds were used for many needed

reforms and school improvements. These included new small schools, charter schools, leadership training for principals, renovating libraries, refurbishing playgrounds, and one project to develop an academic high school. The strategy was to leverage these private-sector funds as seed money for reforms, the most successful of which would later be financed by the Department. The Principal's Leadership Academy is a good example of this strategy.

New York and other urban school systems have drawn on the resources of business and foundations for many decades, but the scale of such funding has been greater under mayoral control in New York City than at any other time and anywhere else in the nation. Much private-sector money was raised for the initiatives noted above through the Gates, Wallace, Broad, Robin Hood, Dell and Pumpkin Foundations, The New York City Partnership, Morgan Stanley, Credit Suisse First Boston, Goldman Sachs and Citigroup, as well as from Leonard Riggio, CEO of Barnes & Noble, among others.

A big part of this achievement was the confidence these donors had in the mayor and chancellor, which will not be easy for their successors to replicate. Nevertheless, Bloomberg and Klein's accomplishment in this domain constitutes a national model.

An End to Social Promotion

Historically, in New York and other urban school districts, students were automatically promoted, regardless of their performance, a policy termed social promotion. By high school, many were years behind in reading, writing, and math; they tended to have high rates of absenteeism, to fail most or all subjects, and to become school dropouts.

In March 2003, the mayor and Klein publicly announced a new policy that would refuse promotions to the bottom rung of students – the end of social promotion. They reasoned, as had Chancellor Macchiarola before them, that it was harmful to students to promote them, regardless of their performance. When three members of the citywide Policy Panel disagreed with the mayor, he removed them ("Mayor Bloomberg Plays Hard Ball," *The New York Times*, March 16, 2004).

Debates about the policy went back and forth. The opposition argued that holding back students with the lowest test scores was not the best way to improve their later performance. To these critics, the policy of social promotion had to be supplemented with enriched programs in pre-K and the early grades, and then in mandatory after-school, summer school, and other remedial classes. These people also argued that one test was an insufficient basis on which to make the judgment. Bloomberg and Klein prevailed, however, and provided remedial classes for those who did not pass the test the first time. The first year the policy applied to third graders and later was extended to fifth and seventh graders. In 2005 and 2006, when reading and math scores of students in the third grade rose, Bloomberg and Klein pointed to the end of social promotion as a contributing factor.

Parent Coordinators, Education Councils

Throughout the early implementation of mayoral control, parent and civic groups, along with state legislators whom the former contacted, stated that parents did not have a place within the new structure to express concerns about their children and have a voice in the schools. In the 1990s, there were school-based management teams established for that purpose, but they were not continued under mayoral control. In addition, the Department of Education disbanded community school boards and districts. During the first several years, it was unclear to parents what would take the place of the community boards and districts or the school-based management teams. Parents reported to the state legislators that they felt increasingly shut out by the school system and urged the legislators to restore their access. One parent activist leader said:

> Parents became infantilized under mayoral control. School leadership teams were falling apart, and there was a sense of futility among parents.

In 2004, when state legislators sued the Department of Education for closing down the district offices, a state legislator reported:

> The legislature was in the middle of doing hearings in January 2003, when the mayor established his regions. In that sense, he secretly and illegally set up the regions and damaged the process. This was followed by protests from parents. Now, with the mayor's regions, consolidating the old community school districts, there is decreasing access of parents to the system. A sufficient threshold of parents exists all over the city, including working class and minority parents, who feel that Klein and his top staff mean well but have eliminated existing avenues of access for parents with none to take their place.

Another legislator recalled:

> We had already given the mayor control over selecting the chancellor and central board and control over the school construction authority, but we deferred on community school districts and appointed a state commission to determine in late 2002 and early 2003 how that might be resolved. The mayor announced the establishment of 10 regions, each encompassing roughly 3 former districts, and I told them he couldn't do that. I told Klein at a public meeting that we had never legislated doing away with community districts. I said to Klein that you're not above the law. He said he disagreed with me and that is why we have courts, so sue us. We did, and we won and forced them to restore 32 district offices and superintendents.

The legislator concluded:

> Decentralization had at least created a local ability for parents to get redress on grievances in this big, sprawling city of ours. My objection to the 10 regions was that they were too removed from the schools. Having districts of 20–30,000 made it possible for parents' voices to be heard. Otherwise, to have 10 regions, some across boroughs, would not give that voice. The mayor had a corporate model – no districts, 10 regions, and 6 operations centers, without anything below that for the public to have a voice. I warned them that if you take a long term view, where people feel disenfranchised from the school system, they will rise up and demand rights to have a voice. It should be a partnership with parents and the community and that is not the way Tweed and the mayor have set it up.

The outcome of the legislators' suit was a compromise in which each side claimed victory. All 32 district offices and superintendents were restored, but only with minuscule staff. In addition, community education councils were set up for

each district, composed primarily of parents, who met regularly to discuss educational policy issues of concern to them. Tweed then set up a council for each region and one called the chancellor's advisory council of parents that was citywide. There was some redundancy, but many parents reported that the powerlessness of the education councils and the extensive personal and financial background information and paperwork that Tweed required from parents deterred many people from running for election ("Parents Seek Greater Voice in Schools from Chancellor," *The New York Times*, December 12, 2005; Baum 2004).

Klein and his top staff started with a different conception of parent involvement from that of parent and community activists. It was not to give parents input into headquarters decisions or those at the regional or school level. Rather it was to have parents play an increasingly active role as partners with the schools in getting their children motivated to perform.

Tweed set up its own version of parent engagement. It involved having a parent coordinator in each school, to be selected by the principal and a committee of local parents, with the principal having the final say. The parents were to be paid an annual salary of roughly $30–39,000, depending on past community experience and formal education ("In Gamble, New York Schools Pay to Get Parents Involved," *The New York Times*, August 30, 2003).

The question was, what role these parent coordinators should play in the schools? One option was for parents to be partners with the school by reinforcing their children's learning, that is, help with homework, be a mentor at home, and motivate their children to take school seriously. A second was to help make the school more responsive to parent complaints. Still a third was to participate with the educators in making policy decisions, e.g., on curriculum, instruction, and staffing. Past advocates of decentralization had sought the latter. Commenting in part on these roles, an outside observer of mayoral control said: "Bloomberg wanted parents to be made comfortable in the school, not to have a voice."

After New York City's experience with decentralization, there was a consensus with the educators of "let the professionals do it," rather than have parents participate in policy-making at the school level. Moreover, people with this point of view argued that few parents wanted or felt qualified for the role of participating in school policy decisions. Many felt intimidated within the school, in part because of their own limited education, and for some, bad memories of their own schooling. What did work in facilitating partnerships, top Tweed staff argued, was for parents to provide a home environment supporting their children's learning, and to have a place to go to in the school when they felt it was not serving their children's needs.

In the first year of mayoral control, the Department of Education delineated several functions for parent coordinators. One was to provide a welcoming environment within the schools to encourage parents to become involved in their child's education and in the school. The latter was left loosely defined. Another was to become the vehicle through which parents could express their concerns about their children's education. A third was to enhance parents' involvement in their children's learning and achievement. Last, the coordinators were to bring more parents into the school and train them to be active in the parent association. In low-income

communities, with weak or nonexistent parent associations, this would become a particularly challenging task.

Community activists had other views. They felt that decentralization had helped give parents a voice in school decisions, thereby enhancing the educational process. One minority legislator explained:

> Before decentralization, parents never came to schools and were fearful. We went from no parent participation to quite a lot. Mayoral control has eliminated parental access. Parent coordinators cannot help parents focus on making their kids' schools better because they are paid by the system and do not have the independence. But we have now set up a family empowerment center for every school and that is beginning to have a positive impact on parent participation.

As with so many of the program initiatives under mayoral control, not enough time has elapsed for systematic evaluations of how well parent coordinators have worked. There is a consensus that Tweed has not pursued the strategy of having parents participate in school policy-making. A senior manager at Tweed described the parent coordinators not as advocates but as "problem solvers." They were seen as helping principals and teachers deal with parent complaints by giving parents a sympathetic place within the school to exercise their concerns. One retired school district official said:

> Parent coordinators are involved in a balancing act. In theory it is a good idea to have somebody the parents can go to. It all depends on the principal. In some schools, it has become the arm of the principal in the sense of being the latter's "yes" person. In others, it became the parents' advocate. It can go either way or in a handful of cases, the coordinator can serve both sides.

Parent participation, however, extended beyond just having a coordinator in every school. Each region had its own council and support staff, its members selected from among the parent coordinators in the schools. Parent problems not resolved at the school level were to be directed to the regional office. Also, this group was to meet with the superintendent and other educators in the district, to discuss broader policy issues associated with parent participation. Michelle Cahill, the chancellor's senior policy advisor, asserted that these regional councils and school coordinators were meant to provide parents with a "real voice" throughout the system (New York City Department of Education, Parent Coordinators, description of duties and responsibilities, n.d.).

Empowerment Schools: Debureaucratization?
An Entirely New Direction?

From the perspective of the mayor, the chancellor, their staff, and outside supporters, much of the discussion in this chapter may represent not only a partial picture of inevitable transition problems, but also of a past that is no longer relevant. As of the fall of 2007, they have moved on, they argue, to a newly decentralized structure, where relationships between headquarters, regions, and schools have changed radically from what they were in the first years of mayoral control.

According to the restructuring that began in 2006 in 330 newly empowered schools, the top-down, centralized bureaucracy and consolidated regions that enforced policies and programs no longer exist in that form. The regions will be eliminated as a program enforcing, middle-management structure. And principals will now be given the authority to make education decisions, as the CEOs of their schools that they were designated to be in the past. In brief, a centralized, bureaucratic structure is being replaced by a decentralized structure of autonomous schools, thereby freeing up the principal to become an effective leader of the school. Specifically, this may enable the principal to establish the staffing, professional development, and curriculum necessary to make the school a learning community and raise substantially the performance of its students.

Some principals will take advantage of these new opportunities, while others will not. And the system will have a set of rewards and punishments, for example, bonuses, additional funds, more technical assistance, school closings, and job termination, in response to the principals' performance. As for the details of this reorganization, the mayor and chancellor see it as having the following main components.

1. More Power and Accountability for Principals

Principals will have more power and control over what goes on in their schools. This includes staffing, managing the budget, the curriculum, and pedagogy. It also covers management support functions, for example, supplies and building renovations. Principals, in that sense, will be liberated from past bureaucratic controls imposed by headquarters, the regional offices, and operations centers. The entire middle-management regional structure will be eliminated, with the exception of four of the ten that will themselves be restructured to provide assistance for principals who chose that option. Headquarters, meanwhile, will move toward becoming a "service" rather than "control" agency, providing technical assistance to principals in their decisions on how to organize, and only impose standards required by the state on such matters as staff licensing, testing, and curriculum.

Just as in the private sector, where decentralization is accompanied by the use of performance measurements to evaluate newly autonomous lower level units (e.g., product divisions), headquarters will monitor the schools through testing and other, more qualitative means to evaluate the principals. Thus, more power for principals will be accompanied by more accountability for their performance. Those who get high ratings may then receive additional funding, while those with low ones may be restructured, lose their jobs, or even have their schools closed (see Robinson 2007). Initially, many principals are not going to have the skills to exercise these new responsibilities on their own. As a result, they will have a choice of several support systems to assist them in that regard. They may join a network of other principals, select one from among the four organizations representing restructured former regions, or work outside the school system with a private nonprofit group,

for example, a university or an agency. In each instance, the support organization will provide professional development and curriculum help.

2. Reorganizing the Regions

Now that headquarters no longer plays a controlling role, the regions' primary raison d'être no longer existed, and they were eliminated as of September 2007, when the new structure was put in place. Money previously used to staff and manage the regional bureaucracies was then to be used for schools instead, fulfilling the original purpose of mayoral control that the mayor enunciated in January 2003.

3. Tightening Tenure

Still another part of the reorganization would be the raising of standards for granting tenure to teachers. In the past, Klein noted, 99% of teachers who sought tenure got it, suggesting that it has become an entitlement, rather than an honor for the most qualified. Since the teachers union was not consulted on this proposed reform, it is understandably resistant. Teachers union president Weingarten stated that tampering with tenure would not improve teacher quality. Instead, she said:

> Let's work on the things good teachers tell me they need, such as lowering class size, making safety important and giving educators the latitude to tailor instruction to the needs of their students (Robinson 2007).

4. A New Funding Formula

The new structure would also provide a new way of allocating funds to schools. Klein's equity agenda, in particular, would be represented in a funding system whereby money would follow the students. Each school would receive roughly the same initial amount per student, but there would be additional funds for:

> anyone who is poor, does not speak English, is in special education or performs at a low academic level. Funds might be added for gifted and talented kids as well.

It remains to be seen how this restructuring gets specified and impacts on student learning. Many issues will only arise and be addressed in the implementation stage. Given the fact that the New York City school system is very large, diverse, and highly politicized, managing that implementation will require much skill. Already, key participants have expressed reservations. The teachers and principals unions are angry that they had not been consulted, particularly since the reorganization affects their members so directly. Meryl Tisch, a member of the

New York State Board of Regents and supporter of the mayor and chancellor, expressed concern that the New York City school system faced still one more reorganization. As reported:

> The more they continue to jimmy around with stability and order…when academic achievement has not been soaring, the more difficult it is for people to accept ("In a Sweeping New Vision for Schools, Big Risks for the Mayor," *The New York Times*, January 18, 2007).

Others complained that the reorganization did not deal with what they regarded as critical resources to improve the schools, e.g., smaller class size, more funds and staff, and better physical facilities for the schools, all of which they saw as much more important to improved learning than one more restructuring was. Norman Fruchter, director of the Community Involvement Program at the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, stated that he did not think the changes would affect the beleaguered middle schools.

> Autonomy is not a virtue in and of itself. If you're living in an abandoned building, you have lots of autonomy. What you need isn't autonomy but help. Civic groups concerned about lowering class size expressed similar complaints (Robinson 2007).

Conclusion

Mayoral control has spawned numerous proposals to transform the schools, changing literally every aspect of the system in a short span of 5 years. Few, if any, critics doubt the mayor and chancellor's commitment to the task and their deep concern for providing more educational opportunities to the poor, the non-English-speaking, and those with disabilities. They are dedicated to reducing the performance gap while holding on as much as possible to the middle class by providing resources to gifted and talented programs as well.

A central theme of the last two chapters has been that they have pursued these progressive goals through what they and many other participants see as a corporate, business management model. Moreover, they have a style of implementation that does so in a short time frame. It is to the many implementation issues that the model and the time frame have raised that we now turn.

Chapter 6
Implementation

In reviewing the New York City experience with mayoral control, one of the most problematic issues has been implementation. Academics interested in managing change have written widely on the subject (see, for example, Pfeffer 1992; Stone et al. 2001; Nye 2004). Their focus, as will be mine here and in the concluding chapter, is how the style of implementation affects leaders' capacity to put together coalitions needed to sustain the reforms introduced.

Four Implementation Options

I assess Bloomberg and Klein's leadership in the context of four pairs of implementation choices:

1. Systemic vs. incremental
2. Phased-in rapidly vs. gradually
3. Closed vs. open decision-making
4. Top-down vs. participatory

Making choices on these dimensions involves trade-offs. Maintaining some balance may be the most effective way to get needed change, but there are few precise guidelines for how to proceed. Furthermore, there are compelling arguments in support of each polarized alternative.

Systemic vs. Incremental

The choice here is between an approach that involves changing the entire organization, as opposed to one that manages the change process piece by piece. Mayoral control of the New York City schools has emphasized the former. The mayor and chancellor's rationale would seem to be that since they regard the school system as broken, they should try to change it in its entirety, e.g., governance, organization design, curriculum, and grade organization. The mayor's constraint of term limits likely reinforced that choice.

From this perspective, an incremental approach would likely fail, because those components of the larger organization not initially changed might well dilute or negate the changes. For example, one cannot alter the curriculum and pedagogy without addressing the culture of teachers and principals who implement the changes. The latter often requires mentoring, training of present staff, recruiting others, and introducing new incentives.

Though it may be desirable to change the entire system, it is not possible to do so all at once, particularly in an institution as large, embedded, and politicized as the New York City public schools. Also, pursuing such a transformational strategy begs the question of how possible "blowups," usually explained away as inevitable "bumps in the road" or "transition problems," may increase resistance to change from groups already inclined in that direction, and raise concern among others who are likely to ask – what is going to happen next?

Phased-in Rapidly vs. Gradually

This choice is a further specification of the first. The argument supporting rapid change is that it minimizes the likelihood that opponents will succeed in blocking or weakening it. They do not have the time to rally their forces into an effective opposition.

A typical component of the gradual approach is the demonstration project strategy discussed in Chap. 1 that pretests proposed changes on a small scale before systemwide implementation. A rationale for this approach is that it will more likely result in sustained transformational change than will that of "full speed ahead," because the former permits an early analysis of which projects do and do not work, and why, with further upscaling based on that information. In the long run, so the argument continues, transformational change will more likely result from this approach than if one takes on the entire organization all at once. Greiner (1967) concludes from his study of organizational change initiatives that such an approach is much more likely to lead to successes than one of rapid, systemwide change.

Another argument for the phased approach relates to the importance of momentum. It allows the change manager to select as targets those parts of the organization most receptive to innovation and build from there. The more rapid approach will produce a mix of successes and failures and, accordingly, pose more of a problem.

Closed vs. Open Decision-Making

This point expands on the previous one. If senior management makes major decisions through a small closed group, the process has limited transparency. If they make decisions taking into account input from stakeholders, the process is, by definition, more open. Again, the arguments for each choice are the same as for implementation being top-down or more participatory.

Top-Down vs. Participatory

Thus, if one chooses rapid change, that option precludes seeking input from key stakeholders, in this case teachers, principals, their unions, parents, and elected officials. Working with all these constituents takes time and calls for negotiation that can be lengthy. Transformational leaders such as the mayor and chancellor may well reason that since the crisis the school system faces demands action now, this is their first priority.

Those supporting a more participative approach often assert that it will improve the quality of decisions, since groups most interested in having input are closest to the schools and classrooms where the changes will have effect. Their "on the ground" experience is likely to be valuable for understanding what changes are needed to facilitate student learning. In addition, by being given the opportunity to have input, these stakeholders will develop more of a sense of ownership in the final decisions than if a small group made them unilaterally, then announced their implementation.

By contrast, those opposing such a participative approach may argue that principals and teachers, for example, can be part of the problem. Although they have experience, they also may have limited expertise related to restructuring. Some may be so entrenched in old ways of doing things that they rule out possible gains to be made by change. With these four points as background I offer an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the mayor and chancellor as change managers.

Strengths of Bloomberg and Klein

First, the mayor has had the foresight and courage to become involved in the public schools in ways that none of his predecessors has. Second, there is no question that mayoral control has led to many positive developments in the New York City schools. Given the school system's acknowledged weaknesses and the enormity of the task of changing it, particularly in view of the failure of past reforms to make significant improvements, it was a big risk for him to intervene. He deserves credit for taking on this challenge, bringing to bear many resources, including his willingness to be judged as a mayor by how well he transformed the schools.

In the process, he and the chancellor changed the conversation in the city regarding public education. Under decentralization, too much of that conversation dealt with patronage and the power to control it, rather than with such substantive issues as curriculum, pedagogy, and teacher and principal training. With mayoral control, there was a renewed sense of hope for a system that had successfully resisted change in the past.

Foremost among the benefits of mayoral control is the fact that the mayor and chancellor speak with one voice, thus providing not only more unified accountability but also more continuity of leadership. Recall that the average length of tenure of a chancellor before mayoral control was less than 3 years and that there had been

12 chancellors between 1970 and 2002 (see Appendix A for a list of superintendents and/or chancellors and their years of service). At the time of this writing, Klein had served for more than 6 years, with all indication that he wishes to continue.

Consider also the fractious relationships between Bloomberg's predecessor, Mayor Giuliani, and his school chancellors. That is decidedly not the case with Bloomberg and Klein. Since Klein reports to Bloomberg, and since school headquarters is immediately adjacent to City Hall, with Deputy Mayor Walcott acting as a liaison between them, the three have worked as a unified policy team.

The chancellor is in many respects part of the mayor's cabinet, appearing at press conferences on a variety of policy issues. The public schools thus have become a more vital component of city government than ever before. At the same time, the mayor's style of delegating to commissioners and not trying to micromanage them has given the chancellor operating flexibility as well. The governance arrangements thus integrate the management of the schools into the mayor's office, while still giving considerable independence to the chancellor.

Other benefits of mayoral control have been the proliferation of new small schools, charter schools, and newly empowered schools throughout the system; initiatives to help improve the recruitment, training, and performance of teachers and principals; and systems of performance measurement and accountability that would enable senior management as well as principals, teachers, and parents to have needed information on the performance of schools. The new system to grade all schools from A to F is an example, notwithstanding that some parents and educators have questioned its assumptions and validity (see, for example, Bloomfield 2007; "Parents, Council Still Angry About School Grades" *City Limits*, December 18, 2007; Fruchter 2007).

The mayor and chancellor's success in securing much new private-sector funding to support the schools is another positive outcome. Foundations and big corporations have contributed on a scale far surpassing that of the past; so too have individuals. There is now a climate of promise about the schools that the mayor and chancellor have created. In November 2007, the Quinnipiac University Poll of 1,000 New Yorkers reported that 54% approved of his efforts to improve the schools, a figure much higher than his approval rate of 35% in May 2003.

One should also note that the mayor and chancellor have received national recognition for their efforts to improve the schools. In September 2007, for example, the Broad Foundation gave its annual award for the most "successful" urban school district in the United States to New York City. The foundation cited the following fact:

> Between 2003 and 2006, New York City showed greater improvement in reading and math at all grade levels than other districts in New York State serving students of similar income levels (Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation, September 18, 2007).

In addition, three subgroups – low income, African American, and Hispanic students – showed greater improvement than their peers in similar New York State districts; and New York City narrowed achievement gaps between African American and Hispanic students and the state average for white students in elementary and high school reading and math. Eli Broad concluded:

The strong leadership by the mayor, the chancellor, and a progressive teachers union has allowed a school system the size of New York City to dramatically improve student achievement in a relatively short period of time. Other cities can look to New York as a model of successful urban school district reform (*Philanthropy News Digest*, September 20, 2007).

Weaknesses

Despite these kudos and the successes to which they refer, I would argue that the management style of the mayor and chancellor has prevented them from doing even better than they have, particularly as related to potential long-term sustainability. I say this as an observer/analyst who likes many of the substantive changes introduced, admires the mayor and chancellor for committing themselves to the effort, and wants mayoral control in some form to continue.

At the same time, I appreciate critics who have raised many legitimate questions about how the mayor and chancellor have managed the changes. These concerns do not just reflect the views of those who see their power eroding, nor of self-appointed pundits and activists. Many are observers and/or participants whose concerns should be taken seriously, as the city and state move to decisions about future governance.

The criticisms deal both with matters of substance and management style, particularly the latter. All relate to what might be called the dysfunctional consequences, intended and unintended, of the mayor and chancellor making some of the management style choices they have. Whether the choices are endemic to mayoral control or are unique to this mayor and chancellor are questions that the city and state will address in 2008 and 2009, as New York's mayoral control law gets reviewed ("Mayor's Control of Schools Could be Curtailed," *The New York Sun*, January 28, 2008).

Alienation and Distrust of Key Stakeholders

Some staff at Tweed and supporters of its many reforms refer in frustration to what they call the "noise" of New York City's educational politics, referring to the negativism of pundits, narrowly based interest groups, and the media in their habitually cynical reactions to promising reforms under mayoral control. There can be no question but that New York is a "noisy" city. As the media capital of the world and as a city that has spawned more than its share of intellectuals whose stock in trade is critiquing the thought styles of others, it is one of the most difficult places in which to undertake such a transformation of public education. Eli Broad's comment on bestowing his foundation's award that "if it can be done in New York City, it can be done anywhere," may refer in part to New York's at times unforgiving political and intellectual climate.

Nevertheless, some of the critiques are well taken. One is that the management style the mayor and chancellor followed has alienated key stakeholders and not just once or twice. This might be seen as inevitable in pursuing such a transformational change. Or it may suggest an approach that serves to make a difficult challenge more so. At any rate, throughout the first 5 years of mayoral control, some teachers and principals, union leaders, city and state legislators, parents, and various civic and community organizations felt that they had an expertise that would contribute to making reforms more effective, but that they were not listened to nor given the respect they deserved. To illustrate: 61% of respondents to the Quinnipiac poll of July 26, 2007, stated that parents should have more say in how the schools are run. It is not clear what "have more say" means in this context, but the responses suggest that parents are left out. The same poll indicates that 45% felt that the school bureaucracy has not effectively addressed teacher concerns, compared with 33% who felt it has.

Teachers and principals regard themselves as "professionals" who should have been consulted more on pedagogy and curriculum, their areas of expertise, than were management consultants at Tweed. Also, teachers resented having headquarters and regional instructional superintendents micromanage them as intensely as was the case in the first years of mayoral control. They wanted more flexibility to deal effectively with learning differences among students, rather than being required to conform to a standardized pedagogy and curriculum. As one teacher put it, "Teaching is not like producing widgets." Many of her colleagues whom I interviewed echoed her comments.

Some principals had the same concern. They felt left out of decision-making on matters that directly impacted their schools. This was particularly disconcerting when they were also told that they were the leaders of the school and were held accountable for student performance. From their perspective, how could they be leaders, while at the same time meeting requirements that called for just the opposite. As one program administrator noted:

> Tweed has established that the principal is the CEO of the school. But with a mandated curriculum, and detailed pacing requirements for the classroom, this leaves the principal little leeway. It's like being on a stopwatch. How can the principal be the education leader under such mandates?

Another administrator added:

> The principal is definitely the worst job in the system. The number of e-mails and communications coming from the region and from Tweed is so great the principal can never keep up. We are all saturated, and consequently morale is bad and school leadership suffers.

The result during the early years of mayoral control was a spiral of distrust. Teachers and principals who felt left out of decisions regarding the reorganization and the new curriculum and then felt the weight of bureaucratic controls from regional supervisors monitoring them and enforcing the new curriculum, became demoralized and hostile to the new regime. A climate of fear existed at many schools. Over time, teachers came to not question curriculum and pedagogy dictates from above, even when they knew from their classroom experiences that some mandates were hurting their capacity to teach. A teacher explained:

I used to go to meetings and I would talk back and raise questions there. People knew I was right, but they looked at me like I was crazy. I was advised not to say "no," but just to say "yes" to everything they told us to do. Information only goes down in that kind of organization, not up. And with no information flowing up, except when we face some disaster, the regional office and Tweed don't hear from us about how the math and reading instruction are really going.

Local instructional supervisors also realized that their close monitoring to ensure teachers' compliance with the new instructional methods was not working well. Said one:

Talk about micro management. I was one of those micro managers. My job was to look at the bulletin boards and the arrangement of chairs. I was the enforcer. If the curriculum and pedagogy coach is not around, there is no conversation at all.

On the positive side, he added:

The good things are a modern curriculum, much better than anything we had before. The texts are better. We do get professional development, but the management style is terrible and demoralizing.

True, in part the negative impacts were a result of the speed of implementation of curriculum changes and of headquarters trying to make them "teacher proof," but the cost was high.

One former teacher and program administrator who had taken advanced degrees in administration and supervision gave his view of the process:

The management theory the mayor and Klein use is all wrong according to everything I learned. It allows for no upward communication of information, nor for the importance of buy-in to get change. And for these people from business to have the wrong management theory is particularly ironic. They are using an old management theory. Maybe it worked at Bloomberg, but not here. On paper, the organizational changes and the new curriculum are good. The problem is in the implementation. Tweed is more and more heavy handed. They badger the principals and assistant principals who then badger teachers and increase the stress levels throughout the system. They don't model a management style for staff in the schools. Everybody was so stressed out. They have the wrong management style.

This sense of alienation was exacerbated by the difficulty parents, public officials, and the media faced in trying to obtain information from headquarters about its policies. A citywide parent association leader said:

The Board of Education had always been a black hole from which no light emitted. It was always hard to get information, and now we have a different problem. Now we have a PR machine that is ratcheted up and we cannot get information that is separate from the spin machine, if we get any at all.

A reporter at a daily newspaper noted:

We have been in many situations where we want to talk to a principal or whoever in a school and we are told that they are not allowed to speak to the press and that they have to check with their legal department.

One view from Tweed is that however valid these complaints may have been about the early years, the September 2007 systemwide school empowerment strategy eliminates perceived excesses of the former style and that the bureaucratic problems reported above are considerably diminished, if they ever existed on the scale implied.

Even with the empowerment schools having more independence, however, some teachers, principals, and program administrators at the school level say the same top-down style prevails. One administrator reported:

> They are liberating schools from the regions and the local instructional superintendents, and that's good. Now principals can do more things without fear. But notice that it is still being done in a top-down way. Tweed never consulted with the educators. And it's being done so fast. These liberated schools don't know how to proceed. The people at Tweed do all their policy thinking in a vacuum. The people who have run small schools in the past have no voice at the policy table. They know a lot, and Tweed still does not acknowledge that.

As of early 2007, the mayor and chancellor have over 2 years before the state decides about the future of mayoral control. The move toward empowered schools and the continued growth of small and charter schools may well build the kind of partnerships that the schools require and that these voices are demanding. If so, mayoral control should develop more legitimacy in New York City and hopefully lead to a further diminution of the performance gap within the city. As noted earlier, the fact that the mayor's favorability rating increased from 35 to 54% from early 2003 to late 2007 suggests that such may well be the case.

Fast Implementation, Poor Planning, BlowUps

A second recurrent issue in implementation has been the frequency of "blowups" that resulted from the scale and speed of introducing such reforms as small schools and an entirely revamped special education program. Blowups also resulted from senior managers not taking into account local conditions, for example, of school crowding and safety. Because most small schools are directed to high school students, these schools are a good case in point. In early 2007, there were roughly 190 small schools throughout the system, affecting about 15,000 students. The benefits of small schools are that they allow for a more intimate, family-like learning environment and a direction to the curriculum to enhance learning and the opportunity for students to receive personal attention. Large, comprehensive high schools have not provided these benefits.

The issue may be not so much the small schools concept and the hoped for benefits, but rather the mode of implementation. The 2005–2006 annual report of the Citywide Council on High Schools documents the implementation problems of the chancellor's small schools initiative. As the reader will see, they mirror implementation problems of other reforms.

One such problem is the negative impacts on traditional high schools that resulted from the "frenzied pace" and the "overly ambitious and hasty implementation of this massive initiative" (Bloomfield 2006: 6). A second is the Department of Education's unresponsiveness to parents' expressions of concern about these impacts. The report concluded:

> It took nine months for the Department to produce a response [to the Council's 2004–05 annual report] that, in tone and substance, was condescending and dismissive. The DOE response stated a desire for dialogue but neither offered a means for such a dialogue nor

indicated how the CCHS (Citywide Council on High Schools) could initiate such a process…. Open the doors to those who want to be part of the solution (p. 10).

Most important, this kind of nonresponse serves to diminish parent support for one of the most positive initiatives of the mayor and chancellor. They have done more to make available the potential of small schools than any other mayor or chancellor, in New York City or elsewhere, but have then proceeded to limit that potential by their poor planning, rapid fire implementation, and nonresponse to parental concerns. As one outraged parent activist bemoaned:

> The people at Tweed and City Hall see dissenters as the equivalent of being unpatriotic. How dare you question our expertise or our motives is what they seem to be telling us.

One reported reaction of top school officials to these complaints was that they were made in a hostile, uncivil tone that did not merit opening a dialogue on their merits. I respectfully suggest that these parents were angry for good reason and that school officials had an obligation to treat them with respect, rather than respond in defensive and hostile ways.

Another negative impact has been overcrowding in traditional high schools. As Bloomfield has pointed out, small high schools are often established through the restructuring of large, failing ones. After the restructuring, there are usually some students left over, who are not enrolled in the new small schools and are then transferred to other already overcrowded schools, resulting in a soaring enrollment there (Bloomfield 2005).

The overcrowding produced still other negative spillovers, including increases in student suspensions and violence. Many factors, in addition to new small high schools, contribute to overcrowding and violence, but that is likely one cause.

Further, there is increasing competition for scarce resources between the traditional and new small schools. Establishing these new schools is an excellent way to encourage reform, but there remain equity problems. The annual report concludes:

> It's almost inevitable that the rapid emergence of new schools would increase competition across the system for resources – good students, professional talents, and building space – and risk redistributing rather than adding to the system-wide capacity (Bloomfield 2006: 9).

Earlier Bloomfield had written:

> Dozens of effective administrators are being lured away from jobs [in big high schools] serving thousands for jobs serving hundreds, even as far too many schools of all types find themselves with inexperienced administrators at the helm (Bloomfield 2005: 8).

What solutions are possible in such a situation? Short of securing more funding to equalize the resources of traditional and new schools, finding new facilities for new small schools might mitigate some of the problems, as difficult as that might be. Bloomfield's recommendation of "scaling-up" for the new schools, rather than "scaling-down" for the old ones also makes sense (ibid., 9).

Again, the overcrowding and other problems associated with the rapid establishment of many new small schools may be dismissed as transitional issues. But better planning through a prior analysis of possible negative impacts and then trying to minimize those impacts in setting up the new schools makes sense. The blowups

and stress associated with the strategy of rapid change in multiple sites and with limited resources may reflect the fact that systemic, transformational change, implemented in that fashion, has serious limits.

Another example is the vast, citywide change in the special education program. It was introduced on top of the redesign of the entire regional system that had its own start-up problems. This led to more uncertainty and stress among staff "on the ground" than was desirable. As a principal was quoted in the Hehir Report on Special Education that the chancellor commissioned: "It's just too much too fast with not enough support" (Hehir et al. 2005: 35).

Again, this is not to argue against systemwide change, but only to suggest that it be well managed. Otherwise, students not being well served, staff burnout, reputational problems with otherwise thoughtful reforms, and the Department of Education's having its credibility come further into question are at risk of sharply negating the benefits that might otherwise accrue. One underlying theme in these cases is the fact that many of the systemwide reforms, implemented rapidly, and with the best intentions, were often managed by people unfamiliar with the workings of the schools and the city. A combination of encouraging the exit of experienced educators, along with having recruited management consultants and lawyers whose lack of local knowledge undermined the usefulness of their conceptual and technical know-how, created problems. A former top-level administrator explained:

> There was a trade off here. I have to believe that Bloomberg and Klein felt they had limited time and that they had to do things fast. So there was little planning. And they didn't talk enough with the people who were here before. Whenever we raised serious questions, often about operations and implementation, they felt we were naysayers. I agree with Klein that small schools have to be the wave of the future. But why didn't he just ask us how to do it? We figured out in 1987 that if we break up a big school into 4 small schools, we would use more space and we would get a lot of over-the-counter kids at the last minute saying that they wanted to get into this school and that they had a right to that choice. So they [mayor and chancellor] alienated many parents with the small high school admissions. We could have helped them forestall many problems by telling them that you must think about this or that and plan in advance for it.

Violence has always been a problem in New York City high schools, as in urban high schools throughout the nation, but in late 2003, the problem seemed to increase in NYC, with individuals and groups roaming the halls and other public places inside and outside the school, bullying others and disrupting the educational process. I use the term "seemed to increase" because school-by-school data were not available. There may well not have been that big an increase, if any, but enough dramatic cases were reported at "problem schools" for this to become a public issue.

The mayor was quick to respond, acknowledging that "we've screwed up," and working closely with the chancellor and the police commissioner, they designated 12 troubled schools to face a zero-tolerance crackdown. They stationed police as extra security guards inside and around the schools ("Mike Means It," *New York Post*, January 7, 2004). By the end of January 2004, the number of crimes at those 12 schools dropped markedly, and the mayor was getting positive reviews for the way he handled the problem ("School Blitz Gets 'A'," *New York Post*, January 29, 2004). He later did the same in other schools marked by violence, acknowledging as he had in the past that without safety in the schools there could be no education.

Any phenomenon such as school violence has multiple causes, but one related to how the mayor and chancellor were pursuing their reforms. The new organization design, creating the ten regions, had completely restructured the high school division so that it no longer functioned as an independent entity, organized centrally and administered through borough offices. In the interests of efficiency and to eliminate as much of the old bureaucracy as possible, many senior administrators were retired or transferred, and the smaller numbers of new people taking their place had little, and sorely needed, local knowledge of how students committing violent acts had been handled before.

While it is always easy to point out managerial oversights after the fact, this outbreak related to the failure of the Department of Education to retain some of the experienced staff and structures that had helped contain violence in the past. Marc Epstein, dean of students at Jamaica High School, gave his diagnosis:

> Bloomberg's reorganization eliminated the five offices for high school suspension hearings that handled the most serious offenses …. Untrained staffers unfamiliar with the complex regulations governing hearings, due process, and suspensions were put in charge in the new regional offices (*"School Safety: Real Answers," New York Post*, December 23, 2003).

These changes, along with the overcrowding from restructured high schools, likely contributed to the increase in violence.

Epstein argued that a failure to take into consideration the possible negative impacts of massive organizational and staffing changes contributed both to safety problems in the high schools and to a diminished credibility of the mayor and chancellor. He proposed several solutions: the removal from schools of students committing violent crimes and sending them to other settings; removal of older students still designated as freshmen to other settings; special transition schools for juvenile felons and changes in federal disability laws that allow disruptive students to return almost instantly to their school.

A final example was the initial reaction to the reorganization plan of 2007 to decentralize the schools. The reform made a lot of sense in terms of giving more flexibility to the schools and giving them the potential to be more responsive to parent and community concerns. One might have thought that, given the past complaints about over centralization and intrusive controls from Tweed and the regional offices, groups feeling left out would have greeted this reform with enthusiasm. Instead, many focused on the negative, emphasizing that the upset and turmoil they felt were likely with the change. They were reacting in part with a mindset developed from their prior experiences with reforms under mayoral control.

Managing the Culture Conflict between Consultants and Educators

The organizational transformation under the New York City version of mayoral control has involved the imposition of a new private sector, corporate-oriented culture on a public sector, educational organization. The leaders representing that new culture, namely, the mayor, the chancellor, business leaders, management consultants,

sometimes have a missionary sense about their way of managing and about management. Veteran New York City educators, on their side, sometimes feel that they have most of the answers.

The recurrence of blowups, of participants' distrust, and of Tweed's defensiveness in the face of these problems suggests that much remains to be done in New York to improve on the management of this relationship. Tushman and O'Reilly (1997) state that effective change managers build in participation, develop trust among key participants, and minimize "us" vs. "them" attitudes (Chap. 8, esp. 200–211). Those prescriptions did not exist for implementing many of the positive reform proposals that the mayor and chancellor put forth.

Underlying these negative dynamics was the perception among stakeholders that the mayor, the chancellor, and many of their senior managers and consultants had a sense of hubris about their approach to change. This was underscored by their dismissal of the importance of local knowledge and experience. In some instances, they defined veteran educators and administrators as a big part of the problem. A former principal and community school district superintendent characterized the early years of mayoral control as "an elite led revolution without the natives" in which "many people and groups felt left out, not just the teachers union."

Implicit in many of the restructurings was a polarity between the mayor and chancellor's corporate management paradigm and one that the educators and other stakeholders felt was more appropriate. Consider the following as aspects of that polarity.

1. Unity of Command vs. Checks and Balances. For the mayor and chancellor, their most significant governance reform was to replace the fragmented authority structure of the old system with one in which they made the main decisions and were held accountable. This made sense from a management perspective, but it led to a concentration of power that many participants found "undemocratic" and that limited the mayor and chancellor's access to "on the ground" information that would have made their reforms better managed.

Even before mayoral control was enacted, citizens and public officials argued in City Council hearings that there should be checks and balances to prevent the mayor from having too much power and becoming too insulated (*City Council Hearings*, March 1, 2002). Many testifying found unacceptable the idea that the mayor's power would be checked by his being held accountable only through an election every 4 years. While borough presidents and parent activists, fearful that their power would be eroded, were those most opposed to unchecked mayoral power, even supporters of management consolidation in the mayor's office argued that there should be checks and balances and a voice for parents built into any mayoral-control system. The Executive Director of the New York City Partnership argued for the latter (*City Council Hearings*, February 26, 2002).

In an interview, an academic who had observed the school system for many years highlighted the issues:

> A key is to know where the public and private sectors differ. It is critical to bring good management, but this is a public agency and it must be run as such. Does the top get so heady it overlooks the bottom? Bloomberg and Klein are treating this like a private firm.

> That approach may be necessary over the short term but may not work in the long run. They
> want to get as far as possible before they open it up. But as a public agency it must be run
> as such. There is a strong need for public discussion.

The many groups who have felt shut out have made the point that in a public agency they should have more access. This becomes an issue of establishing a balance between restructuring the system to facilitate faster decisions, while still having some constraints on the mayor and chancellor beyond an election every 4 years.

2. Contracts Unilaterally Entered into vs. Public Review and Open Bidding. Throughout the years of mayoral control, critics have expressed concern about the lack of public review and open bidding of contracts, particularly of those involving big expenditures. In the past, as required by law, the Board of Education always held hearings for public review of large contracts. Now that there is only a policy panel with no authority, the need for checks and balances as a safeguard against excesses of a centralized authority has become more salient. The mayor and chancellor have awarded big contracts with literally no public review, and some have turned out poorly. See, for example, the furor about the $15.8 million contract for restructuring bus routes that led to operational problems in many areas of the city ("Consultants Draw Fire in Bus Woes," *The New York Times*, February 3, 2007).

One argument in defense of the Department of Education's limited public review of big contracts is that effective transformation requires fast action and that reviews invariably delay that. This was an argument Robert Moses made in defense of his many public works projects, and he was able to use his concentrated power to build a vast empire of parks, expressways, bridges, and urban renewal projects. His accomplishments were extraordinary, but he achieved many of them while disregarding the rights of the communities being affected. He operated in secrecy, claiming to be above politics, and expressed the view that his broad vision far transcended the parochial views of local not-in-my-backyard groups opposing his projects. In the late 1960s, after more than 40 years of Moses' projects, an increasingly informed public began to veto them, and that, coupled with his own sense of hubris and invincibility, eventually led to his decline (Caro 1974: esp. 1–25).

One survey research finding is relevant to this discussion. In the Quinnipiac poll of March 15, 2007, from its randomly selected sample of 1,000 New Yorkers, 58% were in favor of an independent Board of Education to control the public schools, compared with 31% for the mayor.

3. Management vs. Community Criteria in Regionalization. The consolidation of the New York City school system from 32 community school districts into ten regional ones was made largely by consultants using such management principles as span of control, rather than to set up regional boundaries based on local, community-based criteria. In that sense, the consultants used "technical" rather than "social" criteria. Had they used the latter, they might have combined former districts that were more natural neighborhoods and communities, thereby making the regional offices more open to parents and civic organizations.

Actually, the chancellor and his consultants did have one criterion that was not one of "technical" managerial efficiency, namely, that each region have as much class, racial, and ethnic diversity as possible and contain a wide range of schools,

from high-to low-performing. They seem to have done that and moved away in that sense from a narrowly technocratic, managerial standard.

4. Focus Groups/Town Hall Meetings for Consumers vs. Organized Listening and Responsiveness. One point on which communication between the Department of Education and its public broke down was on Tweed's use of focus groups and town hall meetings to communicate with the public on reforms already decided on. Top school officials insisted that they had spent much time conducting focus groups with representatives of parent, civic, and community organizations, and in fact they had. Many people attending those meetings, however, had a different interpretation of what went on there, characterizing them as one more manifestation of the non-participative approach that excluded them from decision-making.

A top Tweed official took exception to that statement and cited the following example:

> Though it isn't known as much as it should be, we consulted with more than 50,000 parents before putting in the parent coordinator program. We had focus group meetings and town hall meetings where there were 1,500–2,000 parents at a time. At those meetings and in the focus groups, we had facilitators and translators and we ended up doing more than 80 focus groups. That had never been done in any urban school system. And much of our parent coordinator program was based on the parent recommendations from all those meetings. Those recommendations drove the policy decisions we made.

Such a use of focus groups and town hall meetings represents a positive case of soliciting parent input. If parents and community leaders express much satisfaction with the parent coordinator program in the future, some of that may be attributable to the example presented above.

Still, a leader of a large civic organization bemoaned:

> Citizens have now become consumers in the business model of the mayor. And Klein has consumer service centers. This applies a business model that says, "Look, we have a good product already, and we just have to sell it better to the consumers." This is a profoundly undemocratic paradigm that says, "We don't have to listen."

Another director of a citywide group working for educational reform explained:

> Parents and community organizations now have no voice in the system at all. Bloomberg and Klein disagree with me and point to the parent coordinators, but there is no opportunity for citizen voice there. They would hold meetings and focus groups, but it was all one-way communication. They talked at people and this was not giving citizens a voice. Giving citizens a voice says the mayor and Klein have faith in the public. They had an attitude that we don't need any help. There were early meetings where they just talked at us. It was clear that they didn't want my views. They invited in people like me to agree with them and then spread the word. They had it all worked out beforehand, so I walked out. It was a waste of my time. They were from McKinsey, the Broad Foundation, and some other big management consultants. The people from Tweed were Klein, Lam, and Cahill.

A potentially effective strategy for the future is what one citywide parent leader referred to as "institutionalized listening." This would involve inviting parent and community groups who have school-level experience with how programs are working to solicit their input into the design and implementation of new programs and restructurings. This need not give veto power to such groups nor encourage

programs that represent the lowest common denominator. It could enrich programs and might well generate more buy-in and trust. If such action were taken, it would reverse the past style of the mayor and chancellor. This person explained:

> Parents charge that when Tweed holds forums for parents, they are all dog and pony shows. The tone is that policy is already made or in the works and that Tweed cannot cede policy to community groups. The parent coordinator comes the closest but that person, after all, does work for the principal and serves only as a funnel for parent complaints. The parent coordinator helps the principal compartmentalize parent management. You meet with the parents, and I will be the educator is how it works. We need more institutional listening opportunities. There is a tone-deafness from the top that then becomes a political strategy. The mayor has angered legislators, parents, teachers, and principals.

Conclusion

Mayoral control over the New York City public schools has largely been a strategy of bringing to bear additional resources, generating many good reform initiatives – in curriculum, staffing, governance, organization design, and management systems – but doing so by imposing a corporate paradigm through an exclusionary, top-down management style that too often undermined the good programs the chancellor had established. The style alienated many key groups, brought about unnecessary blowups in its implementation, and polarized the city's educational politics into two loosely joined coalitions: a corporate management-oriented group of the mayor, the chancellor, business leaders, management consultants, lawyers, state education department officials, and selected foundation and university-affiliated reformers; and a more grass-roots-oriented assemblage of parents, community leaders, teachers, principals, their unions, education reporters in the city's main newspapers, the City Council, the Office of the Public Advocate in New York City government, and state legislators. Both coalitions are loosely joined, but on some occasions members of each come together to jointly press their interests. One example of how that works was a grass roots coalition of parent groups joining with teachers to lobby in Albany for more state funds for the schools, while at the same time refusing to join with the mayor and chancellor whom they felt disregarded them. Another example was parent leaders writing a collective letter to the new mayor of Los Angeles who was pressing for mayoral control of the schools there, urging him not to use New York City as a model, because it had such a limited parent and community voice.

A big future challenge is to establish a relationship of trust between City Hall and the educators (teachers and principals) and between it and parent and community groups. It is unlikely that mayoral control can improve the schools significantly in the long run without such a relationship. Professor Kenneth J. Meier, a political scientist, concludes:

> The implementation literature documents a large number of institutional, organizational, and human barriers to successful policy implementation. School systems vest a great deal of autonomy in individual teachers; without their enthusiastic cooperation, successful implementation of any reform proposed by the mayor is highly problematic. In essence, the

mayor needs to build up a trust relationship with teachers and school district employees, creating in the process social capital that can be invested in higher performance (Meier 2004: 229).

It is obviously a judgment call as to how much social capital the mayor and chancellor have built up. A July 26, 2007, Quinnipiac poll reports that 51% call mayoral control under Bloomberg's a success, but 61% would like parents to have more say in how schools are run as a basis for the continuation of mayoral control in its existing form.

Professor Clarence Stone, a leading researcher on urban school reform and mayoral control, and his colleagues, who have studied their manifestations in several big cities over the past decade, put it well:

Reform from the top-down has inherent limitations, and the office of mayor is no exception to that rule. If reform is to be far-reaching, it will require a grassroots foundation as well as supporting actions by city hall (Stone et al. 2001: 246).

Stone and his colleagues studied school reform politics in several cities, and I believe that their conclusions, along with my research, suggest ways in which mayoral control may be improved in New York for more sustainability.

Chapter 7
Critical Issues for the Future

We turn now to what can be learned from this single case. To give the mayor author-ity over the schools does not in itself narrow the performance gap between the middle class and the poor. A bigger question is what the mayor does with the authority. Advocates see mayoral control as breaking the cycle of what Henig and Rich (2004: 4) refer to as "the wheel spinning" of past reforms, and regard mayoral control as "a tool not a solution" to the problems of urban school systems (ibid., 249). Although over 100 cities have begun to use this tool, we do not yet know how future mayors will adapt to it (Wong et al. 2007). Some may see the political risks as too great and back off. Others may begin without a clear idea of what kind of redesign is needed or how to implement it. New York City is fortunate that Mayor Bloomberg embarked on mayoral control, with all its risks; and this book argues that other cities can learn from studying the reforms he has initiated and his strategies for implementing them.

Bloomberg and Klein are working to change many components of the system, and Chap. 6 has pointed out the strengths and weaknesses in the implementation thus far. Discussed here are three areas that highlight how mayoral control can become a more effective catalyst for change in the future.

Needed Improvements

Interagency Collaboration

Perhaps the most obvious area for improvement is the increased use of the mayor's office to mobilize the agencies of city government and meld them into a commu-nity-based network, bringing to bear a variety of educational services. Usdan (2006) of the Institute for Educational Leadership wrote:

> Political leaders are recognizing increasingly that efforts to improve students' academic achievements must be buttressed by efforts to improve children's health and the social conditions in which they live. Leadership from mayors will be of critical importance to this still-embryonic collaboration movement among social service sectors (p. 149).

Kirst, professor at Standard University, and Edelstein of the US Conference of Mayors wrote:

> We also hope that mayors will heed public calls to link the city health and social services to schools more efficiently. Proponents of mayoral involvement in education have often justified their position on the grounds that this type of city service-school district integration would be greatly enhanced under mayoral-influenced school systems (Kirst and Edelstein 2006: 62).

Implementation of this service integration idea, much needed in the author's view, is not new. In the late 1960s and 70s, Mayor John Lindsay's Office of Neighborhood Government attempted to do this in New York City for other city services. Unfortunately, his successor, Abraham Beame, turned the office into a patronage center, negating its potential (Barton et al. 1977). Unlike Beame, Mayor Koch had success with it in housing by bringing together other city agencies to collaborate in support of housing programs.

That kind of collaboration with respect to the mayor's using the powers of his office to mobilize agencies to work with the schools in servicing students is vital, especially for those living in poverty. It has not yet happened sufficiently in New York City. One senior manager involved in such efforts reported:

> It was clear to me that the goal of coordination was never achieved. I was close to those decisions and the mayor and chancellor never attempted to make that goal a reality. They could mandate with one stroke of the pen that there be a social worker in the schools in poverty areas. It never happened. Those youth serving and social service agencies are huge bureaucracies and the foster care fiasco in New York City is a huge problem, especially for kids in communities with the poorest schools. The mayor seemed reluctant to take on the foster care bureaucracy.

Although the concept of interagency collaboration had been around for several decades before mayoral control, it has been hard to get it accepted. Historically, the New York City public school system has existed as a state agency, purposely separated from the rest of city government. When political scientist Viteritti (1983) published *Across the River*, he highlighted the negative impacts of that separation. Though the school district is now an agency of the city government, many potential opportunities for that integration of services have not yet been realized. They may be under the new school autonomy structure.

When mayoral control began, not only did the headquarters move from Brooklyn to the renovated Tweed building adjacent to City Hall in Manhattan, but the mayor changed its name to the Department of Education of New York City. Much more needs to be done, however, to integrate the schools into city government. Henig and Rich (2004) highlight its potential:

> Mayoral control is designed to promote comprehensive planning by putting decisions about schools in the hands of a leader in position to steer decisions about child welfare, safety, public health, recreation, arts organizations, job training, and economic development-issue areas that bear heavily on the tasks that schools are expected to perform but which typically are outside the sphere of influence of superintendents and school boards (p. 7).

Under mayoral control, the New York City Department of Education did establish an Office of Youth Development whose mission to coordinate other youth service

agencies with the schools was precisely what Henig and Rich (2004) were recommending. Klein appointed a former community school district superintendent, a state education department official, and well-regarded educator, Lester Young, to head that department. His job was to coordinate all health services, after-school, community-based, alternative high schools, and adult education programs so that students and communities would be better served. And each school had to list its collaborative activities over the past year in its annual report. Unfortunately, Young left after a short period of service frustrated by how little he could accomplish, and those activities were not given high priority. They were passed on at the time to Michelle Cahill, the chancellor's then senior policy counselor, who was already overloaded, and to Jean Desravines, who had been managing parent participation programs. As reported:

> Some critics … questioned whether Ms. Cahill, … could handle the additional responsibilities (*"Chancellor Has No Plans to Replace Top Administrator,"The New York Times*, August 25, 2004).

This is not to say that getting city agencies to collaborate would be easy, given the turf mindedness of each agency and their different procedures and cultures. Nevertheless, if the mayor indicated to his commissioners that such collaboration was a high priority and that they would be evaluated on how much they followed through on it, they would comply. Such integration of services may come into being in the new school autonomy structure.

Schools as Community Institutions

A related improvement would be for the schools to once again become major community sites for after-school and summer programs, for example, in the arts, music, other classroom studies, athletics, and adult education. This concept goes back to the settlement houses, and the old Board of Education that had established adult education and recreation units at headquarters to fund such programs around the city. School headquarters had partnerships with such agencies as the Youth Board for these activities, and there was further support through changes in the custodians' contracts, to provide more free time for the schools to be open. The concept of the school as a community institution was reaffirmed as one of the main recommendations of The Bundy Report (1967), in the buildup to decentralization, to reinforce the idea of schools becoming a more integral part of their neighborhood.

Budget cuts beginning in the early 1970s, however, led to many of these school-community programs becoming skeleton activities by the time of mayoral control. Decentralization had given local groups more power to develop and run such programs, but districts sometimes used what money might be earmarked for them in other ways. One district director dedicated to maintaining school-community programs recalled:

> We had control of the money under decentralization, but I told many of my friends and colleagues that we were better off with the central Board of Education in control, because there was much more money then.

Under a new version of decentralization that mayoral control has now initiated, it is time to renew a commitment to school-community programs, both for their own intrinsic merits of serving the needs of many people in neighborhoods, and as a way of integrating the schools more into their locales and into the workings of other agencies that are part of the education process.

Coalition Building

Further, the collaboration strategy needs extending beyond agencies of city government to include all the main stakeholders inside and outside the schools who are involved in education – educators and their unions, parents, and elected city and state officials. This contrasts with the mayor and chancellor's initial strategy of moving ahead unilaterally on reforms without including these various stakeholders. That approach precluded the forming of such a supportive coalition, making it more difficult for the mayor and chancellor to implement reforms.

Taking historical examples as guides for how to manage change more effectively in the future, in many community-based schools under decentralization, union representatives had worked closely with principals and were not insistent that the latter follow work rules to the letter. In fact, teachers were often quite flexible on such issues as working hours and types of assignments they were willing to accept. One reason for their cooperation was that the principal had previously established a collegial rather than a boss–subordinate relationship with teachers, consulting with them regularly on such matters as curriculum and staffing. In those circumstances, teachers were committed to making the school better.

There were school-based management teams in the 1990s, for example, that gave teachers and parents a role as partners with principals in helping to make schools into collaborative learning communities. Both teachers and parents felt welcomed in being made part of the schools' future.

This is to say, then, that it would be wise to build on positive things that went on before and not to regard the system's entire history as one of failure. As still another example, many high school principals had developed good ideas on how to handle the introduction of new small schools. The staff at Tweed seemingly rejected those ideas, as they had school-based teams.

A Partnership Paradigm

This concept of collaboration leads to the need in the future to give serious consideration to a paradigm for public education that explicitly defines it as a multiagency function. Since so many institutions in society are involved in educating children, they should be brought together more explicitly in designing schools of the future. This paradigm would involve replacing the institutional form of a "school system" as a discrete, isolated entity with that of an "education system" that links the

schools with other institutions that play a role in educating students. The linkages are to establish partnerships between the schools and these outside agencies, plus family and community-based organizations, on the assumption that the schools cannot do it alone (Seeley, 2004).

These ideas have particular relevance now that the mayor and chancellor have converted the school system into autonomous, empowerment schools. Ideally, such schools would combine at least three elements. One is either to have each school provide at one site a wide variety of services for urban youth, or at least a much more integral part of a coalition of agencies in each community. A second is to ensure that each school develops a culture of shared responsibility among educators, parents, city agencies, and community organizations. Third is an increasing professionalism in the recruitment, training, and compensation for teachers and principals, oriented to work in partnership with students, parents, and community organizations, as well as using new pedagogies, curriculum ideas, and technologies to facilitate the successful education of all children. Included in that is for each school to develop a sense of collegiality and "team spirit" that is not just an old factory-style principal "boss" dealing with compliant teacher-workers. These schools should establish, more than their predecessors did, a family-like climate, where students have personal relations with adults. The chancellor's concept that these schools become "learning communities," embedded in supportive networks with other similar schools, is complementary to these concepts.

In addition, new small schools and charter schools provide an ideal environment in which to develop these elements of multiple services, heightened professionalism, and community. The pioneers in this shift could operate like lab schools, where new curricula, pedagogies, and relationships, including professional development for teachers and principals, may be developed and spread, with adaptations, to other parts of the system (Report of the New York City Council Commission on the Campaign for Fiscal Equity, Part II, 2005).

Down with the Old Bureaucratic Paradigm

This collaborative, partnership approach has had a hard time getting accepted because its opposite, the bureaucratic model, is still so deeply entrenched in big city public school systems. The rational bureaucracy model, however, made urban school district bureaucracies into what sociologist Max Weber called "an iron cage," seriously limiting the flexibility of schools to adapt teaching methods, curricula, and relationships to the needs of inner city children (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Since the 1960s, researchers on urban school systems and on organizations have pointed out how following this paradigm to an extreme has negatively impacted on the public schools. It has led to a rigid application of rules and procedures, impersonal relations within the school, and an increasing remoteness of top decision-makers and the administrative hierarchy from what Seeley (1981) calls "the realities of classroom relationships." (For a general exposition on the limits of bureaucracy, see Blau and Meyer 1987: Chap. 6.)

Pressures for political decentralization in the 1960s to break up the central bureaucracy and create community schools working collaboratively with families and local communities were a response by the citizenry and elected officials to the limitations of the bureaucratic model. For a variety of reasons, this vision of reform was never clearly articulated or implemented. By the time of Bloomberg's election in November 2001, school policymakers and involved citizens were looking for a new direction that would eliminate both the headquarters bureaucracy that still existed under decentralization and the new community school district bureaucracies that this piecemeal restructuring had spawned.

Mayoral control in its first stages in New York City, though intended to eliminate the "factory-like" headquarters and district bureaucracies, introduced a new business-driven bureaucracy to take their place. Now that the organization is shifting to empowered local schools, however, that early stage paradigm of mayoral control has come to an end. The emerging structure offers the opportunity to shift to a new system that may hopefully enhance learning.

Similar Organization Models

The broad outline for newly empowered schools has parallels to restructuring in the business sector. One example is the changed production management paradigm that General Motors instituted in the 1980s, as exemplified in the Nummi and Saturn projects (Keller 1989: 93–96; Chap. 6). The change was from the continuous flow production, assembly line model that had begun with Henry Ford, wherein each worker was engaged in a highly specialized activity, driven by a machine-paced technology and managed through a highly centralized chain of command, to a highly decentralized one with small teams of workers whose relationships called for reciprocity and mutual trust.

In management theory terms, and applied to education, this new paradigm represents a shift from the traditional bureaucratic form of American education followed throughout much of the twentieth century, to a more decentralized, team-based, organic form, consisting of a series of partnerships within the schools and of the schools to other institutions.

This raises the larger question of the relevance of the Henry Ford assembly line model for the public schools. As sociologist Charles Perrow explains, that type of organizational form is good for designing production systems in factories or clerical operations in offices, where the environment is relatively stable and where the technology is routine (Perrow 1970: Chaps. 2 and 3). It may be applied to school districts in their management support services that are much more routine than what goes on in the classroom, e.g., purchasing, auditing, and the like.

But teaching does not involve delivering standardized services, as so many observers of schools and classrooms have noted. Students enter school from diverse backgrounds and cultures and with diverse personalities. They do not all respond the same way to the same pedagogies and teaching styles, and the organizational structure that is most supportive of teaching in that type of nonroutine situation is

a flexible one. Its form must be bottom-up, flat, flexible, and organic, allowing teachers to draw on a repertoire of skills, the timing of which cannot be predicted in advance. That is the precise opposite of the traditional bureaucratic one that long dominated the management of urban school systems.

Transformational Leadership: Who Is a Strong Leader?

The leadership style the mayor pursued in the first years of mayoral control was one in which he did not hesitate to take charge and be action-oriented. A central question of the book is the extent to which this "strong leader" approach is most appropriate for mayoral control in New York.

Theories abound as to the qualities of effective leaders. The convergence among four is particularly relevant here. One is that of sociologist Jeffrey Pfeffer, who stated that effective leaders need two types of attributes (Pfeffer 1992: esp. Chap. 9), one of which relates to the fact that managers exist in a political arena and must sometimes use "hard influence" tactics to be effective. Attributes relevant for that, he suggests, include focus, high levels of energy and stamina, and a willingness to engage in conflict, to confront groups resisting change. A second, however, relates to the fact that organizations exist as interdependent, cooperative systems in which managers must develop allies to be effective. Attributes relevant for that include sensitivity to the needs of others, flexibility to take into account the prevailing climate, and the ability to submerge one's ego. Managing change effectively requires both sets of qualities.

Making much the same point, political scientist Joseph Nye has written extensively about "soft power" as a way for the United States to be more successful in world politics. Arguing against what he calls "a new unilateralism" in American foreign policy under President George W. Bush and his neoconservative supporters, Nye concludes that America, with the strongest military might in human history, needs the cooperation of others to achieve its goals. He cites such intractable problems as global climate change, AIDS, and transnational terrorism as too complex to solve on our own.

Nye's arguments against an imperial presidency have relevance for assessing mayoral control. He observes that the United States' use of its power on matters such as the invasion of Iraq has contributed to a decline in our capacity to be effective, by alienating many nations throughout the world (Nye 2006). He concludes regarding the neoconservatives and the Bush administration:

> They would have been more effective had they paid more attention to our soft power to attract, rather than focused so heavily on our hard power to coerce (p. 21).

The same point may be made regarding the mayor and chancellor's exercise of power under mayoral control. If it is used as a tool to create wide support for a credible new vision for education in the city, and to bring together the key participants at the school level to develop pedagogies and curricula and more effective teachers and principals, it could be a highly productive driving force for needed

improvements. But if it functions as an elitist group of senior managers and consult-ants, mandating changes from the top, functioning in secrecy, and insensitive to implementation issues, the lack of trust and disruptions it generates will undermine its value and reduce the chances for the reforms to continue after the mayor leaves office at the end of 2009.

Still another perspective on leadership comes from the changing concept of authority in academic writings in organization theory. Through the late 1930s, scholars in what was called the "classical management school" saw authority in top-down terms, derived from the position of the manager, particularly through the sanctions the manager could use against subordinates who disobeyed orders; for example, they could be denied raises or fired. Then, Chester Barnard (1938), New Jersey Bell Telephone Company President, wrote a landmark book, arguing both from his personal experience and philosophical perspective that, quite the contrary, authority comes from the bottom. His point was that an order is not an order unless and until it is obeyed. Perrow (1986) summarizes Barnard this way:

> If a subordinate does not accept the legitimacy of an order, the person giving it has no authority (p. 71).

Herbert Simon, a Nobel-Prize-winning behavioral scientist, argued in similar fashion that managers had to give orders within the "zone of acceptance" of subordi-nates (ibid., 125). This is not to support a "weak" management style that capitulates to subordinates resistant to any change, but simply to emphasize that the most effec-tive leaders are those who earn the commitment of subordinates by being sensitive to the latter's values and interests, rather than to impose orders from on high.

Particularly in the public sector, managers will generate commitment to change by bringing in not only those directly in the chain of command but also relevant others as well, e.g., legislators and parents. We often refer to people who follow that style as consensus managers, because they give high priority to establishing shared goals and a common purpose. Nye (2004), Pfeffer (1992), Simon (1976), and Barnard (1938) hold that developing deep commitments to sustained organization change is more likely to take place with this style than with its opposite, the one Bloomberg and Klein followed their first years implementing mayoral control.

More Use of Local Institutional Knowledge

There is always the problem of maintaining a balance between turning to people with institutional memory whose knowledge can be valuable and seeking new peo-ple whose analytic skills and past change-management experience are a valuable resource but who are unfamiliar with the history and needs of the local situation. Some old timers can be negative, sometimes following the dictum "We've been there, done that, and it didn't work," thereby increasing the likelihood of delaying needed changes. Likewise, some outsiders can be too enamored of their technical knowledge, too eager to apply it and impress people in the organization, and thereby discount the local context and history, both of which they need to know

more about if they are to be effective. They are sometimes referred to as "mindless technocrats" (Halberstam 1972).

How a CEO balances both sets of skills requires many judgment calls for which no clear guidelines exist. Leaders must establish new visions, but they need the help of their constituencies' knowledge and experience to realize them. Downgrading the importance of the latter can be costly and even lead to the inability to carry out change. The new broom should sweep clean, but not too clean.

The restructuring of high schools is a case in point (see Chap. 5). Suggestions by both high school educators and the citywide parent group established by the Department of Education were ignored. Both made compelling points about the implementation of this reform which contributed to a worsening of overcrowding in some traditional high schools that received students who did not go to the new small high schools. To overlook these educators and parent constituencies who argued for attention to the "overflow" was to help mobilize still another alienated group that could limit the mayor and chancellor's political support in the future.

What About the Schools' Monopoly?

One of the most compelling arguments supporting the radical reform of failing public schools in urban areas was their existence in the past as monopolies, offering little choice for parents. On this issue, Bloomberg and Klein are to be commended in their initiatives of setting up small schools and charters and providing resources for these alternatives within the public school system. Meanwhile, the mayor opposes for-profit, voucher schools, in line with the political climate of New York City and state where vouchers continue to be seen as a scheme for destroying public education and shifting funds to the private sector.

One caveat in praising the mayor and chancellor's leadership on small schools is that the planning and implementation need much more attention. Traditional schools must continue to receive the same levels of resources from the city as the new ones, and care must be taken to minimize the many disruptions that have resulted from opening so many small schools so fast. These are important implementation issues, but criticisms of how they have been managed in the past should in no way detract from the positive legacy the mayor and chancellor have developed by embarking on this promising alternative schools, choice strategy with enough momentum to hopefully ensure further development in the future.

Need for More Research and Development

These alternative schools are related, in turn, to an unresolved issue that goes well beyond New York City, namely, the nation's limited understanding of what it will take to significantly upgrade the public schools. It has been more than two decades since the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (1983), indicating the failure of the US

public school system to compete globally. Yet, there has been minimal investment in research and development in education, relative, for example, to that in industry, health, and the military. Chris Whittle, founder and CEO of Edison Schools, points out that major US corporations invest between 2 and 10% of their revenues in R&D and between 2 and 3% on training. The nation spends more than $1.5 trillion per year on research and development in health care, compared with roughly $400 billion a year on K-12 education. He concludes that if we spent the equivalent on educational R&D that we spend on health R&D, our educational R&D expenditures would be roughly 30 times the current levels (Whittle 2005: 210).

He gives several explanations: America's long-standing tradition of control by local school districts, most of which are too small to support significant R&D; a limited conception of how R&D could improve education; a lack of commitment to improve urban education; and insufficient appreciation of how our inadequate public school system contributes to our global economic decline. There are also views he does not mention that the federal government has already invested a lot of money in improving education in poverty-stricken areas with little return:

> As a nation, we are acting as if these are not our children, and in that sense we have treated them as a disenfranchised population (ibid., 15).

That so many public school students in urban centers and rural poverty areas are from poor minority backgrounds with limited political clout no doubt further aggravates the problem.

Given the limited research and development in the New York City schools in the past, they have kept re-addressing the same issues over and over again under successive chancellors, without making much progress, e.g., in teacher training, curbing the high school dropout rate, social promotion, parent engagement, bilingual education for English language learners, special education, private-sector initiatives. New programs were constantly announced, but they seldom addressed the underlying problems and had limited impacts. In brief, the initiators of the new programs had learned little, if anything, from the programs' predecessors (Report of the New York City Council Commission on the Campaign for Fiscal Equity, Part II, 2005). This report concluded:

> Year in and year out, the same policy proposals have been generated, addressing the same education issues, without reference to past efforts that were scrapped. Unfortunately, the outcomes also remain the same, like a low-budget movie where the ending is never in doubt (p. ix).

The Commission recommended creation of an effective R&D structure, composed of lab schools and a lab district within the school system where teams of educators working with researchers may develop and assess various reforms and later scale up those that work (p. xi). They also recommend the establishment of a separate research institute to do the actual evaluation of the reforms. The R&D, however, must extend beyond instructional reforms to include new approaches to school climate and relations among schools, families, and community resources.

New York City now has the advantage of many new small schools and charters that could become a nucleus of lab schools and a lab district, as networks of the former are set up. It also has a new research institute, located at New York University, independent

of the Department of Education, and supported by foundation funding. This is to provide a base for evaluation research that is independent of political-institutional needs of the mayor or the school system. A more extensive R&D effort for New York City is essential for a truly effective program to transform its educational system.

There were understandable political reasons for New York City to get as many new schools and programs into operation as fast as possible. But as the authors of the City Council Commission Report conclude, urban school systems cannot go to scale without having both the infrastructure of lab schools and districts and evaluation data on various instructional reforms introduced there. At present, neither exists, and to try to go to scale with neither is to perpetuate a cycle of failure. There must be an identification of successes and failures that would then facilitate systemwide improvements by identifying what is needed to sustain the effective reforms.

New York City Schools vs. Schools of Chicago, Boston, and San Diego

A few of the 104 cities in the United States that have instituted mayoral control of the public schools (Wong et al. 2007) may be singled out as archetypes, whose experiences, along with those of New York, have broad implications as to how mayoral control could be managed more effectively in the future. Chicago and Boston merit consideration from that perspective. Both began mayoral control in 1995 and because of their early start and the fact that both have been referred to as success cases, we compare their management briefly with that of New York City. Shipps (2006) states that Chicago has become a national exemplar of urban school reform. The Broad Foundation gave Boston its 2006 award for the most effective urban school district.

San Diego is also a relevant case, because although it does not have mayoral control, its governance and organizational issues are strikingly similar to what is going on in New York. These three cities, then, serve as a comparative frame to better understand New York City's experience thus far and what the future may require (Wong et al. 2007; Henig and Rich 2004).

Chicago

This is the case perhaps most similar to New York. It embarked on mayoral control in 1995, 7 years earlier than New York, and it continues to be in effect. It differs from New York in some ways: its long history of active, big business involvement in the public schools, lower aggregate scores historically on standardized tests, and fewer exemplary schools and programs relative to New York City's many elite high schools, small schools, and gifted and talented programs (interviews; Shipps 2006).

More important, however, in the context of this book are the commonalities in management style under mayoral control in its early stages. Perhaps the most basic similarity is that the mayor and chancellor in both cities relied primarily on an old

style corporate approach to transform the schools. This has been driven by the belief that "better management," through such techniques as unified authority, centralized control, outcome-based performance, new incentives and rewards for educators, and new accountability systems based on standardized tests, would lead to improved student performance. Like Bloomberg and Klein in New York, Superintendent Vallas (1995–2001) in Chicago was regarded as a top-down manager who functioned with limited community input, although he seemed to modify this style when he became chancellor of the Philadelphia schools, suggesting that he may have learned from his Chicago experience. Ouchi (2003) quotes a successful but highly frustrated Chicago elementary school principal: "It's all controlled by central. It's very frustrating. We can't run the school." Another principal commented to him:

> When you call central for help or with a question, you usually get an answering machine. The message will usually be: "We're sorry, but the answering machine is full" (p. 72).

In fact, the similarity in management style between New York and Chicago was so marked, that parent activists from both cities joined in writing an open letter to Los Angeles parents, urging them to reject Los Angeles' new mayor's attempt to take over its schools. The letter dated June 1, 2006, said:

> The mayors of our cities and their appointees now feel empowered to ignore the priorities of parents, teachers, and other stakeholders in the system (Maxwell 2006).

As Shipps (2006) notes, the micromanagement of teachers, with headquarters dictating the curriculum and teaching procedures, was another similarity. Vallas imposed a series of "scripted curricula" on teachers, as part of his and the mayor's corporate management approach.

Still another similarity was the extensive use of MBAs and lawyers as top staff people at headquarters. Vallas was quoted as saying that he needed new style managers in each department, and he recruited heavily from City Hall to attain that. Also, these corporate-management-oriented people did much outsourcing and privatizing of various managerial functions.

Even in highly centralized Chicago, however, experience seems to have led to modifications of the corporate model adopted initially. At the time of Vallas' departure in 2001, *Education Week* referred to the management style of Arne Duncan, his successor, as "more inclusive and collaborative" (Reid 2001). The next year this publication referred to Duncan in similar terms. "[He is] a more constructive collaborator of central and local councils than Vallas," and further noted that he was "winning praise from local school activists for setting a tone they see as open and collaborative" (Gewertz 2002b). In May 2005, under Superintendent Duncan, Chicago announced its plan to use Gates Foundation money to transform large high schools into new small ones, again paralleling New York City's initiatives.

A month later, Chicago announced that it would offer its higher performing high schools freedom from the bureaucratic rules that applied to the others. It was setting up autonomous management for the former, much like the empowerment schools in New York.

Like New York, the chancellor and mayor designated the principal as the CEO of the school and the key person in the reform, all the while limiting the principal's

autonomy by the centralized, bureaucratic structure and top-down management. And just as New York City used the Principals' Leadership Academy in management techniques, Chicago used the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern to train principals as change managers. Finally, a lack of transparency was similar in each city. Key policy and program decisions were made at the top, with little input from teachers, principals, or grass roots groups.

Why should there be so many similarities in the two cases? One reason may well be that New York City, as a latecomer, borrowed extensively from Chicago, particularly in using a corporate management style in driving the reform. Despite the fact that both Daley and Vallas had come from political backgrounds, they were influenced by the city's corporate elite and wanted to demonstrate to that group that they saw the importance of corporate management techniques as a way of improving the schools. Bloomberg had been a successful CEO, as was Klein on a more limited scale, and both drew heavily from those experiences in their leadership in New York (interviews; see also, Shipps 2006).

Boston

The other sometimes touted "success" case is Boston. It began implementing mayoral control in October 1995, when it hired Thomas W. Payzant, a Boston native, as superintendent. Boston never went through the centralizing, top-down stage of New York and Chicago. The management style of Mayor Menino and Superintendent Payzant was quite different from that of their counterparts in Chicago and New York respectively, Daley and Vallas and Bloomberg and Klein. Both Menino and Payzant have come to be known for their consensual approach to decision-making (Portz 2005: 14).

A Boston native, Payzant had run school districts in four states, including 10 years in San Diego. He had also been assistant secretary for elementary and secondary education in the US Department of Education under President Clinton. He and Mayor Menino worked together to manage the Boston school system for over 10 years, until Payzant's retirement in June 2006. Boston has often been cited for its extraordinarily stable leadership structure, with Menino having been first elected as mayor in 1993 and still in office in 2007. The consensual management style there was marked enough for community activists and other progressive groups in Boston to refer to the Menino/Payzant approach as too cautious and deliberate, because in their view, school reform has been slow (ibid., 116).

Yet, as already noted, Boston won a prize in 2006 from the Eli Broad Foundation for Urban Education in recognition of its success improving achievement, especially among racial and ethnic minority groups (Gewertz 2006). Broad, the foundation's CEO, is a supporter of mayoral control and praised the "stable leadership" of Payzant and Menino as pivotal in the district's performance (ibid.). Moreover, Boston has been a finalist all 5 years the award has been given.

In addition to Boston's stable leadership, the foundation attributed its success to the strong emphasis on upgrading instruction and to an initiative called "collaborative coaching and learning" in which teachers "honed their craft together by analyzing one

another's work and the results of that work," which was compared to "how doctors in training learn to diagnose by working in groups to examine patients." rather than from corporate models (Archer 2006).

Results in classroom performance show that the Boston public schools have outperformed demographically similar districts in Massachusetts in reading and math in elementary, middle, and high school. This pattern holds as well for Black students. In addition, Boston schools are closing the math gap between Latino and White students at the middle and high school levels faster than the state average. Not surprising, there are increases in the numbers of Black and Latino students taking advanced placement examinations in English and math.

There have been other driving elements in this success story. Menino, like Bloomberg, has made education a top priority, and Menino has developed the same coalition of City Hall and the city's corporate elite. Portz (2004) reports that Harold Hestnes, a business leader, was quoted in *The Boston Globe* in 1996 as saying:

> For the first time we have a mayor, a superintendent and a school committee singing from the same sheet of music (p. 108).

That combination also included the business community.

Unlike New York, Boston gave flexibility to teachers early in the years of mayoral control.

> "It's not teachers teaching curriculum from a box," reported Timothy Knowles, former Deputy Superintendent for teaching and learning in Boston and now Director for the Center of Urban School Improvement at the University of Chicago. "The work is dependent on creating a system full of people who are professionals" (ibid., 32).

Paul Hill (2000) encapsulates the successful consensus management style of Paysant. It includes the following elements: much school-level autonomy, with an inverted pyramid that had schools on the top and headquarters on the bottom, as headquarters concentrated on support and service rather than compliance and control; decision-making on education programs made at the school level, with school site councils of teachers and their coaches; a focus on teaching and learning, with business and civic organization support; and principals as true education leaders, though this was a huge challenge for many.

San Diego: No Mayoral Control, but Stark Similarities to New York

In several ways, New York is an east coast version of San Diego, even though the latter does not have mayoral control (Hess 2005). Like Chicago and Boston, San Diego's school reform administration pre-dates New York's, having started in 1998, with the appointment of Alan Bersin as superintendent. He was an attorney from New York who had been a staff person on immigration in the Clinton administration.

Bersin immediately hired Anthony Alvarado, a reform-oriented superintendent of Manhattan's districts 4 in East Harlem and later 2 on the East Side, and together they established an activist superintendency bifurcated between "two aggressive

New Yorkers, with Bersin responsible for the political and managerial dimensions of the position and Alvarado responsible for the educational component" (Usdan 2005: 5). Alvarado took his much touted improvements in pedagogy, curriculum, and staff development from district 2 in New York to San Diego, and there he worked to implement them systemwide.

The management style of these two leaders was almost precisely that of Bloomberg and Klein. The style had two phases, a top-down, centralized approach in the early years, followed by a bottom-up and decentralized one that picked up momentum after Bersin and Alvarado left:

> Three axioms appear to have driven Phase One: 1) Do it fast. 2) Do it deep. 3) Take no prisoners (Hannaway and Stanislawski 2005: 55).

Later for Phase 2, "funds and discretion have been devolved to the school level" (ibid., 67). This gave principals more of an opportunity to play an educational leadership role, both on curriculum and instruction and in the hiring and professional development of teachers (Schnur and Gerson 2005: 111–113).

All the arguments for and against that centralization strategy, as well as the ones for the decentralization that followed it, were enunciated in San Diego as they were later in New York. In a word, both cities staged the same debates. Quotes from Bersin sound much like those Bloomberg would later make. For example:

> You don't announce systemic reform. You've got to jolt the system. And if people don't understand you're serious about change in the first six months, the bureaucracy will own you (Hess 2005: 3–4).

Building political support for their transformation approach to change was always problematic for Bersin and Alvarado. Originally, Bersin was appointed on a 3–2 vote by the Board of Education, with the minority later objecting to the "top-down style that crushed initiative in the district" (Usdan 2005). Both cities had the same coalitions for and against the district's leadership. Bersin and Alvarado's support came from the city's business elite, foundations, a majority on the school board, and some reformist labor and civic groups. The opposition included the teachers union, principals, the board minority, and many parents who argued that Bersin and Alvarado had moved ahead on reforms without seeking much input from any of these groups. One board member referred to Bersin's "take it or leave it manner" that Alvarado's matched (ibid., 21). In many instances, critics objected more to Bersin and Alvarado's dictatorial approach than to the substance of changes they introduced.

Board of Education support for Bersin and Alvarado eroded over time. Alvarado resigned in 2003. School board critics won a 3–2 majority in 2005, and Bersin was forced out that year, to be replaced by more of a consensus-style superintendent from a smaller city in the region. In brief, to a large extent, leaders of the San Diego reform used the same management styles, experienced the same political dynamics, with the same coalitions, as New York later followed. The same basic themes characterized the San Diego reforms as had characterized those in New York City:

1. Dual leadership at the top;
2. First phase, top-down, systemic, highly centralized leadership initially;

3. Battling vigorously with the teachers union and principals, to have them change their culture;
4. A strong emphasis on professional development;
5. Much attention to low-performing schools and to reducing the gap in student performance;
6. The equivalent of a leadership training academy that New York City has and teacher mentoring through instructional coaches;
7. Emphasis on pedagogy and curriculum, with balanced literacy for reading program and a strong emphasis on uniformity and standardization throughout the district;
8. Development of sophisticated accountability system for performance measurement;
9. Strong emphasis on human resource policies to improve teacher productivity and continued efforts to eliminate work rules.

Each side, the Bersin/Alvarado coalition and their critics, kept making the same arguments. The reform leaders claimed that deep culture change required centralized leadership or the improvements would never have taken place. The critics stated that the district had to confront bottom-up realities and achieve buy-in of such major stakeholders as teachers and parents for support and success. They argued that an incremental, consensual change style would work better for long-term support. They further noted that the top-down approach of Bersin and Alvarado for a uniform curriculum antagonized teachers. They referred to Alvarado's style as a "down your throat" method, concluding that the teachers and their union "oozed institutional memory" compared to the new leadership from "outside" (Williams 2005: 38).

One may summarize the political dynamics of school reform in all these cities as a conflict between "cosmopolitan" and "local" values and interests. The former represent the leadership and its coalition, e.g., the mayor and chancellor in New York, the two chancellors in San Diego, and particularly their big business supporters, and some labor and civic groups. The latter include teachers, principals, their unions, community organizations, various parent groups, and city and state legislators. Minority interests have tended to side more with the locals against fast, systemic change, partly because they have not trusted the promise of White leaders, and partly because they have seen it as a threat to their emerging power and jobs under the old system (Henig and Rich 2004: 17–18). Locals, who include minorities in their coalition, see the schools in terms of their accountability to them and the concrete rewards they may provide under decentralized control, such as jobs and access to resources. Cosmopolitans see them in more generalized terms – as sites for major structural reforms for improved productivity and efficiency and, ultimately, improved student learning and economic development through a vastly improved labor force.

Cycles of Centralization and Decentralization

The swings between centralization and decentralization in all four cities suggest a consistent historical pattern that has relevance for future reforms in New York. Management professor Larry Greiner (1972) has developed a model that highlights

why and how these swings take place in the historical experience of many business organizations. Researchers in education have documented its relevance for urban school systems, including New York (Hess 2005; Ravitch 1974).

Greiner argues that organizations evolve in dialectic fashion, as each solution to past problems contains within itself weaknesses that lead to new ones and to the emergence of a new form. Thus, as organizations increase in size, scale, and complexity, there is a need for bureaucracy to make operations more uniform, to improve coordination, and to facilitate more efficiency and control. Over time, however, the centralized structure that results from this development is seen as stifling the flexibility and responsiveness of local level units, and pressures for decentralization emerge. Still later, when organizations find that there is too much fragmentation and localism and not enough central control over ineffective practices of local units, they recentralize.

Sometimes the swings may take place in a short period of time, perhaps less than a decade, if organizations are under strong external pressure to drastically improve their performance, as in mayoral control in urban school districts such as New York or in school reform in San Diego. Other times they may evolve over decades, but organizations always face conflicting pulls between centralization and decentralization. Each can go too far and require more of the other, as organizations become either too fragmented and loosely structured or too rigidly controlled from the top.

One implication from these cities' experiences is that there must be a balance between making things happen from the top and keeping the stakeholders at the table. The leadership is seen as needing to walk a fine line between treating teachers and principals as professionals and battling their unions to get needed changes (Hannaway and Stanislawski 2005: 54).

Basically, the task of transforming these large urban school systems and maintaining the momentum and legitimacy of the effort is so complex and the requirements for success so demanding that no urban school district, including New York City, has quite found the formula. My view from studying New York and having anecdotal data on other urban districts is that a change-management strategy that contains both top-down and bottom-up components may work best. How to reconcile these contradictions effectively is an enormous challenge (Tushman and O'Reilly 1997: Chap. 7).

To move ahead on transforming urban public education, it makes little sense to go back to the old system of bureaucratic control, no matter who is running the bureaucracy. If mayoral control is the "tool" chosen to bring about the redesign and deep culture changes in urban districts, what may be needed is a modified mayoral control concept that combines decentralized, school-based decision-making with centralized service and monitoring functions that support rather than get in the way of local schools, bent on establishing their own learning communities and continuously adaptive classroom practices. In the abstract, new designs of schools based on such thinking make sense. Putting them into practice requires much more political support than most cities have been able to muster and more commitment of resources than the nation has been willing to make thus far.

One conclusion is that San Diego, and perhaps New York City, in the future will confirm the conclusions of political scientist Stone and his colleagues (2001), namely, that powerful education reforms with shallow political roots are not sustainable.

There is need for a top-down style in the early stages, to get reform underway with some momentum. But that momentum cannot be sustained and it will decline, without a more consensual, coalition-building strategy that makes clear the long-term goal of a more democratic, participatory system in the future, not as an end in itself but as a way toward enhanced student performance. Apparently, the beginnings of decentralization in San Diego were not inclusive and bottom-up enough to maintain the legitimacy of its leadership; it remains to be seen what will happen in New York.

A possible preview of problems for mayoral control's future legitimacy in New York was indicated by the protest made by a group of elected officials, parent and community advocates and union leaders on February 15, 2007. Angered by the mayor's management style of not seeking more input in policy and program decisions, the group urged him to delay any more restructurings. "I voted for mayoral control as an assemblyman, but I did not vote for a dictatorship," said Scott M. Stringer, the Manhattan Borough President. William C. Thompson, Jr., the city comptroller, echoed a similar complaint: "Let's have fewer conversations with consultants and more conversations with parents" ("Group Asks Mayor to Rethink Further Changes to Schools," *The New York Times*, February 15, 2007).

The emergence of such an opposition to what the protestors regarded as an elitist school leadership was likely triggered in this instance by a controversy over a headquarters-initiated project through an outside consultant to change the school bus routes, but it had been building for a long time and would probably have developed anyway. The project was begun to realize cost savings, which would then be put into classrooms.

That controversy involved the Department of Education's hiring an outside consulting firm, through a lucrative contract that was not subject to public review, to reengineer changes in school bus routes for greater efficiency. The subsequent implementation, in very cold midwinter weather, with little advanced information to parents, and without enough of an understanding by the consultant of "on the ground" logistics, caused so much dislocation and hardship that parents complained in droves to elected officials. *The New York Times* reported a City Council hearing on the subject:

> At times the hearing seemed much like a therapy session for council members, who said they had been overwhelmed with constituents' complaints ("Council Grills City Officials on School Bus Changes," *The New York* Times, February 14, 2007).

Five councilmen were quoted to this effect in the article, and Robert Jackson, the chair of the Council's Education Committee, concluded:

> This latest fiasco does not give me a lot of confidence in the Department of Education's ability to implement large-scale reforms (ibid.).

This likely "triggering effect" was driven by more than what parents and members of the City Council regarded as gross mismanagement. They were also angered by the tone of the mayor's reaction to their complaints when the bus route changes were first implemented. Instead of expressing sympathy right away for the displaced children and their parents, he "took the offensive, lambasting critics both in and out of government, impugning their competence and making it clear that he believes that only he understands how to run the city" ("Mayor Know-It-All," *New York Post*, February 19, 2007).

Deputy Mayor Walcott, Chancellor Klein, and Deputy Chancellor Kathleen Grimm did meet with the City Council and apologized for the mismanagement. Walcott said:

> … the mayor and I know the execution of this plan … fell far short …. We extend our deepest regrets to those who were most affected ("Council Grills City Officials on School Bus Changes," *The New York Times*, February 14, 2007).

The mayor and the style with which mayoral control has been pursued remain a target of attack from these disenfranchised constituencies. The bus routes mismanagement that they referred to as a "fiasco" reminded them of others, energizing them to organize in protest against the credibility of the mayoral control enterprise. One of the aptest summaries came from a City Hall staffer who was reviewing the pros and cons of the top-down approach the mayor had followed:

> The downside is that you may get to think you know it all when that isn't necessarily the case. Then, when you stumble, everybody wants to pile on. You can make many mistakes in haste, and we have and will continue to make mistakes. On the other hand, think of what the school system was like before and of all the good things that have happened under the mayor's leadership.

Test Scores

This book has focused on the change-management style of the mayor and chancellor, using an analysis of their strategy and its implementation to argue that they would have done better in transforming the New York City schools had they been more inclusive, worked to collaborate more with the educators and parents, and emphasized a more bottom-up approach to change than they have. Parents, elected officials, and educators have felt left out, and too many of the latter have experienced lowered self-esteem during mayoral control's implementation. Maintaining the latter is an important concern, since it may well contribute to the New York City school system's capacity to attract and retain excellent teachers and principals. Ultimately, however, the mayor and chancellor will be judged, as will their counterparts in other cities, on what improvements in student performance result from this mode of governance that they introduced.

Not surprisingly, demographic factors best correlate with data on student performance, regardless of reform strategies, including mayoral control. This was reported in the Coleman Report (Coleman et al. 1966), and few changes have taken place since then. One goal of mayoral control is to bring together the resources of private- and public-sector groups, including increased funding, to effect systemic changes in schools. Its advocates hope that mayoral control may gradually overcome the negative impact of social background factors.

Test scores, the main indicators now used to assess student performance, are at best a crude measure. Moreover, they may become a double-edged sword. Although they help keep in the forefront some assessment of how well students are doing in school and are a way of making the schools and educators accountable, the scores may be easily misinterpreted. They may become a means, in that regard, perhaps unwittingly, to scapegoat teachers, principals, and school administrators, if applied

without a sense of their wider context. Policymakers certainly should keep track of trends, however, and using test scores is one way.

Wong et al. (2007: Chap. 4) report from their study of 104 cities under mayoral control that reading and math scores in the early grades improved modestly since it has been established, though it is too early to make definitive judgments. Middle school test scores, by contrast, have been less amenable to the positive influence of mayoral control, and many cities, including New York, have begun putting more emphasis on improving them.

At first glance, New York City seems to have experienced big improvements in student performance since mayoral control's beginnings in 2002, as measured by scores on standardized reading and math tests. From the Department of Education's data, results for grades 3–8 showed 65% of students meeting statewide standards in math in 2007, compared with 37% in 2002, 50% in reading in 2007, compared with 39% in 2002, and graduation rates going up from 48 to 60% during that time ("New York Eighth Grades Show Gains in Reading," *The New York Times*, May 23, 2007; "Imitate Our Class Act: Mike" *New York Post*, June 27, 2007).

Statisticians have raised many questions, however, about the scores' validity and about the conclusions that pro- and antimayoral control advocates draw regarding over-all trends. In reviewing the debates over this issue of how much "real" improvement has taken place, it becomes clear that the wider political context has a significant impact on the arguments and especially the claims of each side. The mayor, the chancellor, and their staff, understandably committed to rallying support for their reforms and for transformational change, tend to highlight positive results that thereby validate what they have been doing. Skeptical scholars and critics, meanwhile, raise questions about the tests' validity, who takes them, whether they are in fact a useful measure of school effectiveness, and whether the amount of classroom time spent in preparing students to take them best promotes students' development.

Two such statisticians, for example, Professors Robert Tobias of New York University and Walter Haney of Boston College, stated at the end of the 2004–2005 school year that there was not enough evidence to support the mayor's and chancellor's claim of significant improvement at that time (*"Higher Student Test Scores Mean Progress? Council Wants Proof," The New York Times*, June 28, 2005). Tobias had served for 13 years as Executive Director of Assessment and Accountability in the New York City public schools, while Haney, Professor of Education at Boston College and Senior Research Associate in the Center for the Study of Testing Evaluation and Educational Policy, has published widely on testing and assessment issues in scholarly journals. Tobias said, "I'd like to see more evidence before I render the opinion that students are learning more" (ibid.). Referring to dramatic gains from 2004–05, where the percent of elementary students meeting state reading standards went up 14.4 points and those meeting math standards went up 7.5 points, Tobias, as quoted elsewhere, stated, "I've never seen a gain this large and ubiquitous across the grades in 25 years. We need more analysis and we need to look at performance over time. It may be a result of changes in the test. It may be real learning. We just don't know" (Hemphill 2005).

Findings from Tobias's recent research are, as he describes, "more muted, variable and equivocal than press releases" (Tobias 2008). The following is a summary from his presentation at the annual meeting of the American Education Research Association in March 2008. His study provides trend data on reading and math scores and on high school graduation rates since 1999, taking 2003–2004, when mayoral control first began in New York City, after a year of transition, as his base line year. He compares students' test score trends in New York with those in other cities in the state in what he calls a modest first step in evaluating the possible impacts of mayoral control on the former. All of the state's cities took the same tests, with New York City being unique in having instituted mayoral control. His argument is that if changes in New York City's scores are different from those in cities elsewhere in the state, this may indicate some mayoral control effects.

His results are as follows: On the state reading tests, the city–state gap from 2003–2007 for fourth grade students meeting or exceeding state standards remained the same at 18.6%. For eighth graders, however, the gap actually increased by 4% during that time. The city's reading scores improved, but so did scores elsewhere in the state, using the same test.

The city fared better, however, on the state math tests. The city–state gap went down by more than 9% for fourth graders and 6% for eighth graders. Both New York and other cities in the state improved, with New York improving more. One conclusion, then, is that the city did not improve that much more than others in the state in reading, but it did in math.

A different picture emerges, however, on national assessment tests. They show lesser comparative gains for New York City. On those tests, the city–state gap in reading scores for both fourth and eighth graders went down by only 1%. New York City fared a bit better on math scores, with fourth graders narrowing the gap by 2% and eighth graders by 3.3%.

Data on high school graduation and dropout rates are more ambiguous, making it difficult to discern trends. The city and state use different accounting procedures in establishing the graduation rate, with the state showing a rate that is 10% lower than the city's. The city's graduation rates did rise, however, from 53.4% in 2003 to 59.7% in 2006.

Tobias concludes from his study that it is not clear what impacts mayoral control may have had on these measures of student performance. The need to rely on multiple measures, differences in test results – state vs. national, and in accounting procedures in defining dropouts and graduates – e.g., state vs. city, make it difficult to reach judgments on mayoral control from these student performance data. As he states: "The jury is still out" (ibid.).

Several factors in addition to mayoral control may make a difference in test scores going up or down. One is who is allowed to take the test, with administrators in many districts, including New York, sometimes eliminating or not highlighting the scores of students with learning disabilities or lacking in English language skills and thereby improving scores. Another is changes in test content, with the test perhaps being easier in some years than in others. From 2006–2007 there was a surge in reading scores

in four of New York State's five largest cities, for example, where these factors may have come into play. Tobias was quoted as questioning this result:

> I would say it's something about the test when there's too large an increase and it's too ubiquitous – in too many districts (*"This is a Test, Results May Vary," The New York Times*, June 13, 2007).

He went on to suggest that Yonkers, the one large city in the state where there was no increase, had an atypically large number of immigrant students taking the tests that year.

A final point regarding test scores and what they mean is that in many cities Wong and his colleagues found that it was common for mayors to "spin the schools," that is, to make it look as though they are improving even when that may not be the case (Wong et al. 2007: 165). This is not to charge intentional deceit on the part of mayors making such claims, but rather to indicate a phenomenon common in the actions of many leaders in both the public and private sectors. In annual reports and in public statements for the media, for example, CEOs sometimes "accentuate the positive" and "tone down the negative" with regard to their corporation's performance, to maintain support from key publics – shareholders, consumers, and employees. Mayors are often no different.

There are various ways to spin the data on test scores, all well known. One is to engage in selective reporting, leading off with the best results and then de-emphasizing the not so good ones. This is not to deny the latter but to not report too much on them. A second is to not even report the bad ones. Both reflect ways of interpreting the data that are inappropriate to what they represent. This often happens when the goals of steady improvement in the scores are difficult to attain, as in many states under No Child Left Behind, where they "game" the tests to report positive results. They may do so by making the tests easier than in previous years ("dumbing them down") and either remove some students likely to score low on the tests – e.g., special education and non-English speaking – or compute their results separately and not report them in press releases.

One way to begin minimizing these techniques and the possible bias they bring with them is for a relatively independent, outside group of researchers to collect, analyze, and interpret data on student performance, thereby taking the mayor, the chancellor, and the school district's researchers out of it. New York has already moved in that direction. Otherwise, mayoral control's leaders may have a vested interest in convincing a skeptical public about their capacity to deliver improved school services to a point where it justifies their claims of success. As Wong and colleagues (2007) note: "To get reelection, mayors don't need to improve the schools, but just make it look like they are" (p. 169).

Larger policy questions regarding the impact of testing have also arisen in recent years. Critics of No Child Left Behind that relies so heavily on test results continue to bemoan the fact that so much classroom time is now committed to test prep and "teaching to the test." This is to the detriment of instruction in key subjects – history, science, social studies, and the arts. Beyond that is the issue of what skills or qualities are most appropriate to teach and what should educational effectiveness mean.

It makes little sense to deny the importance of basic skills in reading and math. However, as so many scholars and critics of American public education have observed, there are other noncognitive skills and personal qualities that are also critical to students' development – advocacy and problem-solving skills, citizenship, social ethics, self-esteem, and such social skills as leadership, conflict resolution, and teamwork (Rothstein 2004: Chap. 4; Dreeben 1968). Many of these are not easily measurable, and one may argue that they cannot be easily developed without first mastering the basic cognitive skills. But there is much pressure on states and cities to evaluate the educators on how well students do on those tests.

Conclusions

What, in summary, can be learned from this case study of New York's experience with mayoral control? The main lesson is that mayoral control has introduced needed system changes, heretofore impossible, in the leadership and governance of this gigantic school system that serves 1.2 million students, but more is decidedly needed to advance the changes underway and to realize their potential.

First, the mayor, more than any other figure, has the capacity to bring together the many governmental agencies and nongovernmental groups whose resources are needed to enhance classroom learning. The schools cannot be expected to do the job of educating urban youth on their own and need help from other institutions for this task. The expression "it takes a village" is apt in this regard. Of course, as some point out, for example Rothstein (2004), a successful effort to greatly reduce poverty should take precedence, but we cannot wait for that. The mayor's "bully pulpit" can galvanize the cities' many resources in such a coordinated effort. Mayoral control, in my view, is the best way of enhancing the prospects that other agencies and institutions will be brought together with the schools for the task.

Second, mayoral control provides for pinpointing or focusing political accountability. In the past, too much buck passing has prevailed in New York City, not only between the mayor and various school officials but also among the five borough presidents and members of the central and local boards. Their equivalents exist in other big cities. As this study shows, accountability for educational results is much more complicated than just holding the mayor responsible at election time. But having a single focus for political accountability can energize the whole system, and since education is such a big item in the city's budget, it makes sense to formally place the mayor in charge of the schools. In actual fact, the mayor makes many of the big decisions on the schools, as in collective bargaining with teachers, principals, and custodians.

Finally, as the city's top elected official, the mayor is in a strong position to seek financing from outside sources, namely state and federal agencies, foundations, corporations, and concerned citizens. In this respect Mayor Bloomberg excelled. His strong belief in the urgency of improving the public schools, his personal commitment to philanthropy, and his past successes as a CEO all reinforced this role. Regardless of who the mayor is and in what city, the position itself is the best nexus

of fund raising for education**.** My strong recommendation to future mayors in New York City and elsewhere is that they put more emphasis on developing a shared vision of the kind of system that is needed to achieve quality education in an urban environment. That is not at all the same as seeking the lowest common denominator among the different, and at times, competing interest groups. It means getting as many of them as possible to endorse a new approach to further their shared interest. How to bring about such a collaborative culture and sense of common purpose, however, takes tremendous patience and a strong commitment by the mayor to work on those tasks.

Establishing a Coherent, Shared Vision

A basic component of bringing the participants together to pursue a common agenda of school reform is the mayor and the chancellor's establishment of a coherent and shared vision of the future. Contrary to a popular view that urging managers to have a vision is a platitude, what former President George H.W. Bush derisively referred to as "that vision thing," academic writers on management are increasingly emphasizing that leaders must develop such a vision if they are to be effective change managers (see Kotter 2003: 26–27; Mintzberg et al. 1998: 136–143; Kilmann et al. 1988: 135, 140–145; Tushman and O'Reilly 1997: 39–43, 171; Hambrick et al. 1998: 388–391).

Recent writings of academics on leadership and that of CEOs illustrate this point. One of the former, Warren Bennis (2003) wrote:

> Leaders come in every size, shape, and disposition … nevertheless, they all seem to share some, if not all, of the following ingredients: The first is a guiding vision (p. 31).

Kilmann et al. (1988) note:

> A vision is an attempt to articulate, as clearly and vividly as possible, the desired future state of the organization. The vision is the goal that provides direction, aligns key players, and energizes people to achieve a common purpose. It is a statement of an organizational dream – it stretches the imagination and motivates people to rethink what is possible. It is the most critical element of a successful organization-wide transformation (p. 135).

Further, Biggadike (1998) concludes in describing successful companies that transformed themselves:

> What provides unity to the whole? …. Vision is the first answer given by the CEOs and researchers in this book …. Perhaps most importantly, vision provides employees with a sense of purpose and direction (pp. 389–390).

Turning directly to practicing managers, John Sculley, former CEO of Pepsi Cola and Apple, concluded:

> As I see it, leadership revolves around vision, ideas, direction, and has more to do with inspiring people as to direction and goals than with day-do-day implementation …. You have to be capable of inspiring other people to do things without actually sitting on top of them with a checklist – which is management, not leadership (Bennis 2003: 130).

Moreover, academics and practitioners who write about vision agree that as applied to organizations, it refers to shared beliefs, knowledge, values, and emotions related to a desired future. Another way of describing vision is as a "collective mind" or shared mental representations that are understandable, credible, inspiring, and engender positive actions by organization members. The leader does this through rhetoric that creates and periodically reshapes the collective mind of organization members, identifying through a strategy statement obstacles to realizing the vision and stating how the organization will overcome them.

How does this concept of the ideal visionary leader bear on an assessment of mayoral control in New York? I would argue that there was insufficient attention given to establishing a shared, coherent vision throughout the school system. The many changes Bloomberg and Klein introduced were not developed in collaboration with other key participants; nor were they presented as part of a larger plan. No process for doing so was announced and followed. Instead, the mayor and chancellor made periodic reference to their transformation of the school system, but they made little systematic effort to develop or explain just what the change vision was.

This critique is not limited to Bloomberg and Klein. No other big city mayor and chancellor, to my knowledge, has developed such a vision and spread it throughout the school district, with the exception of the leaders in Boston, Chicago, and San Diego moving in that direction. Ironically, both Bloomberg and Klein have made major policy statements (see Chap. 4) that contained insightful diagnoses about what was wrong with the New York City school system. Moreover, Bloomberg's book (1997) reveals his considerable awareness of a leader needing the qualities just presented:

> The more successful you are, the more likely it is that "you" is a group. To win big, you must have an ability to leverage your work by identifying, including, convincing, and inspiring others to follow your vision. Then share the praise, or they won't be there for very long to help, and soon there'll be little for you to talk about (p. 225).

A big lesson of this book is that Bloomberg and Klein were full of insightful ideas about what was wrong with the system that could be the components of such a vision, but their management styles did not support the ideas with concerted follow-up. Paying more attention to this task is the challenge ahead. It may well be taking place in charter schools and small schools that Bloomberg and Klein deserve praise for having championed so strongly. Now it must be spread systemwide.

Postscript

The ability to make this change systemwide may be more possible in New York's newly decentralized system, with headquarters and the mayor functioning mainly as service providers, rather than as enforcers of bureaucratic rules. This new organization form is accompanied by the development of performance measures at the school and classroom levels to provide accountability. A consideration now

becomes one of spelling out the respective roles of headquarters and the schools under such an arrangement.

New York's prior experience with decentralization immediately preceding mayoral control (1970–2002) provides an important lesson on how not to proceed. In the first several years of implementation, headquarters failed to provide either the technical assistance or the monitoring and standard setting needed for the community school boards and districts to function effectively (Rogers 1990). They offered little training for school board and district officials and assistance on curriculum, budget, staff development, and measuring student and staff performance. Today such efforts should also include strong advocacy for the schools' financing in the face of budget cuts so that the schools will not, as one principal stated, "be hung out to dry."

The chancellor is doing some of these things and could undoubtedly do more. The Principals Academy, for example, is playing a critical role in training new principals to function effectively in increasingly autonomous schools. Headquarters has also given support for teacher mentoring programs and has developed tools for assessing school performance. It could set up a technical assistance unit to collect and disseminate information on model schools and programs throughout the nation, which could then be made available to the schools themselves and to the field administrative units that comprise their parent organization. The concept of headquarters as a resource and service agency, then, needs considerable development, so that headquarters does not hold principals accountable for their performance, without giving them the support they so desperately need.

A big challenge in New York is to learn from its early experiences and move on to a modified mayoral control system that realizes more of its potential than has been the case thus far. Nobody, including the early leaders of mayoral control, should be expected to be mistake-free. The challenge for future leaders is to learn both from successes and mistakes of the past.

Appendix A

New York city Board of Education Superintendent of Schools/Chancellors (1898-present)

Name	Title	Service
William Maxwell	Superintendent of Schools	3/15/1898–2/11/1918
William Ettinger	Superintendent of Schools	5/1/1918–4/30/1924
William O'Shea	Superintendent of Schools	5/1/1924–1/31/1934
Harold G. Campbell	Superintendent of Schools	2/1/1934–5/17/1942
John E. Wade	Superintendent of Schools	6/24/1942–8/31/47
William Jansen	Superintendent of Schools	9/1/1947–8/31/1958
John Theobald	Superintendent of Schools	9/1/1958–10/23/1962
Bernard E. Donovan	Acting Superintendent of Schools	10/23/1962–4/15/1963
Calvin E. Gross	Superintendent of Schools	4/15/1963–1/1/1965
Bernard E. Donovan	Acting Superintendent of Schools	3/4/1965–9/1/1965
	Superintendent of Schools	9/1/1965–8/31/1969
Nathan Brown	Acting Superintendent of Schools	9/1/1969–3/1/1970
Harvey B. Scribner	Chancellor	9/1/1970–4/1/1973
Irving Anker	Acting Chancellor	4/1/1973–6/30/1973
	Chancellor	7/1/1973–6/30/1978
Frank J. Macchiarola	Chancellor	7/1/1978–2/17/1983
Anthony J. Alvarado	Chancellor	5/2/11983–3/25/1984
Nathan Quinones	Chancellor	3/26/1984–12/31/1987
Richard R. Green	Chancellor	3/1/1988–5/10/1989
Bernard Mecklowitz	Acting Chancellor	5/10/1989–5/21/1989
	Chancellor	5/22/1989–12/31/1989
Joseph A. Fernandez	Chancellor	1/1/1990–6/30/1993
Harvey Garner	Interim Chancellor	7/1/1993–9/12/1993
Ramon C. Cortines	Chancellor	9/13/1993–10/13/1995
Rudolph F. Crew	Chancellor	10/15/1995–1/5/2000
Harold O. Levy	Chancellor (interim)	1/19/2000–5/16/2000
	Chancellor	5/17/2000–8/16/2002
Joel I. Klein	Chancellor	9/19/2002-present

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