

## Vermont Legislative Research Shop

#### **Chief State School Officer Selection**

The chief state school officer (CSSO) in the state of Vermont is the Commissioner of Education. The Commissioner of Education is appointed by the State Board of Education with the approval of the Governor. The Commissioner is charged with supervising and managing the Department of Education. This responsibility includes the powers and duties of regulating statewide performance standards, adult basic education programs, regulating and keeping records of attendance, approving independent schools, disbursing funds and ensuring "equal access to quality education" for all Vermont students. The Commissioner is responsible to the State Board of Education. The Vermont State Board of Education is appointed by, and responsible to, the Governor.<sup>1</sup>

# How Other States Select the Chief State School Officer and Members of the Board of Education

Table 1 shows the method of selection for CSSOs (vertical) and the method of selection for state school boards (horizontal) in all 50 states. States in which the CSSO and school board are elected are listed in blue. States in wh

Table 1: Method of Selection of Chief State School Officers and Board of Education

# Chief state school officer method of selection

		By election		By Appointment	
State board galaction		Nonpartisan	Partisan		G (12)
State board selection		(6)	(8)	State board (24)	Governor (12)
By election (9)	Nonpartisan			Hawaii, Nebraska, Nevada, Utah	
	Partisan			Alabama, Colorado, Kansas, Michigan	Texas
	By local school board members				
Mixed (6)	Both elected and	Washington	Indiana	Louisiana, Ohio	New Mexico,
	appointed				Pennsylvania
By	Governor	California,	Arizona,	Alaska, Arkansas,	Delaware,
appointment		Idaho,	Georgia,	Connecticut, Florida,	Iowa, Maine,
(32)		North	Montana,	Illinois, Kentucky,	New Hampshire,
		Dakota,	North	Maryland,	New Jersey,
		Oregon	Carolina,	Massachusetts,	South Dakota,
			Oklahoma,	Missouri, Vermont,	Tennessee,
			Wyoming	West Virginia	Virginia
	Legislature		j	New York	
	Jointly by governor and legislature		South Carolina	Mississippi,	

schools and educate every Californian to meet state standards. The department works as a partner with local schools to provide leadership, resources, assistance, and oversight.<sup>2</sup>

### **Georgia – CSSO elected in partisan election**

The Georgia State Superintendent and Chief Executive Officer of the State Board of Education is elected for a four-year term in a partisan election. The role of the Superintendent is to oversee the Department of Education, which enforces state and federal education laws, and distributes education funds to the state schools. The role of Chief Executive Officer of the State Board of Education is to oversee the fourteen-member board that provides leadership to schools and helps in the development of educational policies and programs.<sup>3</sup>

### New Jersey - CSSO appointed by Governor

The Governor, with the advice and consent of the New Jersey Senate, appoints the Commissioner of Education in New Jersey. The Commissioner is a member of the Governor's cabinet as well and the chief executive school officer for all New Jersey's public schools. Therefore, the Commissioner is accountable to the Governor. The duties of the commissioner are as follows: serve as a link between local districts and the federal government by offering legislative initiatives and changes, put forward rules and regulations for state board consideration; conduct educational research, create code proposals for board discussion, distribute state aid to districts, oversee regulations in regard to students with disabilities, monitor local district adherence to legal and state board requirements, and conduct statewide testing.<sup>4</sup>

#### **Effects of Method of Selection**

States use a wide variety of different methods for selecting both a Chief State School Officer and a state school board. Although information is widely available regarding the methods of selection and roles of these offices for given states, we were unable to locate any comparative analysis of the effect of the different methods of selection.

Compiled at the request of Senator Donald E. Collins by Ike Messmore, Amanda Mitchell, and Kate Sease under the Supervision of Professor Anthony Gierzynski on February 8, 2008.

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