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What They're Saying

Monday, December 20, 2010 • Tags: [Appointments](#)

“Christopher Cerf has proven himself again and again as an effective leader in education reform...”

[Current and Former School Chancellors and Commissioners. “Chris is the right man” to help implement Governor Christie’s Education Reforms...](#)

New York City Schools Chancellor Joel Klein:

“I know the governor wants someone who is tough and fair and who will move the system forward. Chris is the right man for that work,” said Joel Klein, the outgoing New York City schools chancellor who said he has known Cerf for nearly 30 years. “Chris is one of the most talented and sophisticated people in education in America today.” Klein said. “I know every superintendent, every commissioner across the country and he is right at the top of the pack. I think he would be a spectacular commissioner”...One of Cerf’s major accomplishments, Klein said, involved “flipping the system” to empower principals and hold them accountable for students’ learning. Another involved Cerf’s effort to evaluate teachers based on student achievement, one of Christie’s signature education reform proposals, he said.” (Jessica Calefati, “Gov. Chris Christie to nominate ex-N.Y. schools official for N.J. education commissioner,” The Star-Ledger, 12/17/10)

“Joel Klein, the outgoing chancellor of New York City schools, where Mr. Cerf served as a deputy chancellor until 2009, called Mr. Cerf “a man of enormous intellect, talent and deep understanding of K-12 education and would be a terrific leader.” Mr. Klein, who recruited the former Supreme Court law clerk to the New York City Department of Education, credits Mr. Cerf with helping to move the system of 1,600 schools and 1.1 million children toward greater accountability for school leaders and teachers. Mr. Cerf helped push principals to scrutinize the work of teachers who were up for tenure and to deny or delay tenure if they weren’t up to snuff, Mr. Klein said.” (Lisa Fleisher And Barbara Martinez, “N.J. Education Chief Is Named,” Wall Street Journal, 12/17/2010)

“Cerf worked on reforming teacher tenure to stop it from being automatic and worked with union officials to institute school-based incentive pay whereby all teachers at well-performing schools receive a \$3,000 bonus. “He’s got a very powerful mind, great analytics, knows how to execute, and understands the relationship between policy and management,” Klein said.” (Beth DeFalco, “Official: Christie to nominate NJ education chief,” Associated Press, 12/17/2010)

Former Washing DC School Chancellor & Founder of the Students First Advocacy Group Michelle Rhee:

“...gave Cerf high marks. “Christopher Cerf has proven himself again and again as an effective leader in education reform and from the front lines in New York City,” she said by e-mail. “I have no doubt that he is just what New Jersey needs.” (Leslie Brody, “Sources: Christie will nominate former New York City deputy schools chancellor as next schools chief,” The Record, 12/17/2010)

[Education Advocates. “Cerf was aggressive in pushing for better student outcomes”...](#)

New Jersey School Boards Association Spokesman Frank Belluscio:

“...said Cerf’s “professional background appears to fit in with the administration’s desire to improve the delivery of education to children in poorer communities, as well as to make statewide changes in teacher compensation, tenure, and evaluation processes. We look forward to hearing Mr. Cerf’s vision for the state’s public schools.” (Adrienne Lu, “Christie expected to name Christopher Cerf education chief,” Inquirer, 12/18/2010)

Founder and Executive Director of Together Everyone Achieves More (TEAM) Charter Schools in Newark, NJ Ryan Hill:

“Ryan Hill, founder of TEAM, said Cerf was aggressive in pushing for better student outcomes, even in TEAM academies where poor, minority children outperformed peers in traditional district schools. Hill said Cerf supported good charters but would not tolerate underperforming ones. “He’ll be tough on all schools that are bad,” Hill predicted. “He’s completely impatient about changing the way kids are educated. He doesn’t like incrementalism.” (Leslie Brody, “Sources: Christie will nominate former New York City deputy schools chancellor as next schools chief,” The Record, 12/17/2010)

Executive Director of E3 (Excellent Education for Everyone) Derrell Bradford:

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"...praised Cerf's "impressive track record on charter schools." (Jessica Calefati, "Educators, politicians praise Gov. Christie's choice for N.J. education commissioner," Star-Ledger, 12/18/2010)

"...supports the choice of Mr. Cerf..." (Winnie Hu, "Christie Picks Klein Ally for New Jersey Schools," New York Times, 12/17/2010)

Consultant with the New Teacher Project Daniel Weisberg:

"Daniel Weisberg, a consultant with the New Teacher Project who worked for the New York schools with Cerf, called him an "extraordinarily bright, passionate guy." He said Cerf was instrumental in generating reports that aimed to show each teacher's impact on student growth, measured by test scores; the reports were sent to principals and teachers to help them improve instruction." (Leslie Brody, "Sources: Christie will nominate former New York City deputy schools chancellor as next schools chief," The Record, 12/17/2010)

Teachers' Union Leaders, "He was very good at problem solving"...

**Former head of New York City's Teachers' Union and the President of the American Federation of Teachers
Randi Weingarten:**

"We had a constructive relationship in New York and I would expect him to have a constructive relationship in New Jersey," Weingarten said. "He was very good at problem solving." (Beth DeFalco, "Official: Christie to nominate NJ education chief," Associated Press, 12/17/2010)

"Weingarten said she spoke to him almost every day. "He understood that to really move a system on behalf of children, you had to work together," Weingarten said. "Conflict is easier ... but if you are actually trying to help students succeed, you're listening to those who actually have to walk the walk. I found that Cerf engaged in a legitimate exercise in problem solving." (Leslie Brody, "Sources: Christie will nominate former New York City deputy schools chancellor as next schools chief," The Record, 12/17/2010)

New Jersey Education Association President Barbara Keshishian:

"...I'm looking forward to an opportunity to establish a relationship with the new commissioner if he is approved, and to be able to begin a dialogue about the important things we're facing." (Leslie Brody, "Sources: Christie will nominate former New York City deputy schools chancellor as next schools chief," The Record, 12/17/2010)

New Jersey Education Association Spokesman Steve Wollmer:

"...said the union hopes to build a cooperative relationship with Cerf, adding that Cerf's collaborative relationship with New York City's American Federation of Teachers chapter was "very encouraging." (Jessica Calefati, "Educators, politicians praise Gov. Christie's choice for N.J. education commissioner," Star-Ledger, 12/18/2010)

Former Local Officials, Chris Cerf is one of the "smartest, most accomplished guys in the education movement nationally and internationally"...

Former Deputy New York City Mayor Kevin Sheekey:

"...praised Cerf Friday, calling him one of the "smartest, most accomplished guys in the education movement nationally and internationally...Sheekey said Cerf always had good, productive relationships with union leaders and politicians alike, crediting his work with Randi Weingarten, the president of the American Federation of Teachers, on the school-based incentive pay program." (Beth DeFalco, "Official: Christie to nominate NJ education chief," Associated Press, 12/17/2010)

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