



Legislation Text

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081378 SUBSTITUTE 1

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Substitute resolution directing the Intergovernmental Relations Division-Department of Administration to seek introduction and passage of state legislation amending provisions relating to a First Class City School System to create a citywide elective position of Chief Executive Officer and abolish the position of Superintendent of Schools, and establish the terms of office of both School Board members and the Chief Executive Officer to run and expire concurrently with those of the city's Mayor and Common Council.

As a city of the first class, public instruction in the City of Milwaukee is largely regulated by Chapter 119 of the Wisconsin Statutes - First Class City School Systems. The role, responsibilities and election process of both the 9-member Milwaukee Board of School Directors and the Superintendent of Schools are dictated by state statute. This resolution directs the Intergovernmental Relations Division-Department of Administration to seek introduction and passage of state legislation amending provisions relating to a First Class City School System to create a citywide elective position of Chief Executive Officer and abolish the position of Superintendent of Schools, and establish the terms of office of both School Board members and the Chief Executive Officer to run and expire concurrently with those of the city's Mayor and Common Council.

Whereas, Chapter 119 of the Wisconsin Statutes, First Class City School Systems, regulates public instruction in cities of the first class, therefore delineating operations of Milwaukee Public Schools; and

Whereas, The 9-member School Board in a city of the first class, per Chapter 119, is given broad ranging duties including the possession, care, control and management of the schools, facilities, operations, property and affairs of the school district, and the formation and adoption of an annual budget; and

Whereas, The School Board is further given power to promote the cause of education, including establishing, providing and improving school district programs, functions, and activities for the benefit of pupils; and

Whereas, Because the School Board in a city of the first class has unilateral power to select and dismiss a Superintendent of Schools, and the duties of the Superintendent of Schools as spelled out in Chapter 119 include such phrases as "under the direction of the board", "subject to confirmation of the board" and "shall be an advisory member of every committee of the board", Wisconsin Statutes effectively place primary responsibility for the Milwaukee Public School system in the hands of the 9-member Milwaukee Board of School Directors, leaving no single elected leadership position fully accountable for the performance of the public instruction system in Milwaukee; and

Whereas, Legislation providing for the initial establishment and term expiration of a School Board in a city of the first class has resulted in the term of office of each of the 9 members of the Milwaukee

Board of School Directors expiring in off-year, non-citywide spring election cycles when voter turnout is typically extremely low, encouraging current and prospective School Board members to answer less to the students and citizenry of Milwaukee and more to special interests; and

Whereas, Milwaukee Public Schools have for years been beset by poor performance - in attendance, graduation rates, academic achievement, infrastructure management and budgeting - thereby severely jeopardizing not only the education of Milwaukee's children, but the economic vitality and well-being of the city as a whole; and

Whereas, This state of affairs within Milwaukee Public Schools calls for true leadership and accountability, which can best be brought about by amending the roles, responsibilities and selection process of those given the charge of running the public instruction system in Milwaukee; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee, that the Common Council directs the Intergovernmental Relations Division-Department of Administration to seek introduction and passage of state legislation amending provisions relating to a First Class City School System to:

1. Create a citywide elective position of Chief Executive Officer and abolish the position of Superintendent of Schools.
2. Prescribe the duties of the Chief Executive Officer, including the development and presentation of an annual budget and veto authority over all school based legislation acted upon by the School Board.
3. Establish the terms of office of both School Board members and the Chief Executive Officer to run and expire concurrently with those of the city's Mayor and Common Council.

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