

GOVERNOR PATRICK ANNOUNCES PLAN TO CREATE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Proposal Changes Governance to Create a Seamless System from Pre-K through Higher Education

BOSTON - Thursday, January 10, 2008 - Keeping to his vision to offer a world-class education for all children in Massachusetts, Governor Deval Patrick today will file legislation under Article 87 of the Commonwealth's Constitution to reorganize the state's education system by creating a cabinet-level secretary of education.

The plan will improve policy coordination across all sectors of education: early education and care, K-12 and higher education; guiding students seamlessly from one step to the next through every level of their education and into the workforce. The Governor's proposal creates an Executive Office of Education, including a Secretary of Education who would coordinate the work of the existing boards to create a comprehensive education system.

"There is no greater gateway to opportunity and success than a first-rate education. This reorganization, along with the work of the Readiness Project will guide us through the next phase of education reform to ensure all of our children are ready to compete in the global economy," said Governor Patrick. "A cabinet-level secretary of education will help us move forward."

The reorganization under Article 87 must be voted up or down without amendment by the Legislature within 60 days.

Creates Executive Office of Education

Headed by a Secretary of Education and containing the following departments:

- Early Education and Care (existing)
- Elementary and Secondary Education (new name for the existing Department of Education)
- Higher Education (new department that will include personnel now staffing the Board of Higher Education)

Establishes a Secretary of Education

Provides the Secretary with the following powers:

- Approval authority over the boards' hiring of each of the three commissioners;
- A voting seat on the UMass board as well as on the three education boards;
- Approval of mission statements and 5-year master plans, both at the departmental level and, within higher education, at the institutional level;

- Approval of budget and capital outlay requests at the departmental and institutional levels.

Maintains Existing Education Boards

Corresponding to each of the above departments expands the size of each board by two members and:

- Installs the secretary as a voting member on each board
- Staggers the board terms so that there are a fixed number of appointments that come up each year;
- Removes the peer commissioners from each board
- Other existing powers of the boards remain unchanged

Additional provisions

- Provides Governor with authority to appoint the chair of the UMass board

"This is a bold move by a bold leader who recognizes that continuous improvement in education is critical if we are going to compete in the global economy," said Dana Mohler-Faria, the Governor's Special Advisor on Education and President of Bridgewater State College.

"This proposal is the result of months of cooperative work between Governor Patrick and legislative leaders and I am pleased with the results. I am hopeful that the creation of an education Secretary will help better coordinate our efforts to promote greater educational achievement in the Commonwealth and encourage more cohesion and increased accountability in the system," said Speaker of the House Salvatore DiMasi. "This proposal strikes an appropriate balance between maintaining stability in our schools and positioning ourselves to meet the immediate challenges before us. I look forward to working with the Governor to pass this reorganization."

"This proposal by the Governor represents many months of collaboration and cooperation and sets the stage for an educational system with greater communication, coordination and accountability. Moving forward, the Governor's plan, featuring the new secretariat, affords us the opportunity to bring the Commonwealth into a new era of achievement and success," said Rep. Patricia A. Haddad, House Chair of the Joint Committee on Education.

"I commend the Governor on this bold and ambitious effort to coordinate the Commonwealth's public education system" said Senator Robert A. Antonioni, Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Education. "After 15 years since the last major reform in the states education system, I believe the Commonwealth is ready for change and new ideas. This bill is a bold step in setting the stage for significant education reforms in the future."

"The Readiness Project is working to develop a long-term strategic plan for improving our education system, but that work alone is not enough. The Governor's central-governance proposal is important to ensure that we have the structure in place to act on those recommendations," said Joe Tucci, co-chair of the Readiness Project. "As we do in the business world, we need to make sure that accountability is

aligned with authority: that's exactly what the Governor needs to get the job done, and that's what this proposal does."