



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
GOVERNOR DANIEL P. MALLOY

**GOV. MALLOY SELECTS DR. DIANNA WENTZELL AS COMMISSIONER OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Former Public Schools Teacher to Lead State's Education Department

(HARTFORD, CT) – Governor Daniel P. Malloy today announced that he is selecting Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell to serve as Commissioner of the State Department of Education. Dr. Wentzell, a former teacher with over 25 years of experience as an educator in Connecticut, has been serving as the department's Interim Commissioner since January.

"Dr. Wentzell has dedicated her career to delivering a brighter future for the children of this state, teaching in several school systems, having a direct and positive impact on improving students' lives, and preparing them for college and careers," Governor Malloy said. "Through smart choices, we've already raised the bar dramatically – graduation rates are at record highs, the achievement gap is down, and students are being prepared for the future like never before. Now what we need to do is set the bar higher to deliver a brighter tomorrow. That's why we've expanded families' access to early childhood education, supported schools and districts that need it, and developed great teachers. Dianna is the right person to do this work going forward. During her time with the State Department of Education, Dianna has proven herself as an effective leader, helping to coordinate the very strategies that are improving our education system and preparing students for a brighter future. I am thrilled that she has accepted this new role, and I'm confident that by working together – parents, teachers, students, and community leaders – we can generate the success that our next generation deserves."

Governor Malloy added, "We had a rich field of applicants, including the deputy commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Alan Ingram and our own Superintendents Nate Quesnel and Fran Rabinowitz – all individuals of the highest integrity with a deep commitment to students and improving public education. I look forward to the leadership and dynamism Nate and Fran will continue to bring to Connecticut schools and students. They are outstanding individuals and I and our agencies will be working with them to improve student outcomes going forward."

"I am grateful to Governor Malloy and the State Board of Education for affording me the privilege of this nomination and offering me the opportunity to continue to serve our students,

families, and educators,” Dr. Wentzell said. “Connecticut is home to incredible students, great teachers, and fantastic schools. Our graduation rates are climbing and achievement gaps are beginning to close. However, we have much more work to do to ensure that all students are afforded the opportunity and advantages of high-expectations and a high-quality education. By working together with our educational partners, I will strive to build upon our success, perfect our systems, and continue to improve outcomes for our students.”

“Since her appointment as Interim Commissioner, Dr. Wentzell has proven to be a truly gifted leader and an invaluable asset to our educational system. Her strong management acumen and collaborative approach will help ensure that we continue to build on our successes for our schools and students,” State Board of Education Chairman Allan Taylor said. “Dr. Wentzell, who offers a clear direction and steady leadership, embodies all the qualities we need in an Education Commissioner and will keep us all moving forward together.”

Dr. Wentzell began her career in education with the Farmington Public Schools system in 1988, first at Farmington High School and then later at Irving A. Robbins Middle School, where she taught political science, history and social studies courses, and helped lead the school’s gifted education program until 1998. In that period, 1992 she spent a year overseas in Pakistan, teaching sixth grade technology education, high school creative writing, history, and photography courses at the International School of Islamabad.

Beginning in 1998, Dr. Wentzell worked for four years in the East Haddam Public Schools system as an Enrichment Teaching and Learning Coordinator, where she developed the district’s programs for gifted students. She also taught for two years and served as a team leader and curriculum facilitator at Two Rivers Magnet Middle School in East Hartford, teaching sixth grade history courses, developing social studies curriculum, and mentoring new teachers.

Following that, she worked with the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) in Hartford in several roles, including as Curriculum Director of the Institute of Teaching and Learning, where she facilitated the development of curriculum for the CREC Magnet Schools, and supported training for CREC administrators regarding implementation and articulation of the district curriculum plan.

In 2008, she began working as a Literacy Curriculum Specialist for kindergarten through Grade 12 in the South Windsor Public School system, and became Director of the school’s literacy program in 2010.

She then worked for two years in the Hartford Public Schools system, first as Deputy Chief Academic Officer and Executive Director of Professional Learning, and then as Assistant Superintendent of Pre-K through Grade 12 Education.

Dr. Wentzell first joined the State Department of Education in January 2013 in the role of Chief Academic Officer, where her responsibilities have included oversight for implementation of college and career content standards and student assessment programs, as well as oversight of

Title I, II, III and bilingual programming. She was appointed by the State Board of Education in January 2014 as Interim Commissioner of the agency.

She earned a bachelor's degree from Mount Holyoke College, a master's degree in educational leadership from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, and a doctorate in educational leadership from the University of Hartford.

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