

CREW CUT

IN ED. BOARD COUP

"As an administrator, he's been less than stellar."

BOARD MEMBER
JERRY CAMMARATA

were going to do, but it's something they wanted to do." He added that he didn't try to talk them out of their decision either.

The mayor's appointees, Ninfa Segarra and Irene Impellizzeri, joined Cammarata and Thomson in rejecting Crew's extension. Thompson, Sandra Lerner of the Bronx and Irving Hamer of Manhattan supported Crew.

Crew, 49, has been chancellor of the city's 1.1 million-student school system for four years. He arrived in October 1995 with a mandate to reform a system beset with poor student performance and morale problems.

Before replacing former Chancellor Ramon Cortines, Crew had held the top public-schools posts in Tacoma, Wash., and Sacramento, Calif.

His ouster comes in the midst of several major reforms that he has championed, including the end of social promotion and his takeover of 40 more failing schools.

"All those initiatives will be undermined," Thompson warned.

One of Crew's most significant victories came in late 1996, when — with Giuliani's support — he won state approval to give the chancellor more power over local school districts.

Also during his tenure, the focus on literacy increased, tougher standards were introduced, arts were restored, and an agreement to end principals' tenure — one of Giuliani's biggest goals — was reached.

But Jill Levy, executive vice-president of the union that represents principals and other administrators, said Crew helped demoralize school leaders during a draining four-year contract impasse.

"It's time for him to move on," Levy said. "It appears he was more interested in his own needs than the needs of the children of New York. He was a man who was quick to blame everyone else, but didn't rise up to accept his own accountability."

Jeers and cheers for decision

Here are a few of the voices raised — for and against — the Board of Education's vote to end Schools Chancellor Rudy Crew's contract.

AGAINST DISMISSAL

■ Probable Senate candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton's campaign spokesman, Howard Wolfson: "Today Dr. Crew learned what happens when you disagree with Rudy Giuliani. Rudy Crew stood up to the mayor by opposing his voucher scheme and paid the price. He deserved better."

■ City Council Speaker Peter Vallone: "This administration has driven some pretty good people out of town. It's time to get rid of the Board of Education, not the people who are trying to fix it."

■ United Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten: "Dr. Crew's ouster as chancellor represents a failure of political leadership in this city, and it is stunning how quickly it came about. The uncertainty and instability that will likely result from his departure could not have come at a worse time."

■ Public Advocate Mark Green: "It's regrettable that the mayor and the four board members have put politics ahead of our kids."

■ Noreen Connell, executive director of the Educational Priorities Panel: "It's very saddening and angering, because I think it's micro-managing by the mayor, and he certainly finessed this."

FOR DISMISSAL

■ Colman Genn, executive director of the Public Education Association: "I am pleased that they made the decision. I think the chancellor's behavior has been very poor in the last few weeks."

■ Terri Thomson, a board member representing Queens who had the decisive swing vote: "We need a chancellor who will give a thousand percent right now. We need a chancellor with a fire in his belly and a passion for change."

■ Deputy Mayor Ninfa Segarra, a mayoral appointee to the board: "The straw that broke the camel's back was that there was someone [who] was negotiating [his conditions to remain] through the press, when he had not talked to the board. He didn't seem to be managing very well."



Board President Bill Thomson and members Sandra Lerner and Irving Hamer (left to right, top) wanted to keep schools chief Rudy Crew (right), but Terri Thomson (above) and three other board members turned thumbs down.

At first he mattered — then he splattered!

SCHOOLS chancellors come and schools chancellors go — so it was always just a matter of time for the talented, but flawed, Rudy Crew.

The important lessons to be drawn from Crew's New York experience shouldn't be lost in the chaff cluttering the media's radar screen.

Some remarkable reforms took place on his watch; he can take pride in having helped bring them about.

But, on balance, Crew's tenure has to be marked a failure — not because of any one tactical setback, but because the chancellor lacked strategic vision.

It's not so much that he didn't learn from his losses — though



clearly he didn't. It's that he didn't understand his victories.

There were substantial changes in the public-school governance system under Crew; earlier this month the union representing principals agreed to give up tenure.

These are fundamental reforms — and they never would have happened without Crew's support.

But the chancellor never seemed to understand that they wouldn't

have been possible without unremitting pressure from outside the public-school establishment.

That is, without the involvement of the Giuliani administration.

It was the mayor who ultimately beat down the opposition to school-governance reform — all the while building the coalition of interested parties needed to pass the necessary bills.

And it was the mayor's labor people who insisted on an end to principal tenure — and finally got it.

Mayor Giuliani couldn't have done it all by himself. But it wouldn't have happened without him.

Conversely, Crew's major losses

— the cheating and attendance scandals that helped do him in, and the fight with City Hall over school vouchers — happened because Crew abandoned his outside allies and allowed himself to be absorbed by the Livingston Street culture.

Before the voucher fight, it was the Two Rudys — the chancellor and the mayor — and good things were happening.

Then Crew signed on with the teachers' union — and suddenly progress was no longer possible.

Schools chancellors who are committed to real reform have no allies in the established order.

Rudy Crew once knew this. Then he forgot it. Now he's gone, or soon will be.

CREW CUT

Hizzoner sheds no tears for an ex-pal

By DAVID SEIFMAN
City Hall Bureau Chief

It now seems like 100 years ago, but it was only in 1997 that Mayor Giuliani and Rudy Crew were so close that the schools chancellor was featured in the mayor's campaign commercials.

The two men were so tight that aides told how they shared cigars and quiet moments together at

ANALYSIS

Gracie Mansion.

Fast forward to yesterday.

"The chancellor's been there a long time, much longer than average," Giuliani said — and that was before Crew was handed his walking papers. "Change is good."

For a while, the relationship forged by Crew and Giuliani served both men well.

After ousting Chancellor Ramon Cortines, Giuliani needed Crew to shore up his standing in the one arena where he was demonstrably weak — education.

For his part, Crew realized that without the mayor's support he couldn't accomplish much.

You could even argue that Crew got the better end of the deal.

Protected by a mayor who praised him unstintingly, years went by before anyone began complaining that test scores weren't going up.

Crew supporters say things began to unwind when Giuliani began pushing school vouchers to bolster his credentials for the U.S. Senate race.

Giuliani backers said Crew had to be pushed at every step to implement changes that benefit kids.

"He was supposed to be a reformer. He was resistant to even exploring change," complained one City Hall insider. "He lost all of that. He got overcome by the bureaucracy."

Crew lost something else when he publicly rebuked Giuliani: the mayor's trust. He hadn't learned the lesson of Cortines.

So it's time to search for another chancellor who'll have to serve under a Board of Education president, who's running for controller and a mayor who may be leaving in a year.

"The system stinks," said one veteran educator.

CHANCELLOR OUT

A bitterly divided Board of Education yesterday denied a contract extension to the head of the nation's largest school district, saying Chancellor Rudy Crew had lost the "fire in his belly" — and the ability to lead.

In a narrow 4-3 vote, the board decided not to renew Crew's \$245,000 contract when it runs out in June. It appears the chancellor might leave well before then.

It took just 10 minutes for the vote.

"He's been a champion of new governance but as an administrator, he's been less than stellar," Staten Island board member Jerry Cammarata declared later.

Queens member Terri Thomson, who cast the crucial swing vote, said Crew left a "fabulous legacy," but added: "We need

By Susan Edelmon,
Moggie Haberman and
Cathy Burke

a chancellor who'll give 1,000 percent right now.

"We need a chancellor with fire in his belly and a passion for change."

Board President Bill Thompson charged the vote had Mayor Giuliani's "hand prints" all over it, but board members loyal to Giuliani denied there was any pressure.

"I think this is a dark moment in the public-edu-

Mayor's allies nix his new contract

cation system in New York City," Thompson said. "I think Rudy Crew has served this system well in the more than four years he has been chancellor. He has helped move us in directions we haven't seen in decades."

Crew was not at 110 Livingston St. when the vote was taken. "He prefers to be lynched in absentia," a spokesman said.

The board plans to meet Tuesday to discuss a possible buyout. "I think it would be unfair to ask

him to sit for six months as a lame duck when a majority of the board has given him a vote of no-confidence," Thompson said.

In a statement, Crew praised his supporters, but said it was time to move on.

"Last spring, it became clear that this coalition [of supporters] could not be sustained, and that it might be impossible to restore the solidarity that marked my first three years as chancellor," he said.

"It is now time for a new leader to build upon our accomplishments — and move this school system into the new millennium."

Giuliani denied that he orchestrated the coup.

"This is something that each one of them freely and independently wanted to do," the mayor said last night.

He said Crew's defensive reactions to recent investigations of teachers cheating on standardized tests and the inflation of attendance records at some schools hurt his credibility — as did the leaks in newspapers about his demands for a new multiyear contract, a raise and a fatter pension.

"I did not ask them to do anything," the mayor said. "I knew what they

That was then ... and this is now

The job of New York City schools-chancellor has proven a tough one to keep, with leaders moving through the revolving door at an ever-quicken pace.

Before Rudy Crew arrived in 1995, six people had held the job in the preceding 12 years:



Ramon Cortines:
Term 1993-1995.
Formerly San Francisco superintendent of schools; resigned after a dispute with Mayor Giuliani



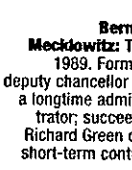
Joseph Fernandez:
Term 1990-1993.
Formerly Miami superintendent of schools; ousted by the board, which opposed his reforms



These four people have been mentioned as possible candidates for the schools-chancellor job:

WALDEMAR "BILL" ROJAS

Position: Superintendent of the Dallas Independent School District, with 160,000 schoolchildren
Salary: \$160,000
Appointed: April 1999
Background: Superintendent for seven years in San Francisco, administrator in New York City schools for 24 years
Scandals: Two DWI arrests, in 1984 and 1990
Style: Independent, quick to judge
Controversies: Supports private, for-profit companies running troubled public schools



Bernard Meckdowitz: Term 1989. Formerly deputy chancellor and a longtime administrator; succeeded Richard Green on a short-term contract



Richard Green: Term 1988-1989. Formerly superintendent of Minneapolis schools; died in office of an asthma-related heart attack



FRANK MACCHIAROLA

Position: President of St. Francis College in Brooklyn
Background: Former vice president of CUNY, and New York City schools chancellor from 1978 to 1983; considered one of the city's strongest schools bosses
Scandals: None
Style: Savvy, and politically experienced



THOMAS TOCCO
Position: Superintendent of the Fort Worth Independent School District, with 110 schools and 79,000 children
Appointed: 1994
Scandals: None
Style: Brash and hard-driving
Controversies: Accused early in his tenure of not listening to blacks in the community and letting racial problems fester in some schools



Anthony Alvarado: Term 1983-1984. Formerly district superintendent of East Harlem schools; resigned amid a financial scandal



Nathan Quiñones: Term 1984-1987. Formerly executive director of the High School Division; retired early amid criticism



HERMAN BADILLO

Position: Chairman of the City University board and former congressman and deputy mayor; has long political history
Background: Mayor Giuliani's education adviser; is influential in the administration; limited clout in the Hispanic community, although still high-profile
Scandals: None
Style: Persistent and consistent
Controversies: Switched political allegiance from Democrat to Republican

