



New York State Board of Regents
MaryEllen Elia
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The State Education Department
The University of the State of New York / Albany, NY12234
Office of Communications



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**COMMISSIONER ELIA APPOINTS DENNIS M. WALCOTT MONITOR FOR THE
EAST RAMAPO CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
District Pledges to Cooperate to Implement Improvements**

State Education Department Commissioner MaryEllen Elia announced today that Dennis M. Walcott has been appointed as Monitor for the East Ramapo Central School District. Walcott, the former Chancellor of New York City schools, will oversee an expert team that will monitor district operations and provide recommendations to ensure that students have access to appropriate programs and services, and that the district is on a path to fiscal and programmatic stability.

“Dennis Walcott’s appointment and the district’s stated commitment to working in partnership with the State Education Department are crucial steps toward reversing the district’s disastrous decline and repairing the deep rifts in the community,” said Board of Regents Chancellor, Merryl H. Tisch. “We must act now to make sure that the civil and educational rights of a community of overwhelmingly low-income minority children are not denied.”

“The Board of Regents and I recognize the seriousness of this situation, and I have made it one of my top priorities to ensure that the State Education Department acts swiftly to ensure that the educational rights of the district’s students are protected,” said Commissioner Elia. “There is clear evidence that for many years the district has not adequately served the needs of its public school students. I want to thank Assemblymember Ellen Jaffee, Assemblymember Ken Zebrowski and Senator David Carulcci for their efforts and commitment to this district. I look forward to our continued work together for the students of East Ramapo, particularly in the next legislative session, to better ensure that this district can become one where all parents are proud to send their children.”

“The hardship these students have endured is reprehensible,” said Regent Judith Johnson. “Students in East Ramapo public schools cannot afford to wait any longer for

appropriate educational programs. Appointing Dennis Walcott and his team is a first step to repairing a damaged relationship with the community.”

“This effort will be both cooperative and collaborative; we will work directly with the East Ramapo school board but we will not shy away from keeping the district accountable to the community when we identify areas of improvement,” Walcott said. “Our goal is to help the district develop sustainable practices to ensure that East Ramapo is able to provide, and actually does provide, appropriate educational programs for all its students. My team will get started right away, and one of our first orders of business will be to engage the district, its students, staff, parents and stakeholders.”

Yehuda Weissmandl, East Ramapo’s Board President, affirmed the board’s commitment to cooperating with the State Education Department.

“The Board and I are eager to begin our work with Mr. Walcott and the monitoring team to identify and implement improvements in the district’s educational programs and services,” Weissmandl said.

Walcott has extensive experience in top leadership positions in education, including the management and governance of the New York City public school system in the position of Chancellor. In his role as Monitor, Walcott will be supported by Dr. Monica George-Fields, an expert in teaching and learning and school turnaround, and Dr. John W. Sipple of Cornell University, who has a background in education policy and finance and will be supported by experts in state education finance. Walcott’s team will report directly to Commissioner Elia and will be a regular presence in the District with the authority to monitor district operations, including fiscal and operational management and educational programming. Walcott’s team will provide guidance, make recommendations and propose actions for improvement to the school district and to the State Education Department, to ensure that students have access to appropriate programs and services and that the district is on a path to fiscal and programmatic stability, as well as review the allocation of State resources to the district and make findings or recommendations as to any necessary modifications.

Mr. Walcott and his team will maintain a regular presence in the district, including meetings with the Board, district staff, and members of the community, and will provide regular feedback, progress reports and updates to the State Education Department and the district. In addition, Mr. Walcott and his team will provide a report of their actions and findings, as well as any corrective or improvement actions taken by the district at their recommendation, to Commissioner Elia and the Board of Regents in December 2015, with follow-up as needed.

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