

The New York Times

Opinion

Parents and the Schools (1 Letter)

Published: March 4, 2007

To the Editor:

Re “Hoping to Quiet Critics, Bloomberg Picks a Parent in Chief for the City’s Schools” (news article, March 1):

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg’s announcement of a chief family engagement officer to represent parents at the Department of Education is a move in the right direction.

This appointment recognizes the need for the meaningful participation of parents in New York City’s public education system and is a good first step. But it is clearly not enough.

A city staff position inherently lacks the independence required to serve effectively as a parent advocate.

If the mayor really wanted to promote parent participation, he would create multiple spaces for parents at the policy-making table. Many parents want to and should be involved in prioritizing, choosing and evaluating education policies.

This kind of meaningful participation in public affairs is not only good governance, but is also a human right protected by international laws that the United States has signed and ratified.

Ejim Dike

New York, March 1, 2007

The writer is director of policy advocacy at the Human Rights Project of the Urban Justice Center.