

Lowengard to be RCSD interim boss, again

Says he has recovered from stroke in 2016

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Daniel Lowengard is going to get another chance to lead the Rochester City School District.

The first one came in January 2016, when he was appointed interim superintendent following the resignation of Bolgen Vargas. That lasted exactly four days before Lowengard had a stroke while speaking before the Rochester Teachers Association.

The new opportunity comes in similar circumstances;

the board has announced him as the interim superintendent as it searches for a permanent replacement for Barbara Deane-Williams, the district



Lowengard

announced to staff Friday.

Lowengard's chief of staff will be Linda Cimusz, who stepped in for him in 2016 and led the district until Deane-Williams' appointment. Both are experienced administrators with long tenures in large upstate districts; Lowengard was superintendent in Syracuse and had been a consultant in Rochester before his first appointment as interim superintendent. School Board President Van White called them "the dynamic duo."

"Both these folks have a lot of experience with our district," he said. "To have both these individuals come back, we should lose no ground, because these aren't people who will have to be brought up to speed."

The goal is to select a permanent superintendent by June, White said. The board has contracted with a search firm to help make its choice. Lowengard has four decades of experience in urban education in New York, including stints as superintendent in Syracuse and Utica. He got his start as a teacher in Syracuse in 1972 and worked his way up to the top job, staying there more than five years before retiring in 2011. After his retirement, he worked as an outside educational expert reporting on schools — including in Rochester — on behalf of the New York State

Education Department.

In a phone conversation Friday afternoon, Lowengard addressed his health issues and his return to the Rochester district.

"I know they've got a lot of things on their plate I want to help them move through it," he said. He also said he does not expect his health to be an issue. "It was unfortunate the way the last one ended. I still have right side weakness but my brain and work are fine. ... I'm not as quick as I used to be and my golf game is terrible." Lowengard said his top priorities would be a likely difficult budget season and helping prioritize the school board's action steps regarding the "very thorough" distinguished educator's report.

Cimusz spent a year as chief academic officer of Buffalo Public Schools. Before that, she worked with Lowengard in the Syracuse City School District from 1972 to 1992 and also as Texas' deputy education commissioner.

"To have (Lowengard and Cimusz) come back, we should lose no ground, because these aren't people who will have to be brought up to speed." School Board President Van White