

# *H.425: Questions and Answers*

## **THE URGENT NEED FOR H.425**

### **Why should H.425 be the top legislative priority?**

Research shows that teacher and administrator expertise are the most significant variables in student achievement. Without H.425, we limit the effectiveness of all other school improvement programs.

Right now, the personnel processes for developing the educator workforce are severely dysfunctional. As a result, our educator workforce produces random pockets of excellence and an unacceptable number of under-skilled practitioners.

### **How does H.425 address this urgent problem?**

It improves the personnel processes for educators by aligning all ten processes for the teacher and administrator workforce and grounding them in professional knowledge.

### **What are the results we should expect to see from H.425?**

The primary result will be workforce excellence in teaching and leadership for all our schools. More specifically, we can expect:

- Better retention of beginning educators, which will create dramatic savings in teacher turnover costs, higher levels of teacher and administrator expertise, and better continuity of instruction for students
- Improved outcomes of supervision and evaluation through (1) better quality feedback and learning for all teachers; (2) intensive assistance for struggling teachers; and (3) expedited dismissal for unsatisfactory teaching
- Higher standards, more accountability, and consistency in educator preparation programs
- Incentives for hard-to-staff positions
- Career path options for instructional leadership by teachers

## **THE PERSONNEL PROCESSES**

### **What are the ten personnel processes?**

1. Preparation
2. Licensure
3. Recruitment, Hiring, and Placement
4. Induction
5. Professional Development
6. Supervision and Evaluation
7. Relicensure
8. Teacher Leadership
9. Organizational Structure
10. Organizational Culture

### **How will aligning the personnel processes impact student achievement?**

We know that students with effective teachers and leaders outperform students without effective teachers and leaders. If we improve the ten personnel processes influencing teacher and administrator quality, we can expect to see dramatic improvements in student achievement relating to MCAS as well as to other performance measures of student learning.

### **With all the time, energy, and resources that have already been invested in Massachusetts public schools, why aren't the ten personnel processes operating well?**

There is no accountability for school districts, colleges and universities, and state regulatory agencies to work together and align their practices with a common core of professional knowledge.

### **How will H.425 fix the personnel processes?**

By combining research-based approaches with standards, support mechanisms and accountability to build a seamless, coherent SYSTEM for developing and sustaining high quality educators. More specifically, the bill will:

- Build internal capacity through a comprehensive design that efficiently integrates and aligns the human and financial resources which influence educator quality
- Provide a systemic solution, rather than piecemeal, fragmented approaches
- Create effective accountability for all constituencies: districts, individual schools, administrators, teachers, preparation programs, school committees
- Put pressure on educator preparation programs to work closely with districts and produce graduates who are better prepared

## **KNOWLEDGE BASE OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE**

**What unifies the ten personnel processes into a seamless, coherent system?**

The knowledge bases of teaching and administration.

**What is the knowledge base of teaching?**

It comprises field-tested practices of what teachers should know and be able to do. This knowledge base is *far* larger and more complex than we have acknowledged. It takes years to master for those who have access to it, and almost never happens for those who don't. Its broad elements include applying knowledge of:

- Students and their diverse learning needs
- Cognitive science
- Motivation
- Content, content specific pedagogy, and state curriculum frameworks
- Planning, instructional design, and assessment
- Data analysis
- Managing the learning environment
- Ongoing professional growth
- Collaborating with colleagues, families, and the community

These elements are consistent with the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

**What is the knowledge base of educational leadership?**

It comprises field-tested practices of what instructional and other educational leaders should know and be able to do. This knowledge base is also *far* larger and more complex than we have allowed. Its broad elements include applying knowledge of:

- Instructional leadership, including state curriculum frameworks, student performance standards, and strategies for assuring inclusive schooling for children with disabilities
- Strategic leadership, including comprehensive school reform, managing change, student performance data analysis and long and short term planning
- Teacher or principal evaluation skills and methods, including observation, performance analysis and documentation
- Professional community building, including teacher instructional leadership

- Communication skills
- Promotion of equity and diversity
- Parent and community relationships

**With all the time, energy, and resources that have already been invested in Massachusetts public schools, why hasn't the knowledge base of professional practice been sufficiently addressed?**

This oversight is grounded in a gross misconception of good teaching as something that can be done by anyone who is literate, decent, and knowledgeable of their content. The truth is, there *is* a field-tested knowledge base of professional practice – and we must now integrate it into all the personnel processes to strengthen the educator workforce across the state.

Right now, every educator has access to different components of the knowledge base depending on the curriculum design of their particular preparation program, the availability of an induction program in the district they enter, and their district's individual approach to professional development.

**IMPLEMENTATION DESIGN:**

**How will the bill be implemented?**

The implementation of the bill will take place in two phases:

**Phase I:**

*District Level Processes:*

The first phase of implementation will include 15 pilot districts who represent a range of demographics and geographic locations. These pilot districts will engage all stakeholders in a comprehensive restructuring of all seven personnel processes connected to educator quality that operate at the local level:

1. Recruitment, Hiring, and Placement
2. Induction
3. Professional Development
4. Supervision and Evaluation
5. Teacher Leadership
6. Organizational Structure
7. Organizational Culture

During Phase I an Educator Quality Panel will be established to collaborate with the Department of Education in order to create criteria and guidelines to support the planning, development, and implementation of comprehensive plans; approve district plans; and provide implementation assistance. In addition, external evaluations will be collecting data on the pilots to determine the impact on teaching and learning and to gauge the precise cost of scaling up.

*Higher Education:*

Preparation programs will be required to have a performance-based evaluation of program graduates and to align their curriculum with the professional knowledge base.

*Licensure and Relicensure:*

Alternative certification programs for teachers and leaders will be required to meet the same high standards as higher-education preparation programs.

**Phase II:**

*District Level Processes:*

There will be a scaling up of districts involved in comprehensive redesign.

*Higher Education:*

Preparation programs will:

- Be required to partner with a local district to create an advisory board, ensuring that programs are aligned with the needs of the field
- Receive Incentives for the creation of professional development schools
- Publicly report the readiness of program graduates based on evaluations from hiring districts