

V.C.

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

TO BE PROPOSED:

June 1, 2016

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-2a of the Connecticut General Statutes and its Bylaws, appoints Dr. Isabelina Rodriguez as Interim Chief Academic Officer, effective immediately, to serve until such time as a Chief Academic Officer is appointed, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved by a vote of _____ on this first day of June, Two Thousand Sixteen.

Signed: _____
Dianna R. Wentzell, Secretary

*"I believe in the best of others, encourage the best and give them the opportunity to grow.
I believe we are all leaders in Education"*

ISABELINA RODRIGUEZ, Ed.D.

PROFILE

Visionary innovative and dynamic leader with exceptional communication and consensus-building strengths; Dedicated Educator with proven excellence in administration as Superintendent of Schools, Director of Pupil Services and Supervisor of Special Education; with teaching experience both as Adjunct Faculty and as a public school special education teacher; A passionate commitment to insuring equal access for ALL students to a quality education, through collaborative leadership encompassing strategic planning, strong interpersonal relationships, continuous improvement, mentoring of K-12 teachers and the collaboration of all stakeholders, parents, educators, and community members including area colleges and universities. Active member/involvement both at the National and State level, through the American Association of School Superintendents (AASA), Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS). Bilingual, English/Spanish.

FELLOWSHIPS /AWARDS

AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE, Springfield, MA:

- Senior Fellowship in Advanced Educational Leadership

AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE, Springfield, MA:

- Fellowship in Advanced Educational Leadership

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL WOMEN

- Awarded the 2010 Woman of the Year Award

CREDENTIALS/EDUCATION

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY, Ft. Lauderdale, FL:

- Ed.D., Educational Leadership

WESTFIELD STATE COLLEGE, Westfield MA:

- M.Ed., Supervisor/Director of Special Education
- Bachelor of Science in Education, Elem Ed - Special Education, Cum Laude

Licensure/Certifications

- Massachusetts Certification in Superintendent of Schools
- Massachusetts Certification in Administration of Special Education
- Massachusetts Certification in Principal/Assistant Principal Levels: Pk-6 and 9-12
- Massachusetts Certification Severe Special Needs

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

CURRENT AND RECENT EMPLOYMENT:

BUREAU CHIEF OF SPECIAL EDUCATION, Connecticut Department of Education, Hartford CT March 2015- Present
Hired as the State of Connecticut Department of Education (CSDE), Bureau of Special Education Chief, to provide leadership, guidance and support to a wide spectrum of stakeholders within the state, while ensuring compliance with all federal and state requirements. My responsibilities include working with colleagues within and outside the CSDE to help ensure high expectations and improved outcomes for students with disabilities as well as to develop and implement effective policies and practices to support improved outcomes for these students and their families.
Some major duties include:

- Ensuring that all federal and state requirements regarding special education are met in an accurate and timely manner.
- Providing CSDE leadership and support in developing and implementing effective policies and practices to support instructional and inclusionary outcomes for students with disabilities and their families.
- Managing federal and state special education funds, including Local Education Agency (LEA) entitlement grants, discretionary grants and state set aside funds.
- Coordination with internal and external stakeholders for implementation of the State Strategic Improvement Plan, setting as the State Identified Measurable Result (SIMR): Improving Reading and Literacy of all Grade 3 students with disabilities.
- Developing effective strategies to help ensure parents and families are knowledgeable about their child's education, rights, and are full participants in the education of their child.
- Through the collaboration of various State partners (Higher Education; other state agencies; Federal agencies; public/private schools; private vendors) providing leadership and direction in developing and implementing state-wide professional development and Technical Advisory support in key initiatives such as Literacy and Reading; Response to Intervention; UDL; Understanding Dyslexia and teaching students with Dyslexia.
- Providing leadership and support to staff members and district personnel in the monitoring and processing of all IDEA related complaints and/or requests for mediations or hearings.
- Providing leadership, technical support and guidance in the development of State-wide professional development initiatives to LEAs, aligned with the Bureau of Special Education, the Connecticut Department of Education priorities and Federal/State regulations.

RECENT EMPLOYMENT:

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, Granby Public Schools, Granby MA

2011-2015

Hired to be the District's Superintendent to provide educational and administrative leadership over a school system comprised of approximately 900 students and 125 employees. Prepared strategic plans with a focus on driving high quality instruction and curriculum, and prudent fiscal management over a more than \$10 million annual budget, to include gathering community support and input for annual budget development, so to ensure voter approval at annual Town meeting.

Key Achievements:

- **Secondary School Curricular/Program Improvements:** Advised and assisted secondary administrators in curriculum and program changes. Successfully implemented new Advanced Placement program, increasing AP course selection. Assisted administration and teaching staff in shifting and transitioning from a four long period schedule to a 55 minute, seven period schedule.
- **MSBA Building/Renovation Project:** Applied for and accepted into the MSBA process for the building/renovation of our elementary school. Including the RFS process for the Feasibility, OPM and Designer process.
- **District-wide Security System:** In collaboration with Fire and Police, successfully presented, and received full approval from the appropriate Town Committees and Town Meeting, funds to install a newly district-wide Security system.
- **District wide PD in UDL/DI:** Provided consistent professional development in Universal Design for Learning/Differentiated Instruction to teachers in elementary through the secondary level, with expectations of integration of goals within new Educator Evaluation system and goal setting.
- **Improved Student Achievement: in State Assessment for Students with Disabilities** Increased SGP at grades 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12 in ELA and Math for students with disabilities on State Assessments.
- **Curriculum and Assessment Alignment:** Led a district-wide initiative to review/Realign Reading/Literacy and Math Curriculum K-12, along with benchmark assessments, creating consistency across grade levels.
- **District PD in Reading and Math:** Provided for the successful implementation of professional development in Reading/Literacy and Math instruction district-wide, leading to successful positive student outcomes.
- **Early Learning/Early Childhood:** Sought and awarded competitive Full-day Kindergarten grant; Coordinated and implemented district/community-wide stakeholder community groups involving private day care, birth to 3 and home care to work on alignment of curriculum, screening, and shared professional development, parent outreach, and transition.
- **Administrator PD in Supervision and Evaluation:** Provided successful professional development to Administrative Team to support and promote Supervision/Evaluation of UDL/DI teaching using the new DESE Educator Evaluation process.

- **Secured Grants:** Secured several grants securing over a half a million dollars to support a variety initiatives: such as Technology; Mass. Math and Science Initiative with Mass Insight initiative for Advanced Placement Programming; Teaching the Diverse Learner; Mass. Cultural Council literacy grant; Pre-Service Teacher Mentor program; Full day Quality Kindergarten; Extended Day Programming Innovative grants; Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Early Childhood; District wide security upgrades.
- **Technology:** Worked closely with the Director of Technology and contracted vendor to create a three-year technology improvement plan, resulting in year 1 improvements in infrastructure and speed, hot spots in all three schools, and by the third year, hardware and software will be sufficient to sustain BYO devices and curricular supports. Additionally, professional development has been provided to initiate supporting teachers to move towards integrating technology into their curriculum and instruction.
- **Shared Vision:** Created a new set of District goals to be incorporated within the District Improvement Plan (DIP) after initiating an Administrator retreat, soliciting input from members of School Councils and staff members to identify strengths and concerns, resulting in aligned School Improvement Plans with the DIP.
- **Community Outreach:** Initiated various community outreach activities: Created a Cable show called "The Superintendent's Corner" to run weekly; Halloween Trick or Treat at Granby Jr. Sr. High school in collaboration with Fire, Police and the Lions Club; Holiday visits to the Granby Senior Center by West St. elementary students; Use of email for all parents to communicate.

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, Northampton Public Schools, Northampton MA

2004 to 2011

Directed the administrative activities of a school system comprised of the following direct reports of six Principals, Special Education Director, Business Manager and Directors of Health and Director of Technology; within a school system of four elementary schools, one middle school, one high school and one alternative high school with a combined 500 employees and 2,900 students; and prepared strategic plans with a focus on driving high quality instruction and curriculum, and prudent fiscal management of a \$40 million annual budget.

Key Achievements:

- **Secured Grants:** Secured several grants totaling over a million dollars to support various initiatives: such as Technology and DESE first Data warehouse project: Mass. Math and Science Initiative with Mass Insight; Teaching the Diverse Learner; Mass. Cultural Council literacy grant; Artist in Residence; The Responsive Classroom; Cultural Diversity Training; Inclusion practices; pre-service teacher mentoring programs; Implementing Response to Intervention programs and curriculum alignment.
- **Innovative Initiatives:** Researched, developed and introduced several initiatives: District-wide New Teacher Mentor and training for veteran teachers; Increased Advanced Placement classes in Math; Science and English (increasing participation over 65%); K-8 After-School Remediation/Enrichment, Electronic Lunch Ticket K-12; and District Security System.
- **District wide PD:** Professional Development provided in Racial/Cultural/Economic Awareness and Diversity; Understanding and Acceptance; UDL/Differentiated Instruction; both to Administrative team and to teaching staff.
- **Standards Based Report Card:** Successfully implemented the first standards-based, computerized report card at the Elementary level.
- **USA TODAY:** Top Ten High School Recognition 2010
- **Progress Toward Closing Achievement Gap** Identified and implemented a comprehensive action plan, gaining stakeholder buy-in, that in 2 years demonstrated steady growth in closing the achievement gap with students of color and white students.
- **Curriculum and Assessment Alignment** Worked collaboratively with staff across K-12 to align the new NPS curriculum with State curriculum in ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies and Music, including creation of benchmarks and ELA assessment rubrics. Results ensured consistency across grades and a curricular understanding across levels.
- **College Partnerships** Forged partnerships with the NPS through outreach and collaborations with area colleges (Smith College, UMASS –Amherst) and universities. Efforts led to creation of several successful initiatives: joint professional development programs, research, summer at-risk programs for entry 9th graders, internships, tutoring, mentoring book study groups and more.
- **Community Outreach** Created 'Superintendent Chats' in community both in schools, public libraries, housing projects. Frequent guest on local radio show; networked at chamber of commerce meetings; and actively participated in community service organizations such as the Lions and Rotary clubs.

DIRECTOR OF PUPIL SERVICES, Northampton Public Schools, Northampton MA

1994-2004

Provided effective leadership to develop a department vision, manage and oversee the district's department budgeting, program development/implementation, staff hiring, supervision and evaluation. Provided leadership and oversight over district systems and policies, along with the monitoring of DOE reporting, grant writing, and regulatory compliance for special education, TBE/ESL, therapeutic /contractual and consulting services, guidance, psychological/counseling and early childhood education (Pupil Services). Represented Superintendent at meetings and represented District schools in negotiations with Paraprofessionals Union. Supervised and evaluated 50 professionals and 100 non- professional staff members.

Key Achievements:

- **Continuum of Special Ed Services** Provided expert knowledge in leading efforts to develop and implement a continuum of services for students with disabilities the creation of several programs such as:
 - **Intensive Pre-School Autism Program** A full day, full week program for preschoolers with Autism.
 - **Alternative Learning Program** at all levels serving students with emotional and behavioral needs.
 - **Inclusion Learning Disabilities Model Program** Co-teaching model program at elementary through H.S.
 - **Specific Learning Disabilities Program** Elementary, middle and HS modeled after a successful private LD school.
 - **Alternative High School Program** for students with special educational needs and regular educational needs that enables students to growth and ultimately return to the regular environment.
 - **Developmental Learning Program** for students with profound physical and mental disabilities that allows students to participate in a school environment with their typical peers.
 - **Life Skills Program** for students with moderate to severe mental disabilities.
 - **Early Childhood Center:** Elementary School Preschool Integrated Special Education Pre-school center, that maximized service provision.
- **Creation of Various ELL Programs** Led efforts to develop various programs to meet the needs of the various limited English speaking students within the district.
 - **Two Way Bilingual Program** for students who first language was Spanish and for students who wanted to learn Spanish. Provided with Teachers fully certified in ESL and SEI.
 - **Sheltered Immersion Program**
- **Building Renovation** Involved in 2 construction projects (one building at the high school and another at the middle school); role included planning classroom sizes, ensuring access, designing rooms and other activities.
- **Political Advocacy** Discovered that the District had an unusual number of students for the area attending Clarke School for the Deaf; lobbied state representatives and garnered \$250,000 in additional funds to support this program.
- **Successful Fiscal Management:** Provided successful fiscal leadership and management over department programs and local department budget, including ancillary programs such as transportation, Medicaid, and grants.

Supervisor of Special Education, Springfield Public Schools, Springfield MA

1992-1994

Special Education Evaluation Team Leader, Springfield Public Schools, Springfield MA

1990-1992

Special Education Teacher, Springfield Public Schools, Springfield MA

1985-1990

RECENT PART TIME FACULTY TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

ADJUNCT FACULTY, American International College, Springfield MA

2009-2015

Education Department: MEd and CAGS Programs; Taught the following classes:

- ***"Educational Seminar- Middle/Secondary Education and Moderate Disabilities***
- ***"Leadership for Professional Development"***
 - Assisted in creation of On-line Course and
 - Adjunct Faculty Teacher: On-line Course
- ***"Issues in Urban Ed"***
 - Adjunct Faculty Teacher Evening course -Traditional Evening Course
 - Created on-line version of course to include curriculum, assessments, assignments, pacing guide etc.
 - Adjunct Faculty Teacher- On-line Course
- ***"Instructional Strategies for Students with Disabilities and ELL Students"***-Traditional Semester Course
- ***"Administration of Special Education"***- Traditional Semester Course
- ***"Strategies for Students with Moderate Special Needs"***-Traditional Semester Course

FACULTY/ADVISOR/COLLEGE SUPERVISOR, American International College

2009-2014

Administer to Practicum and Pre-Practicum Students

- College Practicum Supervisor: Special Education Teacher; Principal, Supervisor/Director Special Education
- Field Based Research MEd: Moderate Disabilities Special Needs Teacher-All Levels

ADJUNCT FACULTY, Elms College, Chicopee MA

1996-2000

Education Department: Graduate Program; Taught the following classes:

- "Models of Inclusion"
- "Introduction to Special Education"

ADJUNCT FACULTY/COLLEGE ADVISOR, Westfield State University, Westfield MA

1988-1993

Education Department: Undergraduate and Graduate; Taught the following courses.

- "Introduction to Special Education"
- "Career Transition Education for Students with Significant Needs"

Advisor: Under Graduate and Graduate Level Students in class and program selection

PROFESSIONAL PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- 2015 Federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Leadership Conference: July 2015, "Evolving General Supervision in an Era of Results Driven Accountability" Presenter.
- 2014 Massachusetts Association of School Committee and Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASC/MASS) Joint Conference: November 2014, "Difficult Conversations; Walking the Tightrope", Presenter.
- Westfield State University: 2005-2015, Teacher Preparation and Recruitment Panelist.
- 2012 MASC/MASS Joint Conference: November 2012, "Communicating Your School Budget", Presenter.
- 2010 Statewide Latino Public Policy Conference (September 2010), Key Respondent on Latino Educational Outcomes in an Education Town Hall Meeting, Panel Participant.
- Rodriguez, I., "Separating Carver School District: The Power of Home Rule Petition", Chapter in *Creative solutions to Contemporary problems in small and rural schools*, by Young, N. & Michael, C. (author, editor), Weston, MA: Learning Disabilities Worldwide, Inc. 2010. (In Press).
- Rodriguez, I "Teaching Preschoolers with Autism". *Special Education Webinar Series*. Filmmaker: Demand Video, Santa Barbara, CA. (2010).
- Rodriguez, I. "How to Teach Hearing Impaired Students". *Special Education Webinar Series*. Filmmaker: Demand Video, Santa Barbara, CA. (2010).
- Rodriguez, I. "Teaching the Student with Specific Learning Disabilities". *Special Education Webinar Series*. Filmmaker: Demand Video, Santa Barbara, CA. (2010).
- Rodriguez, I. "Teaching the Visually Impaired Student". *Special Education Webinar Series*. Filmmaker: Demand Video, Santa Barbara, CA. (2010).
- Rodriguez, I. "Early Childhood Education, Special Education Strategies". *Special Education Webinar Series*. Filmmaker: Demand Video, Santa Barbara, CA. (2010).
- Rodriguez, I. "Educating Students with Bi-Polar Disease". *Special Education Webinar Series*. Filmmaker: Demand Video, Santa Barbara, CA. (2010).
- Massachusetts' Association of School Committee/Massachusetts' Association of School Superintendents (MASS) Joint Conference: November 2009, "School Committee Relations", Presenter.
- Massachusetts' Association of School Committee/Massachusetts' Association of School Superintendents (MASS) Joint Conference: November 2008, "School Scheduling and Start Times", Presenter.
- Peace & Justice Committee: First Churches of Northampton: October 2008, Community Forum on "Closing the Achievement Gap", Panelist.

- **Superintendents' Technology Leadership Conference:** October 2008, "Technology Essentials for Today's Superintendent", Panelist.
- **Superintendent State Representative at the OSEP National Conference:** Response to Intervention (RTI) Summit, Washington D.C. December 2007
- **Women's Educational Leadership Network Conference;** Sponsored by MASS and MDOE; October 2007, "Interpersonal Relationships, Politics and Leadership in Education", Panelist.
- **Pioneer Valley Plan for Progress Educational Summit:** January 2006, "Summit on Educational Equity and Excellence", Panelist.
- **Massachusetts' Association of Bilingual Educators Conference:** March 2005, "SPED, ELL and NCLB requirements", Presenter.
- **Massachusetts' Department of Education Conference:** June 2004, "Supporting The Education of Homeless Children and Youth", "Special Education-- An Overview", Presenter.
- **Massachusetts' Association of Bilingual Educators Conference:** March 2004, "SPED, ELL How can I tell the difference?", Presenter.
- **Elms College/Massachusetts' Department of Education Institute:** Summer1995, "Language Proficiency and Development for Limited English Proficient Student", "Assessing limited English proficient students with disabilities", Presenter.
- **Massachusetts' Department of Education Trainings:** "Understanding the New IEP", 1995-96 school year, various trainings throughout Western Massachusetts, Facilitator.
- **Massachusetts' Teachers' Association Leadership Conference:** August 1992, "Understanding the New Guidelines for Special Education", Facilitator.
- **Association of New York Special Educators for the Emotionally Disturbed Annual Conference:** Buffalo, NY, 1987, "Special Education and the Bilingual Child", Presenter.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP

Westfield State University Foundation Board: Corporate Member	2015-present
Westfield State University Alumni Executive Board member	2015-present
Working Group for Educator Excellence (WGEE)	2009-2015
<i>The WGEE is a coalition of educator, business, and parent groups collaborating since 2004 to create greater coherence among all the systems that influence the quality of teaching and educational leadership.</i>	
American Association School Superintendents National Representative	2013-2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AASA elected National Representative for the State of Massachusetts 	
Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents:	2004-2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Board Member (2007-2015) • Professional Development Committee (2010-2015) • Charter School Task Force Member (2005-2007) 	
Connecticut Valley Roundtable Member	2004-2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Board Member (2005-2015) • President Connecticut Valley Superintendents 2010-2011 • Vice President of the Connecticut Valley Superintendents 2009-2010 • Secretary of the Connecticut Valley Superintendents 2008-2009 	
Smith Vocational Agricultural High School Board of Trustee Member	2004-2011
UMASS Amherst School of Education Dean's Leadership Council Member	2008-2010
Governor's Readiness Committee	2007-2008
Collaborative Educational Alliance for Race and Equity at Brown University	2006-2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Board Member (2008-2011) • Invited Participating Member (2006-2011) 	

Massachusetts Department of Education Advisory Committee

1994-2008

- Recruiting and Retaining Educators Committee (2007-2008)
- Personnel Advisory Committee (2002-2004)
- Special Education Advisory Committee (1994-2000)

Massachusetts Department of Education Task Force

1992-2012

- Superintendent Evaluation Process and Rubric Committee (2011- 2012)
- Bias Review Committee MTEL (Spring 2008)
- Bias Review Committee MTEL (2001-2002)
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners (1996-1997)
- Creating the New IEP and Forms (1995)
- Eligibility Guidelines in Special Education (1992)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)
- Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)
- National Association of Special Education Teachers (NASET)
- American Association of School Administrators (AASA)
- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)
- Massachusetts Association for Supervision of Curriculum Development (MA)