



Parent Voices Weekly Education Fax

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Support democratic governance of public schools

The story: *Legislative proposal seeks to strengthen local control of schools*

Last November, voters in Bridgeport, Connecticut rejected a corporate reform-backed effort to strip voters of their right to an elected school board. PAA Connecticut member Wendy Lecker wrote*, "Bridgeport's voters were not fooled by the reformers' claims. A sound majority elected to retain their right to vote, maintaining public accountability for education."

87% of last fall's voters in Chicago favored of an elected school board in the 35 of 50 wards where the advisory referendum was on the ballot**. The initiative was supported by PAA Chicago affiliates 19th Ward Parents Organization and PURE. 19th Ward's Becky Malone said**, "As long as we have an appointed board accountable only to the Mayor, we will never see real change in our public schools."

Now, Representatives Aaron Schock and Pat Meehan have announced their intention to introduce the **Local School Board Governance and Flexibility Act**, which will reaffirm the role of local educational agencies as the principal democratic governance body in determining how children in local communities are educated.

*"Unfortunately, in recent years, this local authority has been unnecessarily eroded through policies and requirements unilaterally established by federal agencies. One such example is the federal Department of Education placing additional requirements on schools boards in order to receive a federal grant." *****

PAA's position: PAA strongly supports democratic governance of schools, including elected parent-majority school site councils.***** We have opposed mandates like Race to the Top which require states and districts to enact questionable policies in order to win federal funding. We also support the right of local communities to approve or disapprove the establishment of charter schools in their communities, either through direct vote or through their school board or other locally-elected body, rather than through appointed commissions.

PAA recommends that Congress give due consideration to the Local School Board Governance and Flexibility Act when it is submitted.

*<http://parentsacrossamerica.org/voters-spoken-corporate-school-reform-bridgeport/>

**<https://sites.google.com/site/codechicago/>

***<http://parentsacrossamerica.org/19th-ward-parents-fighting-for-democracy-better-public-schools/>

****<http://files.nsba.org/advocacy/schoolboardflexoriginalsDCfinal.pdf>

*****<http://parentsacrossamerica.org/empowerment-parents-want-lsc-model-school-reform/>

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