



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
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NEWS RELEASE

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Regents' Chairman Appoints Committee, Establishes Timeline For Commissioner Search

The Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education has appointed a 12-member Search Committee to advise the full Board and to select final candidates for the position of Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Regents' Chairman Robert G. Flanders, Jr., Esq., has announced.

Flanders appointed Regents Amy Beretta and Angus M. Davis to chair the Search Committee.

"In guiding the selection of the next Education Commissioner, the members of this committee will have a profound effect on the future course of public education in Rhode Island," Flanders said. "I'm grateful to the committee members for taking on this task."

"We have assembled a highly talented and diverse group of community members to lead the recruitment and selection process," said Regent Beretta. "We look forward to working with them over the coming months."

"It is vital that the Regents build on past accomplishments and continue to initiate further reforms in order to close the achievement gap and to position Rhode Island as a national leader in education," Regent Davis said. "We are confident that the Search Committee will help us meet this challenge."

According to a proposed timeline developed by Flanders, Beretta, and Davis, the Committee will hold up to six public meetings by December in order to solicit community and stakeholder input on the selection process. Applications will be solicited early next year, with up to five finalists recommended to the full Board in early February. The Board is expected to select a new Commissioner by March 2009.

To aid the Search Committee, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) will hire a consultant to develop, organize, and manage the search process.

Peter McWalters, the current commissioner, has served since 1992 and is currently in the final year of his contract, which ends in July 2009. Last spring he told the Regents that he would not seek a contract renewal.

The Commissioner of Education is the executive officer of the Board of Regents and the chief administrative officer of RIDE, and as such he or she carries out all of the policies and programs that the Board formulates. The Commissioner is responsible for policy development, budgetary planning, legislative and executive relations, accreditation of schools, certification of educators, liaison with regional and national agencies, and oversight of other aspects of the public-education system in the state.

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The members of the public who have agreed to serve on the Search Committee are:

Chace Baptista, Co-Director, Young Voices

Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director, Rhode Island Kids Count

Frederick K. Butler, Vice President Business Ethics, Textron

William Daugherty, Board Member, National Federation for Teaching Entrepreneurship

Dr. Hans Dellith, Superintendent, Pawtucket School Department

Dr. Michael Magee, Director, Office of Children, Youth, and Learning, Town of Cumberland

Ramon Martinez, CEO, Progreso Latino

Kathleen Mellor, 2004 National Teacher of the Year

Meg O'Leary, Co-Director, The Learning Community Charter School

Robert K. Taylor, Partner, Partridge Snow & Hahn LLP

Ronald A. Wolk, Founding Publisher, Education Week

Dr. Kenneth Wong, Chairman, Education Department, Brown University

The first meeting of the committee is scheduled for Wednesday, August 20th, at 3 p.m., in Room 501 at RIDE (80 Washington St. or 255 Westminster St., Providence).

