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NATIONAL THINK TANK REVIEWS HARTFORD SCHOOL REFORM

Hartford's school reform strategy has become a national model that other cities are imitating. New-school initiatives have given families better choices and made a difference in student outcomes. But the improvements have just begun, and results are likely to improve in future years if the city continues to follow the same strategy.

These are the conclusions of a study of Hartford school reform conducted by the Center on Reinventing Public Education (CRPE). CRPE director Paul Hill and researcher Sarah Yatsko will present their results at a community meeting at the main branch of the Hartford Public Library on January 11.

"Hartford has made amazing progress, but it can also learn from other cities like New York and New Orleans. If the current reform strategy is kept and built upon, future improvements in student achievement can go beyond the impressive gains already made," said Sarah Yatsko, who conducted the case study.

At the January 11 meeting, school reform leaders from Rochester and Baltimore will discuss what they have learned from Hartford, and what Hartford might learn from their cities' reforms. All three cities—and twenty others, including New York City, Denver, Los Angeles, and New Orleans—are members of the national "Portfolio School District Network." The Network has developed under the umbrella of CRPE's Portfolio School District Project, led by Hill. A portfolio district is one that seeks to replace troubled schools with high-performing ones, unlock the creativity of educators in existing schools, hold all schools to the same standards for student learning, and expand choices for all families.

When asked about the report on Hartford, Hill said, "Progress has been admirable, but city leaders have to guard against slipping backwards. As Adamowski retires, the mayor and school board need to choose a successor who will continue the work, not toss it out and start over."

CRPE will release the findings of its study of Hartford school reform on January 11 at 6pm at the Hartford Public Library, 500 Main Street, Hartford. The meeting is free and open to the public.

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The Center on Reinventing Public Education (CRPE) at the University of Washington engages in independent research and policy analysis on a range of K-12 public education reform issues, including choice & charters, finance & productivity, teachers, urban district reform, leadership, and state & federal reform.

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