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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Principal Hired for Path Academy Following National Search

Hartford, CT...The new principal for Path Academy is ready to get to work. Taking an important step toward opening in the fall, Path Academy has hired Brooke Lafreniere, an experienced educator, as its founding principal.

Path Academy was unanimously approved as a state charter school in June 2013 by Connecticut's Board of Education and is governed by the Windham Charter School Corporation and managed by Hartford-based non-profit Our Piece of the Pie. Opening in August 2014 with up to 120 students, Path Academy will re-engage over-age, under-credited students in the Windham, Connecticut region by supporting them through mastery of the critical skills necessary for success in college, career and community.

Brooke Lafreniere comes to Path Academy from Global Experience Magnet School and the Bloomfield Public Schools, where she had worked since 2008 as the English Curriculum Liaison and Community Partner Liaison. In these roles, she led the realignment of the literacy curriculum to the Common Core Standards, as well as developed and maintained relationships with partnership organizations locally, nationally, and internationally. Mrs. Lafreniere brings experience in teaching and learning, curriculum development, and school design to Path Academy.

Mrs. Lafreniere has dedicated her career to assisting in the development of new teachers in the field through her work with the Teacher Education and Mentoring Program and student teaching programs at local universities, as well as working to educate students in non-traditional settings. She holds multiple degrees from the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut.

"Offering a non-traditional approach to education for over-aged, under-credited students creates an opportunity for these students to better see the positive impact they can make to our community," said Brooke Lafreniere, Principal of Path Academy. "Together with the Windham Charter School Corporation and Our Piece of the Pie, I am excited to develop this program at Path Academy and look forward to hearing from all stakeholders throughout this process."

Mrs. Lafreniere began on March 3 and will work up to and through Path Academy's August 2014 opening. While a principal was originally to be hired in the early summer, in part to a U.S. Department of Education's Charter Schools Program grant and local funders, the H. A. Vance Foundation and the United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut, Path Academy was able to move its personnel timeline ahead. With the extra time before opening, Brooke will play an integral part in faculty/staff hiring and professional development, curriculum customization, building details and much more.

Path Academy will be located at the former YMCA, at 832 Main Street in Downtown Willimantic. With aggressive renovations through July, Mrs. Lafreniere will work with the Charter Management Organization, governing board,

Crosskey Architects architecture firm, and Construction Resources (CORE) construction management group on final details to ensure the facility is conducive to the unique school model that fits the over-age, under-credited and English Language Learner population of the region.

Windham Charter School Corporation (WCSC) is the governing board for Path Academy. Developed in August 2013 with pending approval through the IRS for 501c3 registration, WCSC is currently made up of four Windham community members and advocates: George Hernandez, Kimberly Silcox, William Anderson and Mary Lou DeVivo.

“We are very pleased to have Brooke join the Windham Path Academy team,” said George Hernandez, Chairman of the WCSC Board. “Hiring Brooke is another solid step in our efforts to create a positive school environment focused on helping our youth understand and live a quality life.”

Our Piece of the Pie will serve as the Charter Management Organization for Path Academy. OPP’s mission is to help urban youth become economically independent adults and works with young people in Connecticut communities, high schools and community colleges. With the belief that success in adulthood includes being able to meaningfully contribute to society, OPP provides a framework to guide youth, with the specific goals of high school graduation, achieving a postsecondary degree and obtaining rewarding post-education employment.

Resources:

Path Academy Website: www.WindhamPathAcademy.com

Our Piece of the Pie Website: www.OPP.org