

NEW YORK POST

LATE CITY FINAL

MONDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1999 / Cloudy with a chance of flurries, 31-35 / Weather: Page 57 ★★

Chancellor search starts tomorrow as Crew heads west

By ANGELA MOSCONI
and TRACY CONNOR

Lame-duck Schools Chancellor Rudy Crew flew the coop yesterday — as the city Board of Education members who booted him prepared a search for a temporary successor.

“One door closes, another one opens,” Crew said as he left his Brooklyn

Heights home to fly to a vacation in Washington state, where he has a standing job offer.

Although he has six months left on his contract, Crew has said he probably won't finish out his term — and the Board of Ed could start the process of finding a replacement when it meets tomorrow. “I hope he

doesn't continue to hold us hostage,” said Staten Island representative Jerry Cammarata, one of the four members who voted to oust Crew.

“He knows where the board stands, and he's already blessed us. Now his lawyers and our lawyers have to meet and work out an agreement.”

Crew insisted he has no regrets about his tumultuous 3½ years at the helm of the nation's largest school system.

“It's a wonderful city that remains dear to my heart. Now I'm

off to the next adventure in my life — wiser and better for the experience,” he said.

Finding an interim acting chancellor will be the board's immediate objective.

“It could be someone in house, or a retired CEO or even a corporation that would give us a CEO on loan,” Cammarata said.

Manhattan representative Irving Hamer Jr., one of Crew's supporters, said his successor is likely to be someone chosen by Mayor Giuliani.

“It's clear it's all being orchestrated by City Hall — and the mayor's four votes,” Hamer said. “It's so dishonest and so corrupt.”

One name that has surfaced is Robert Kiley, the head of the New York City Partnership and Chamber of Commerce.

“Bob Kiley doesn't know boo about education,” Hamer said. “We ought to have someone who has curriculum and instruction experience and is a good manager and good teacher and you don't, in a matter of a week, find someone who has those attributes.”



TAKING WING: Rudy Crew in Brooklyn yesterday, before going on vacation in Washington. Helayne Seidman

After Crew: Editorial / Page 32

NEW YORK POST

America's oldest continuously published daily newspaper

After Crew: Looking Ahead

Everything Hillary Rodham Clinton knows about public education in New York City, she learned from Randi Weingarten of the teachers union. This may be self-evident, given the present-at-the-creation role Weingarten is playing in the first lady's a-borning campaign for the U.S. Senate. But it bears repeating as the departure of Schools Chancellor Rudy Crew proceeds.

It is clear that Mrs. Clinton views the debate over Crew as a political opportunity. As an outsider, she has no responsibility for outcomes — and so is free to criticize at will.

New Yorkers understand that, for better or for worse, whatever differences exist between Crew and Mayor Giuliani, they are grounded in substance. And both men can be proud of what they achieved while working together to improve the schools.

When Crew came to New York four-plus years ago, he was fluent in the rhetoric of reform. He understood — or so he said — America's growing frustration with the failures of urban education. Back then, he predicted that there would be fundamental change within 10 years — or that the public would abandon the schools altogether.

That's when the chancellor and the mayor were speaking the same language. Much progress was made — particularly in the areas of school governance and the raising of performance standards. When Crew and Giuliani worked together, good things happened — even as recently as earlier this month, when tenure for school principals was done away with. Ever so slowly, however, Crew was absorbed into the established order — and the relationship deteriorated.

Over the weekend, much was made over this year's dispute between the two over school vouchers. Crew won, in the sense that Weingarten and her bought-and-paid-for allies in the Democratic Party saw to it that Giuliani's pro-voucher plan died. In the end, though, Crew lost.

He committed political capital to a fight that would have been won without his participation (Weingarten would have seen to that) and his working relationship with the mayor was destroyed. The rupture was com-

plete when Crew demanded that Giuliani commit money the city didn't have to a wholly unrealistic school-construction program.

We happen to believe that, in both instances, the mayor was right on the merits. Even if we didn't, though, it would be hard to disagree with his diagnosis of what *truly* ails the school system: It is, as currently constituted, wholly unaccountable to the people of New York City.

This is not to say that the city's elected leadership have no *moral* responsibility for the schools. Giuliani isn't the first mayor to be frustrated by the inability to move 110 Livingston St. — but few before him have worked as hard, or as effectively, to shake things up there.

Has this left him open to charges of "playing politics" with the schools? Sure. And that's just what he has done — if "playing politics" is the correct way to characterize establishing the environment which made many of Crew's accomplishments possible to begin with.

Does the mayor deserve all the credit? No. Does Crew? No again. And, in areas like school governance reform, credit is due even to Weingarten and Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver. Sometimes even the established order has an interest in limited change.

Right now, though, it is important to the establishment that radical reformers — like Giuliani — be put in their place. Thus did Weingarten immediately lash out at the mayor when the Board of Ed fired Crew: "[The] ouster represents a failure of political leadership in this city," she said.

Quite the contrary. When all is said and done, it represents the *exercise* of political leadership in New York City — albeit to ends that Weingarten can't abide.

And if Weingarten can't stand it, neither can Mrs. Clinton. "Today Dr. Crew learned what happens when you disagree with Rudy Giuliani," her spokesman said right after the ax fell on the chancellor. Indeed he did. But Giuliani was right and Crew was wrong and — Mrs. Clinton notwithstanding — that makes all the difference.