

## **Partner is leaving the RCSD**

### **Communications director is headed to URMCM post**

**JUSTIN MURPHY**

@CITIZENMURPHY

Rochester City School District Communications Director Chip Partner is leaving the district this month to lead the public relations department at the University of Rochester Medical Center, he said Tuesday.

At URMCM, Partner will be in charge of external communications. He fills, in part, the position vacated in January by Chris DiFrancesco, who left to become chief communications director at the Columbia University Medical Center. "It's truly bittersweet, because I've loved working in the district and I value its mission," Partner said. "But if you work in my field, URMCM is really the place to be." Partner first took the RCSD job in November 2012 at the beginning of then-Superintendent Bolgen Vargas' tenure. He was an administration loyalist through Vargas' deteriorating relationship with the school board and eventual departure in December 2015, then stayed on through two interim superintendents and the current leader, Barbara Deane-Williams. Before joining the school district, Partner was public relations director for Roberts Communications. He was also communications director for two of former mayor William Johnson's political campaigns. Complaints about the way the district office communicates with school staff and families date back several administrations. Most recently, the Martin Anderson School 1 community was outraged at having their building wrested from them as part of the Facilities Modernization Process, and School of the Arts parents felt misled over a change in start time.

Under Deane-Williams, the district has begun posting more information on its website and has instituted a weekly newsletter for school administrators.

No replacement in the school district has been announced, but some of Partner's duties will be fulfilled in the meantime by former Rochester Police Department spokesman Carlos Garcia, who joined the district in January.

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**Carlos Garcia will take on communications duties.**



**RCSD Communications Director Chip Partner**

TIMOTHY J. TOAL

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**CHIP PARTNER**