

# Mayor Hasn't Been Meek About School Control

By [MICHAEL HOWARD SAUL](#)

Mayor Michael Bloomberg declared Monday there won't be any power sharing at the helm of New York City's school system, echoing his stance eight years ago when he brokered a deal with state lawmakers to create a panel to replace the defunct Board of Education.

"There will be one person in charge—make no mistake about that," said Mr. Bloomberg, when asked how much autonomy a new deputy chancellor will have as part of an agreement he negotiated last week with David Steiner, the state education commissioner.

The Bloomberg administration hammered out a deal in which Cathie Black, the mayor's pick as schools chief, agreed to appoint veteran educator Shael Polakow-Suransky as her chief academic officer in exchange for Mr. Steiner granting Ms. Black a waiver she needs to become the chancellor. Ms. Black, chairwoman of Hearst Magazines, needs the waiver because she lacks the education experience and credentials required by state law.

In 2002, the mayor agreed to create a 13-member Panel for Educational Policy to replace the Board of Education.

On the day the mayor introduced his appointees to the panel, he instructed them to keep a low profile and serve as a "sounding board" to the chancellor. "I do not expect to see their names—ever—in the press," Mr. Bloomberg said. "That's exactly what's wrong with the current system.

Council Member Robert Jackson, chairman of the council's education committee and a critic of mayoral control, said if Ms. Black ignores the deputy chancellor's advice it will prove "the whole set-up is nothing but a sham."

Mitchell Moss, a professor of urban policy at New York University and a friend of the mayor, said Ms. Black will demonstrate that the educational requirements for chancellor are obsolete. "Just because you teach 40 people in a classroom doesn't mean you can manage a system of this size," he said.

Steven Cohen, a professor of public policy and administration at Columbia University, said, even though Ms. Black will be in charge, her deputy, Mr. Polakow-Suransky, will have "more clout than he would otherwise" because of the way the position was created. "This person has a little more oomph," Mr. Cohen said. "How easy would it be to fire this person?"

Former Mayor Ed Koch, a supporter of the mayor, said Mr. Bloomberg, not the chancellor or the deputies, is the ultimate decider. "He depends on the expertise of the people he appoints," Mr. Koch said.

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