

Vargas gets NH schools chief job

Ex-RCSD superintendent takes Manchester post

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Nine months after stepping down as superintendent in the Rochester City School District, Bolgen Vargas has a new job.

Vargas accepted the post of superintendent in Manchester, New Hampshire, after the school board voted 14-1 to offer him the position, the *Manchester Union-Leader* reported Saturday afternoon.

According to the paper, the vote came after a public question-and-answer session that began at 8 a.m. and lasted more than two hours. Vargas' appointment was expected after Manchester's other top finalists withdrew their names from consideration. Connie Van Houten cast the dissenting vote, which she said was a statement about the process that left only one candidate.

"Nothing against Dr. Vargas," Van Houten said when reached by phone by the *Democrat and Chronicle*. "I think he's going to be fantastic. I will talk to him and make sure he understands that as well. It was not a vote against the man. It was a vote against the process."

Van Houten said the board typically has a practice of voting on a slate of three or more candidates. She said she'd received calls from constituents requesting the process be followed, and she said she would respect their wishes. The current superintendent retires Oct. 1. Van Houten said the board could have selected an interim leader while it searched for additional candidates. "That doesn't mean Dr. Vargas wouldn't have risen to the top," she said. "I was impressed with Dr. Vargas. It was a procedural issue which I addressed with the board previously."

Manchester is the largest city in New Hampshire but still much smaller than Rochester. The district has about 14,000 students, of whom a quarter live in poverty and 76 percent graduate on time.

Until now, Vargas had managed to ascend in his education career without leaving the Rochester area, his adopted hometown. He spent 20 years as a counselor in the Greece Central School District and served several terms on the Rochester school board before becoming superintendent.

The Manchester job was advertised at a salary of \$165,000, the *Union-Leader* reported. According to the newspaper, a contract will be worked out Monday.

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.com Includes reporting by staff writer Patti Singer.



Former Rochester schools Superintendent Bolgen Vargas.

JAMIE GERMANO/FILE PHOTO

The Manchester, N.H., district has about 14,000 students, of whom a quarter live in poverty and 76 percent graduate on time.