



## State Strategies to Ensure All Students Graduate

### Presenter Biographies



**Dr. Mitchell Chester** began serving as Commissioner of the Massachusetts public schools in May 2008 after being unanimously selected by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in January. As Commissioner he is responsible for the public education of the Commonwealth's nearly 1,900 schools and more than one million students.

Before coming to Massachusetts, Dr. Chester served in senior positions in the Connecticut State Department of Education, the School District of Philadelphia, and the Ohio Department of Education. Dr. Chester has presented nationally on accountability, assessment and teacher induction and retention. He has served as a consultant to states and school districts regarding curriculum and instruction, teacher evaluation, student achievement, and assessment and accountability. Dr. Chester holds a doctorate in Administration, Planning, and Social Policy from Harvard University, as well as advanced degrees from the University of Connecticut and the University of Hartford.



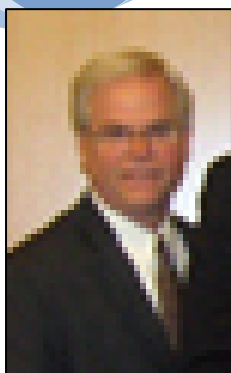
**Paul Reville** directs the Executive Office of Education as the Secretary of Education. The Secretary oversees the three education agencies of the Commonwealth - Department of Early Education and Care, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and Department of Higher Education. Prior to becoming Secretary, Governor Patrick appointed Paul as the chairman of the Massachusetts State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. He also served on Governor Patrick's Transition Team and was chair of the Governor's Pre-K - 12 Task Force on Governance.

Until his appointment as Secretary of Education, Paul was the founder and president of the Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy. Paul was also the Director of the Education Policy and Management Program and a senior lecturer on educational policy and politics at the Harvard Graduate School of Education where he taught for eleven years. He is the former executive director of the Pew Forum on Standards-Based Reform, and was the founding executive director of the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education (MBAE). From 1991-96, he served on the Massachusetts State Board of Education. In 1994-5, he chaired the Massachusetts Commission on Time and Learning. From 1996-2002, he chaired the Massachusetts Education Reform Review Commission, the state body that provided research and oversight for the state's implementation of education reform in the Commonwealth. Paul was also the founding executive director of the Alliance for Education, and the principal/education director and a teacher in two alternative, urban secondary schools. He is a graduate of Colorado College and holds a Master's from Stanford University.



**Robert O'Leary** has represented Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket in the Massachusetts State Senate since his election in 2000. Senator O'Leary is the Senate Chairman of the Joint Committee on Education. He was the first Democrat elected to represent the Cape and Islands in the State Senate since the end of the Civil War. Prior to his election to the State Legislature, he served as a Barnstable County Commissioner from 1987 through 2001. In addition to being a Senator he is also a tenured professor of history and politics at the Massachusetts Maritime Academy where he has taught for nearly thirty years and at Cape Cod Community College where he is an adjunct professor.

He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Georgetown University, an MPA from Harvard University, and a PhD in History from Tufts University.

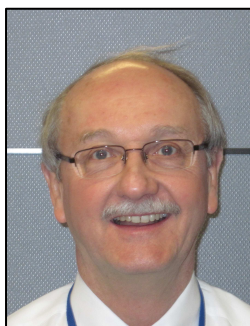


**Neil Sullivan** is the executive director of the Boston Private Industry Council (PIC). The PIC organizes employers to provide jobs and internships for Boston public high school students, serves as Boston's Workforce Investment Board under state and federal law, overseeing the city's three one stop career centers. The PIC collaborates with the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University to examine the impact of high school dropout rates as well as college enrollment and graduation rates for Boston public school graduates.

Before joining the PIC in 1992, Sullivan served as chief policy advisor to Mayor Ray Flynn for ten years, as a community organizer and policy strategist for Massachusetts Fair Share in Worcester and Boston for six years, and as a high school teacher in the Chicago area for three years. A 1974 Amherst College graduate, Sullivan holds a Master of Arts in Teaching degree from Northwestern University. He lives in Dorchester, and his four children all attended Boston public schools.



**Jill Norton** is the Executive Director of the Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy. The Rennie Center is a non-partisan, non-profit think tank whose mission is to develop a public agenda that promotes significant improvement of public education in Massachusetts. The Rennie Center conducts its work through independent research, constructive dialogue and civic engagement. Jill joined the Rennie Center with a background in K-12 professional development. She was formerly Director of Professional Development for the New England School Development Council (NESDEC) where she worked with educators throughout the six New England states to develop targeted professional development for K-12 teachers and administrators. Prior to NESDEC, Jill managed the customer service department for Tom Snyder Productions, an educational software publisher. Jill received her B.A. in Elementary Education from Michigan State University where she spent an additional year completing a full year internship and graduate courses in Teaching Curriculum. She also attended the National Center for Montessori Education-New England and earned her Primary Teaching Certificate. Jill earned her M.Ed. from Harvard University where she focused on Education Policy and Management. She has been a public school teacher in Michigan and Montessori directress in Massachusetts.



**Stafford Peat** is the Director of Secondary School Services at the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Stafford has been the Director of Secondary School Services for the past five years. Prior to holding this position he was a supervisor in Career and Technical Vocational Education. He coordinates Department initiatives to improve high schools and to increase college and career readiness. He also administers federal and state programs and services for dropout prevention, alternative education, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning, Community Service Learning and Academic Support.



**Jenny Curtin** is the State Coordinator of Alternative Education and Trauma Sensitive Schools at the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. In her role she is responsible for grant administration, as well as coordination of several state efforts to support school districts and organizations implement promising strategies related to trauma sensitive environments, high-quality Alternative Education programs, and dropout reduction. She previously worked in the nonprofit sector on education policy to better serve at-risk students. Jenny is an alumnus of the national Education Policy Fellowship Program, she has a master's degree in Public Policy (MPP) and a certificate in Nonprofit Management from Johns Hopkins University, and a bachelor's degree in Sociology from Tulane University.