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State Senate to Vote On Mayoral Control Aug. 6 UFT Optimistic

By DAVID SIMS



JOHN SAMPSON:
Amendments separate from main bill.

The State Senate will return to session Aug 6 to pass a bill renewing mayoral control of schools, as well as further chapter amendments to that bill, which already passed in the State Assembly. Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver has not indicated whether his members would approve the Senate amendments.

The announcement by Senate President pro tem Malcolm Smith, Majority Leader Pedro Espada Jr. and Conference Leader John Sampson, came after weeks of deadlock set off when Mr. Espada and Sen. Hiram Monserrate defected from the Democratic Senate conference followed by wrangling once they returned due to Mr. Sampson's objections to the Assembly' bill passed in June.

Proposed Changes

The Democratic conference finally came to an agreement July 24, almost a month after mayoral control of schools lapsed and Mayor Bloomberg had to reconvene the Board of Education. The chapter amendments proposed include parental training centers, increased arts education, more oversight of police activity in schools and a strengthening of the role of superintendents.

If the State Senate approves the measure, mayoral control will be immediately renewed, including the changes in the Assembly bill that remove the Chancellor as the head and a voting member of the Panel for Educational Policy and strengthen PEP oversight of contracting. The Assembly will not have to reconcile its bill with the State Senate's amendments.

Mr. Silver has indicated to reporters that he is not considering reconvening his members until next month at the earliest, when Governor Paterson is expected to call the Legislature together to discuss mid-year budget cuts, and has made no promises that the amendments will be passed. "The Speaker has said that he will discuss these amendments with the Assembly Majority Conference," said Mr. Silver's press secretary, Dan Weiller.

In a July 30 radio interview on AM Talk 1300, Mr. Silver also indicated that the Senate's amendments could be achieved without the Assembly's help, as they had already been agreed upon with the city Department of Education. "It can be done. . . without any legislation, anyway," he said.

New United Federation of Teachers President Michael Mulgrew said in an interview that he hoped the amendments, which his union was involved in negotiating, would be incorporated before the start of the school year. "Fighting for parents to have a voice and training so that they understand what's going on in the schools and education? I think it's a very good thing," he said. "We are hoping that this all happens, especially the parent piece."

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