

MONITOR OF THE MOUNT VERNON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT PUBLIC HEARING

July 22, 2025

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

- Moderator:
 - Harold Coles, District Superintendent, Southern Westchester BOCES
- State Monitor:
 - Kimberly Young Wilkins
- Mount Vernon City School District Representative:
 - Demario Strickland

AGENDA

- Presentation on State law and regulations regarding school district governance and intervention (Kimberly Young Wilkins)
- Opportunity For Public to Make Comments
- Next Steps in Process

MEETING PROTOCOLS

- After Kim has finished her presentation, we will open the meeting up for comments.
- Anyone who submitted a request to speak will be given 3 minutes to talk, followed by an additional 1 minute for final remarks.
- Anyone who did not submit a request to speak prior to the hearing can still submit comments to **Kyoungwilkins@mtvernoncsd.org**

STATUTORY AUTHORITY OF THE MOUNT VERNON MONITOR

Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2025 requires the Commissioner to appoint a monitor to the Mount Vernon City School District to provide oversight, guidance and technical assistance related to the academic and fiscal policies, practices, programs and decisions of the district, the board of education, and the superintendent.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MONITOR

- Serve as a non-voting ex-officio member of the board
- Assist the board to adopt a conflict-of-interest policy that ensures board members and administrators act in the district's best interest
- Develop a proposed financial plan and a proposed academic improvement plan for the district no later than November 1, 2025, for the 2025-2026 school year and the four subsequent school years.
- Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year budget, ensure that the budget is balanced and consistent with the district's academic improvement and financial plans.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MONITOR CONTINUED

- Provide semiannual reports on the academic, fiscal and operational status of the district.
- Assist in resolving any disputes and conflicts between the superintendent and the board and among members of the board.
- Approve travel outside the State paid for by the district;
- Recommend cost saving measures including, but not limited to, shared service agreements; and
- Notify the Commissioner and board in writing regarding violations of the academic improvement or financial plans.

REQUIREMENT FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS

- Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2025 requires that the monitor of the Mount Vernon City School District hold three public hearings within 60 days of appointment.

REQUIREMENT FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS

- This is the first hearing, the purpose of which is to take public comment on the existing statutory and regulatory authority of the Commissioner of Education (“the Commissioner”), the State Education Department (“the Department”), and the Board of Regents (“the Regents”) regarding school district governance and intervention under applicable State law and regulations, including but not limited to, section 306 of the Education Law.
- A second hearing will take public comment on the fiscal performance of the district followed by a third hearing on the academic performance of the district.

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

- Elected boards of education oversee schools within specific geographic boundaries. These boards have primary responsibility for the management and operation of schools.
- Superintendents of schools are the chief executive officer of a school district. They enforce all provision of law, rules, and regulations relating to the management of the schools and other educational, social, and recreational activities under the direction of the board of education.
- The State and Federal governments adopt laws and regulations that impact school governance.
- At this hearing we will focus on the authority of the State in regard to school governance and interventions.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION (ED. LAW. §101)

- Section 101 of the Education law charges the New York State Education Department with the general management and supervision of all public schools and educational work of the State.

ADOPTION OF RULES AND REGULATIONS (ED. LAW §207)

- Section 207 of the Education law empowers the Regents to adopt rules and regulations to carry out State education laws and functions and duties conferred on the Department.

VISITATION AND REPORTS (ED. LAW §215)

- Section 215 of the Education Law provides that the Regents, or the Commissioner, or their representatives, may visit, examine into and inspect, any institution in the University of the State of New York (“University”) and any school or institution under the educational supervision of the state. Additionally, they may require, as often as desired, duly verified reports therefrom giving such information and in such form as the Regents or the Commissioner shall prescribe.
- The Regents may suspend the charter or any of the rights and privileges of any institution in the University that refuses or neglects to make any report required, or for violation of any law or any rule of the University.

COMMISSIONER POWERS AND DUTIES

(ED. LAW §305)

- Section 305 of the Education Law enumerates the general powers and duties of the Commissioner, which include:
 - Being the chief executive officer of the State system of education and of the Board of Regents.
 - Enforcing all general and special laws relating to the educational system of the State and executing all educational policies determined upon by the Board of Regents.
 - Having general supervision over all schools and institutions in the University, or of any statute relating to education, and shall cause the same to be examined and inspected.
 - Advising and guiding the school officers of all districts and cities of the State in relation to their duties and the general management of the schools under their control.
 - Having authority to promulgate rules and regulations.

ACCOUNTABILITY LAW §211-A)

(ED.

- Section 211-a of the Education Law requires the Regents to develop and implement an enhanced State accountability system to more fully implement the requirements of the accountability provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015.
- Section 100.21 of the Commissioner's regulations implements these federal and State statutory requirements promulgating the State's accountability system.

ACCOUNTABILITY (ED. LAW §211-A)- CONTINUED

- Under this system, districts are designated either for Local Support and Improvement (LSI) or as Target Districts
- Schools are identified for Local Support and Improvement (LSI), Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI), Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) or Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI).
- Under this system, Mount Vernon is currently a Target District for the performance of a subgroup of students.

ENHANCED SUPPORT FOR DISTRICTS AND SCHOOLS (ED. LAWS §211-C AND §211-F)

- Section 211-c of the Education Law and section 100.17 of the Commissioner's regulations permits the Commissioner to appoint a distinguished educator to a school district that has one or more very low-performing schools that have persistently failed to make progress.
- Section 211-f of the Education Law and section 100.19 of the Commissioner's regulations provides that schools identified by the Commissioner as struggling and persistently struggling under the State's accountability system are subject to receivership.
- Neither Mount Vernon as a district or any of its schools are eligible currently to participate in either of these programs.

REMOVAL OF SCHOOL OFFICERS; WITHHOLDING PUBLIC MONEY (ED. LAW §306)

- Section 306 of the Education Law provides that whenever it shall be proved to the Commissioner's satisfaction that any school officer is a member of an organization listed as subversive by the Regents pursuant to section 3022 of the Education Law, or has been guilty of any willful violation or neglect of duty under the Education Law, or any other act pertaining to common schools or other educational institution participating in state funds, or willfully disobeying any decision, order, rule or regulation of the Regents or of the Commissioner, the Commissioner, after a hearing at which the school officer shall have the right of representation by counsel, may remove such school officer from his office.
- Such section also provides that the Commissioner may withhold from any district or city its share of the public money of the State for willfully disobeying any provision of law or any decision, order or regulation.

OTHER POWERS

(ED. LAW

§308)

- Section 308 of the Education Law provides that the Commissioner shall also have the power and duty to cause to be instituted proceedings or processes as may be necessary to properly enforce and give effect to any provision in the Education Law or in any other law pertaining to the school system of the State or any part thereof or to any school district or city.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

- Next, we will allow persons who have signed up to speak a maximum of four minutes to make their comments and/or ask their questions.

NEXT STEPS

- A record of this public hearing will be made available on the district's website at <https://www.mtvernoncsd.org>.
- Answers to any questions that were not addressed in this hearing that are relevant to the topic will also be available in the public record.
- A second hearing on the fiscal performance of the district will be held on July 29 from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.. Information about that hearing will also be available on the district's website. A third hearing regarding academic performance will be conducted in August.