

HOUSE No. 5089

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, June 23, 2006

The committee on Education, to whom was referred the petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1110) of Anne M. Paulsen and Kay Khan relative to establishing the office of educational quality and accountability within the Department of Education, reports recommending that the accompanying bill (House, No. 5089) ought to pass.

For the committee,

PATRICIA A. HADDAD.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Six.

AN ACT IMPROVING SCHOOL AND DISTRICT ACCOUNTABILITY PROCESSES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 1G of chapter 15 of the General Laws, as
2 appearing in the 2004 Official Edition is hereby amended by
3 inserting after the words “following areas:” in line 2 the fol-
4 lowing: “school and district accountability, intervention, and
5 technical assistance”.

1 SECTION 2. Said section 1G is further amended by inserting
2 after the word “balance:” in line 22 the following new paragraphs:
3 “The members of the advisory council on school and district
4 accountability, intervention, and technical assistance shall consist
5 of 9 voting members. Of the members recommended by the com-
6 missioner and appointed by the board, 1 shall be from a list of 3
7 nominees offered by the massachusetts association of school
8 superintendents, 1 shall be from a list of 3 nominees offered
9 jointly by the massachusetts teachers association and the massa-
10 chusetts federation of teachers, 1 shall be from a list of three nom-
11 inees offered by the massachusetts secondary school
12 administrators’ association, 1 shall be from a list of three nomi-
13 nees offered by the massachusetts elementary school principals’
14 association, and the remaining members recommended by the
15 commissioner and appointed by the board shall represent a bal-
16 ance of individuals with a demonstrated record of achievement or
17 academic expertise in the areas of: education administration; edu-
18 cation finance and management; the utilization of student achieve-
19 ment data to improve instruction and administration; the conduct
20 or utilization of school and district audits and evaluations; edu-
21 cator evaluation and professional development; or other areas of
22 expertise in key areas of education reform contained in chapter 71
23 of the acts of 1993.

24 The council shall meet no less than 4 times annually to review
25 and advise the department and board on the policies and practices
26 of both the office of educational quality and accountability estab-
27 lished in section 55A of this chapter and the office of account-
28 ability and targeted assistance, or any successor office within the
29 department. The council shall assist the two offices to coordinate
30 and support their respective missions and shall have the opportu-
31 nity to review and comment on all regulations relative to these
32 program areas prior to board approval.

1 SECTION 3. Section 55A of chapter 15, as appearing in the
2 2004 Official Edition is hereby amended by striking in line 3, the
3 words “but not subject to its control” and is further amended by
4 striking in line 4, the words “an independent” and replacing it
5 with the word “a” and is further amended in line 5 by inserting
6 between the words “schools” and “and school districts” the fol-
7 lowing: “charter schools”.

1 SECTION 4. Said section 55A of chapter 15, as so appearing,
2 is further amended by striking lines 7 through 45, inclusive, and is
3 further amended by striking in lines 46 and 47, the words “the
4 council shall employ a director and establish the salary for the
5 director” and replacing them with the words “the department shall
6 employ a director who shall be appointed and have his salary
7 established by the commissioner” and is further amended by
8 striking in line 54, the words “chairman of the council” and
9 replacing it with the word “department”.

1 SECTION 5. Said section 55A of chapter 15, as so appearing,
2 is further amended in line 60 by inserting after the figure “1993.”
3 the following: “The office shall share a common advisory council
4 with the office of accountability and targeted assistance as pro-
5 vided for in section 1G of chapter 15. The office shall otherwise
6 operate independently of the accountability and targeted assis-
7 tance office but shall exchange information and coordinate its
8 activities with that office under the common direction of the
9 deputy commissioner.” and by striking the figure “24” and
10 replacing it with the figure “40”.

11 and in line 61 by inserting after the words “audits annually.”
12 the following: “, not less than 75% of which shall be in districts
13 whose students achieve at low levels either in absolute terms or
14 relative to their peer group. The remainder of the audits shall be
15 divided equally between those districts whose students achieve at
16 high levels relative to their peers and a number of districts chosen
17 at random. In establishing the schedule of audits to be conducted
18 in any calendar year, the office shall coordinate with other entities
19 in the department to ensure that a school or district is not subject
20 to multiple comprehensive audits by departmental entities or
21 accrediting bodies within a 9-month period unless the board
22 specifically votes to do so on an emergency basis.”

23 and in lines 63 through 69 by striking the following: “(2) inves-
24 tigate allegations of any breach of academic integrity in the
25 administration of any assessments administered by the department
26 of education; (3) undertake inspections of schools and school dis-
27 tricts to determine the quality of instruction, the performance of
28 administrative, instructional and other staff and make recommen-
29 dations about the school and school district goals and perfor-
30 mance;” and inserting in place thereof the following: “(2)
31 undertake inspections of schools, charter schools, and school dis-
32 tricts to evaluate efforts to improve and support the quality of
33 instruction and administration, and make recommendations about
34 the school and school district goals and plans to achieve those
35 goals;

36 and in line 69 by removing the figure “(4)” and replacing it
37 with the figure “(3)”:

38 and in line 71 by removing the figure “(5)” and replacing it
39 with the figure “(4)”:

40 and in lines 74 through 77 by removing the following: “(6)
41 review the impact of unanticipated growth in enrollments and the
42 cost of special education on municipal education budgets, where
43 applicable including, but not limited to, the impact of said costs
44 on other areas of appropriation within the municipal budget;” and
45 inserting in place thereof the following: “(5) compile, on a bi-
46 annual basis, a list of best practices from the list of audits con-
47 ducted over the 2-year period and distribute the compiled list to
48 all school districts in the commonwealth” and in line 77 by “(6)”:

49 and in line 79 by removing the figure “(8)” and replacing it
50 with the figure “(7)”:

51 and in line 79 by inserting after the words “student achieve-
52 ment.” the following: “(8) assist and support the department and
53 board in carrying out the activities necessary to implement sec-
54 tions 1J and 1K of chapter 69. (9) provide information to the
55 office of accountability and targeted assistance in support of their
56 technical assistance efforts to schools and districts.”

1 SECTION 6. Said section 55A of chapter 15, as so appearing,
2 is further amended in line 83 by inserting after the word “district”,
3 the following:

4 “In establishing protocols for the conduct of school or district
5 audits and in conducting such audits, the office shall utilize
6 existing, recently compiled, or readily available papers, vouchers,
7 books, and records when the use of such papers, vouchers, books,
8 and records will not compromise the accuracy or comprehensive-
9 ness of the audits and significantly minimize the administrative
10 burden imposed on the districts being audited.”

11 and in line 86 by inserting before the words “The council”, the
12 following words: “Each school district in the commonwealth shall
13 file with the office by October 1st each year a copy of all per-
14 sonnel contracts and collective bargaining agreements in which it
15 has entered”.

1 SECTION 7. Said section 55A of chapter 15, as so appearing,
2 is further amended by striking in lines 86 and 90 the word
3 “council” and replacing it with the word “department” and is fur-
4 ther amended by striking in line 90, the word “its” and replacing it
5 with the words “the office’s”.

1 SECTION 8. Said section 55A of chapter 15, as so appearing,
2 is further amended in line 90 by inserting after the words “its find-
3 ings” the following: “, audit reports,”

4 and by striking lines 92 through 96, inclusive, and inserting in
5 place thereof the following words: “local public library in the dis-
6 tricts that have been audited, the president of the senate, the
7 speaker of the house of representatives, the joint committee on
8 education, and the house and senate committees on ways and
9 means.”

The history of the United States is a story of growth and change. From the first European settlements to the present day, the nation has expanded its territory and diversified its economy. The early years were marked by the struggle for independence and the establishment of a new government. The middle years saw the westward expansion and the development of a strong industrial base. The late years have been characterized by social and political reforms, and the emergence of a global superpower.

The United States has a rich and diverse cultural heritage. It is a land of immigrants, where people from many different backgrounds have come to seek a better life. This diversity has shaped the nation's identity and contributed to its strength. The American dream, the belief that anyone can achieve success through hard work and determination, is a central theme in the nation's history.

The history of the United States is also a story of challenges and triumphs. The nation has faced many difficult times, from the American Revolution to the Civil War, and from the Great Depression to the Vietnam War. But it has always emerged stronger and more united than before. The American people have shown a remarkable capacity for resilience and a deep commitment to the principles of liberty and justice for all.

As the United States continues to grow and change, it is important to remember the lessons of its history. We must cherish the values that have made us a great nation, and we must work together to address the challenges of the future. Only by staying true to our principles and embracing our diversity can we ensure a bright and prosperous future for all Americans.

