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<u>2212795 0.jpg</u> Michelle Rhee plans to release her legislative agenda for education reform early this week, but whether legislators will embrace the platform remains to be seen, analysts say.

"Whatever she releases will get attention," said Neal McCluskey, associate director of the Cato Institute's Center for Educational Freedom. "It's a lot harder to say whether it will have any on-the-ground traction as far as legislation passed."

Rhee, the former city schools chancellor whose reforms polarized the District, told

The Washington Examiner of her plans to create a national education platform through the nonprofit advocacy group she started earlier this month, StudentsFirst.

She described the agenda as "the gold standard of what the [educational] environment should look like, the laws that should be in existence, to really focus on the kids."

Rhee said she had spoken with governors -- some of whom had already indicated interest in adopting the platform -- as well as mayors and other community members to hash out the best plan.

Political consultant Chuck Thies said to look for Republicans to latch onto the platform. "And with more state houses controlled by Republicans, there's a greater appetite for these ideas," Thies said.

But Rhee's unceremonious departure from District may scare politicians away from her branded platform, Thies warned.

Rhee resigned her post after Adrian Fenty lost the Democratic mayoral primary to D.C. Council Chairman Vincent Gray in an election viewed as a referendum on Rhee's reforms.

"If the Rhee ideology means you don't become elected, then very few politicians will be willing to adopt that," Thies said.

Terry Lynch, a local political observer and school reform advocate, said Rhee's run in the District would not tarnish the agenda's adoption.

"There are still plenty of politicians out there who are risk takers -- that's how they got to be politicians," Lynch said. "There are numerous urban systems out there looking to turn around school systems that have been sinking ships."

Rhee is a member of Republican Florida Gov.-elect Rick Scott's education transition team, which released its policy agenda last week. The 20-page document is stuffed with Rhee hallmarks, from the elimination of teacher tenure for recent hires, to the emphasis on quality charter schools, and is a strong indicator of what's to come from StudentsFirst's platform, Thies said. "Pardon the pun, but I think we're going to see a 'Rhee-packaging' of what we already know about her legislative priorities," he said.

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<u>Education Local Education Lisa Gartner Michelle Rhee platform reform</u>
StudentsFirst NEP

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