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Proposed Hiring Revision Would Hurt More Than Help

Chancellor Joseph Fernandez' proposed revision of the hiring process for principals, assistant principals and other supervisors would dramatically diminish what should be the primary role of parents in screening and recommending candidates to fill these crucial school positions.

Rather than cut back on patronage, cronyism and job-trading, the proposal appears merely to shift opportunities for such from community school board members to teachers and supervisors. The Legislature barred school employees from holding office as community school board members to remove these opportunities for those school employees who act first for their own benefit. Indeed, at a recent meeting with parent leaders in my northeast Queens district, they expressed a clear consensus for the current system which excludes teachers.

The current system limits the initial screening of resumes and interviews (called "Level I") to parents and school board members. The only change at this level ought to be limited to permitting community school board members to auditing Level I to insure that supervisory candidates don't say one thing to the parents and an opposite thing in

their Level III interviews with the community school board. To insure the integrity of Level I, parents should be permitted to request an outside monitor from the board. Also, school boards should be free to opt out of all Level I interviews if they find that preferable.

The role of teachers and school administrators in this process should remain limited to working with parents to set up the criteria and qualities they perceive their school needs in a principal or assistant principal.

In addition, the community supervisors should be required to recommend a minimum of three and a maximum of five candidates to the community school board at Level III.

Finally, I reiterate my longstanding opposition to the latest trend in education to search for and hire teachers

sent by the central Board of Education should be imposed based on demonstrated need or, the invitation of the parents involved in the interviewing and screening process. My board remains superseded because our predecessor board stood opposed to the imposition of such an outside intervener which the then-chancellor asserted was necessary to insure a fair effort to hire black and Hispanic supervisors. It's interesting to note that Queens, the largest minority in the district, were not a concern. The predecessor board certainly was not not ignorant and was open and fair in its selection. No one was to be favored based on their heritage. African or Hispanic descent.

The proposal does contain a worthwhile provision to require that the

not recommended by parents.

The promise of decentralization — good schools for children through parent empowerment — has been realized in some districts and many schools. If fully implemented and monitored, all public school children will reap its benefit.

Corey Boorak, member
Community School Board 26

Let me see what you think of this and what you think. Writers should give a full address of home and office phone numbers, as well as a list of any special needs, like asthma, diabetes, heart disease, or political views. An e-mail address is also fine. I and other editors will be happy to help. Write to Queens Voice, P.O. Box 1000, Jamaica, NY 11431.

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