

# NEWS

## Connecticut Department of Education

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**For Immediate Release**  
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### **Associate Commissioner Coleman named Interim Commissioner**

(Hartford, CT) – Associate Commissioner of Education George A. Coleman of Sandy Hook has been named Interim Commissioner of Education, effective August 14, by the State Board of Education. The Board acted at its regularly scheduled meeting today to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Dr. Betty J. Sternberg, Commissioner since November 2003, to become superintendent of the Greenwich Public Schools on August 14.

Mr. Coleman, who has served as associate commissioner of the Division of Teaching and Learning Programs and Services since 1998, joined the State Department of Education in 1987 as a consultant in kindergarten and the primary grades. He served as chief of the Bureau of Curriculum and Instruction and of the Bureau of Early Childhood Education and Social Services before becoming associate commissioner eight years ago. He began his career as an educator as a classroom teacher at St. Mark's School of Learning, Brooklyn, NY, in 1972.

Allan B. Taylor, chairperson of the State Board of Education, said that the Board expects the Department's work to proceed "at full speed" during the Interim Commissioner's tenure.

“We fully expect Mr. Coleman to be very active in leading a very talented and committed State Department of Education staff in continuing to move forward on a very aggressive agenda to close the student achievement gaps in Connecticut.

“Preschool for our neediest 3- and 4-year-olds; strong curriculum and professional development to support educators as they teach that curriculum; programs and facilities to meet the educational, health and community needs of a child’s whole family; educational technology and a longer school day and year for our neediest students – these are the kinds of programs that Commissioner Sternberg has envisioned and worked with the State Board to support,” Mr. Taylor said. “The work being done in these areas, in school improvement and the creation and use of student data to support school improvement, in charter and magnet schools, teacher induction and retention, and in so many other critical programs simply cannot and will not be put into ‘neutral’ while a search for a worthy successor to Dr. Sternberg is underway. Too much is at stake.”

Mr. Taylor concluded, “George Coleman has the intellect, energy and dedication to ensure that these programs remain in ‘drive’ and moving at a healthy pace. The Board appreciates his willingness to take on what is never an easy task – interim leadership of a large, complex, vitally important organization – and looks forward to working with him in his new role.”

The Board expressed its confidence that the Department’s leadership team would build on the foundation Dr. Sternberg has built: “With George Coleman as Interim Commissioner, Fran Rabinowitz as Associate Commissioner, Mark Stapleton as General Counsel providing guidance on legal issues and legislative relations, and Abigail Hughes as Superintendent of the Connecticut Technical High Schools, we have a leadership team that will need no breaking in.

As much as we will miss Betty, we pledge to the people of Connecticut that the Connecticut State Department of Education will not miss a step.”

The Board chairperson said the State Board of Education will conduct a nationwide search to identify the right candidate to serve as the next permanent Commissioner of Education in Connecticut. Details of that search process will be made public when they are complete. Mr. Coleman will not be a candidate for the permanent position.

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