



For Immediate Release:

Wednesday, June 27, 2012

Contact: Jim Polites 860.713.6525

ADAMOWSKI NAMED NEW LONDON SPECIAL MASTER

Connecticut Commissioner of Education Stefan Pryor has named Dr. Steven Adamowski as special master of New London Public Schools. Adamowski, whose appointment is effective July 1, is the former superintendent of Hartford Public Schools and current special master of Windham Public Schools.

At its June 6, 2012 meeting, the State Board of Education unanimously approved a resolution authorizing Commissioner Pryor to appoint a special master for the New London Public Schools and to require the New London Board of Education to participate in training to improve its operational efficiency and effectiveness. The action followed the Board's consideration of a government and management audit completed by the State Department of Education's Bureau of Accountability and Improvement on May 7, 2012.

Adamowski's new role as special master in New London will be performed in concurrence with his current responsibilities in Windham under an existing two-year employment agreement entered into among the State Department of Education, the State Education Resource Center, and Dr. Adamowski on August 15, 2011. He will serve as New London special master for the 2012-2013 school year. The term may be extended by the State Board of Education. Adding the role of special master in New London does not change the terms of the contract, including the compensation paid to Dr. Adamowski.

A native of Connecticut, Adamowski has previously been Superintendent and Chief Executive Officer of Cincinnati Public Schools (1998-2002), Associate Secretary at the Delaware Department of Education (1996-1998), and Superintendent of Schools in Clayton, Missouri (1991-1995), Chatham, New Jersey (1987-1991), and Norwich, Connecticut (1983-1987). A graduate of Southern Connecticut State University and Trinity College, he has served as a Visiting Professor of Educational Leadership and Administration at George Washington University and as Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Missouri.

“To this point, New London Public Schools have been unable to build sufficient momentum around policies that drive student learning,” said State Board of Education Chairperson Allan Taylor. “In concert with mandated Board of Education training, we expect that the appointment of a special master will focus the school district on creating outcomes that provide the greatest benefit to schoolchildren.”

“Dr. Adamowski is uniquely positioned to assist New London in the strategic planning and execution needed to improve student achievement,” said Commissioner Pryor. “This collaboration between State Department of Education and local leadership will position New London’s students for success.”

In New London, Adamowski’s immediate priorities will include improving the governance structure of the district to support student achievement; immediate stabilization of the district’s finances; completion of New London’s Alliance District Plan; and the development, in conjunction with the local board of education, of a systemic, strategic long-term operating plan for improving student achievement.

New London Public Schools have been subject to intensified supervision and direction since September 2008, during which time a State Department of Education Technical Assistance Team has monitored New London’s school district improvement plan. In February of 2012, New London’s school board President and school superintendent requested greater intervention by the State Department of Education, citing a lack of focus on student achievement and diminished school board functionality.

In terms of student achievement, New London is among the lowest performing districts in Connecticut. The district’s four-year cohort graduation rate is sixth lowest in the state; just 63.9% of New London high school students graduate within four years.

As special master in Windham, Adamowski has worked collaboratively with the local school Board and Superintendent to develop and implement a three-year improvement plan based on principles such as creation of a portfolio of high-performing, effective schools and district school choice; improvement of teacher and leader quality and retention; expansion of university, community, and institutional partnerships; and greater parent engagement.

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