



Department of Education Adopts New Organization Structure Signaling Focus on Comprehensive Reform

For Immediate Release

Contact: Justin Barra
Alan Guenther
Allison Kobus
609-292-1126

Date: July 13, 2011

Trenton, NJ – The State Board of Education today approved a dramatically new organizational structure for the Department of Education focusing on four key pillars of reform and reaffirming Governor Christie’s pledge that education reform is the next big thing for New Jersey to tackle. Following the notification that state education aid is increasing \$850 million over last year, with all school districts receiving an increase in funding, this structural reorganization is the latest step towards improving student achievement. The State Board also approved 16 appointments to senior level positions, including the appointment of Dave Hesper, former Education Commissioner, as Chief of Staff.

“While New Jersey currently spends more money per pupil than almost any other state, our ‘achievement gap’ for low-income students is one of the largest in the country, leaving many of our most vulnerable students without the options they deserve,” said Acting Commissioner Chris Cerf. “By focusing on four nationally recognized pillars of reform - high standards and rigorous assessments, data and accountability, educator effectiveness, and innovative school models – we are poised to ensure all New Jersey students, regardless of socioeconomic status, are college and career ready.”

Acting Commissioner Cerf has prioritized four pillars of reform for New Jersey schools, with a goal to ensure that all students in New Jersey graduate from high school college and career ready. The State Board’s approval today aligns the Department to deliver on these pillars, by assigning a new Assistant Commissioner role to oversee each one:

- Chief Academic Officer: Will be responsible for implementing the new Common Core State Standards, ensuring that our assessments meaningfully reflect college and career readiness, and collaborating with education leaders across the state to help them build curriculum and instructional tools that maximize the impact of the new standards;
- Chief Performance Officer: Will develop our next generation accountability system and complete development of our statewide longitudinal data system, which will inform progress against learning goals for every school and student group on an ongoing basis;
- Chief Talent Officer: Will ensure that New Jersey has the highest-performing teachers and administrators by focusing on recruitment, retention, and development; will be responsible for expanding educators’ tools and the ability to collaborate around timely use of data to diagnose learning progress and personalize instruction for every child; and will oversee the design and implementation of our educator effectiveness work including evaluation and tenure reforms;
- Chief Innovation Officer: Will identify, incubate, launch, and support proven school models, programs, and technologies for parents and children, especially in our persistently lowest-performing school communities.

Bari Erlichson, who holds a PhD from Stanford University and is the Department’s former Director of the Office of Education Data, has been named Chief Performance Officer. The Department is conducting a search to fill the other positions.

A new organizational chart can be found here: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/genfo/overview/>

Recognizing the need to build NJ educators’ capacity to perform deeper analysis of data, leverage new instructional technologies, and design strategies to meet goals for every student, the department has also created a Delivery Unit, headed by newly appointed Deputy Commissioner Andy Smarick. This unit will be responsible for aligning the Department’s various School Support functions including our County offices – re-purposing these resources to be more focused on teaching and learning support rather than on regulation and compliance.

“Collaboratively building capacity to support school leaders’ data analysis and instructional planning is one of the most important things we can do to support the goal of preparing every child for college and career,” said Acting Commissioner Cerf.

In addition, recognizing the need to become a more service oriented agency and improve NJDOE's own planning and execution skills, the Delivery Unit will also house a new Project Management Office, led by Jim Palmer, a Six Sigma Black Belt process and project management expert.

"Jim's recent experiences leading Delaware Department of Education's Project Management Office following several decades of business leadership will help to ensure that we deliver on our promises to districts and students," said Andy Smarick.

The State Board also approved 16 senior appointments, which are listed below. This list includes the promotion of 12 current Department staff members, and the introduction of 4 outside hires. Among the appointments, Acting Commissioner Cerf has named former Commissioner Dave Hespe as his Chief of Staff, to oversee all key administrative functions in the Department, including administration and finance, programs and operations, legislative affairs, communications and strategic partnerships.

"As I've gotten to know Chris Cerf over the last several months, my respect for him and excitement about the Department's work have continued to grow," said Hespe. "I'm thrilled that he has asked me to join the team and support his efforts, and to once again work on behalf of the children of New Jersey."

"The work to address our state's growing achievement gap must be a top priority of the state, and we are excited to see so many strong appointments at the Department of Education," said State Board of Education President Arcelio Aponte. "Along with the new organizational structure, these new appointments show that Acting Commissioner Cerf is ready to make a difference in the lives of New Jersey students."

LIST OF APPOINTMENTS APPROVED JULY 13, 2011

Former Department of Education employees:

<u>NOMINEE:</u>	<u>NOMINATED FOR POSITION OF:</u>	<u>FORMER POSITION:</u>
Andrew Smarick	Deputy Commissioner, Education Delivery Unit	Special Assistant to the Commissioner
Bari Erlichson	Chief Performance Officer (Assistant Commissioner), Division of Data Research, Evaluation and Reporting	Director, Office of Education Data
Barbara Gantwerk	Assistant Commissioner, Program and Operations	Assistant Commissioner, Student Services
David Corso	Assistant Commissioner, Administration and Finance	Director, Administration
David Joye	Director, Office of Budget and Accounting and Grants Management	Director, Budget & Accounting
Diane Shoener	Director, Office of the State Board	Education Program Devel. Spec.

Robert Higgins	Director, Office of Certification/Induction	Director, Teacher Certification
Cathy Pine	Director, Office of Professional Development	Director, Office of Professional Standards
Mary Jane Kurabinski	Director, Office of Literacy	Director, Language Arts Literacy Education
Jeffrey Hauger	Director, Office of Assessments	Director of Assessment
Ellen Wolock	Administrator, Division of Early Childhood Education	Director, Office of Preschool Education
Laurence Cocco	Director, Office of Educational Technology	Manager, Office of Educational Technology

New hires:

<u>NOMINEE:</u>	<u>NOMINATED FOR POSITION OF:</u>	<u>FORMER POSITION:</u>
David Hespe	Chief of Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-Executive Director, Stem Education, Liberty Science Center • Former Commissioner of Education, NJ State Dept of Ed
James Palmer	Director, Office of Project Management	Chief Officer, Project Management Delaware Dept of Education
Justin Barra	Director, Communications and Strategic Partnerships	Senior Director, Division of Portfolio Planning New York City Dept of Education
Angel Ramos	Superintendent, Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf	Superintendent, Sequoia School for the Deaf

Mesa, Arizona