

## Office of the Governor

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### NEWS RELEASE

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### **Whitman Accepts Klagholz Resignation Names Hesse as Replacement**

NJ Gov. Christie Whitman today accepted the resignation of Dr. Leo F. Klagholz as the Commissioner of the NJ Department of Education and announced her intention to name First Assistant Attorney General David Hesse, of Montgomery, to replace Klagholz on April 5, 1999.

Klagholz, who has served as Commissioner of Education since February 1994, will leave the department to assume a position as Distinguished Scholar and Professor of Education Policy at the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey. Klagholz will also serve as Associate Vice president for Research Studies at the college's Institute for Education and Policy Studies.

"Leo Klagholz has been at the heart and soul of our efforts to revamp education in New Jersey. Under his guidance we established a revolutionary charter school program that has given families across New Jersey choices in the education their children receive. We developed core curriculum standards to ensure that children receive the education they deserve. And, under Commissioner Klagholz's leadership, we put into place a comprehensive school funding program that meets our obligation to provide every New Jersey child a thorough and efficient education," she said.

"Leo Klagholz was the leader in our efforts to accomplish the most meaningful reforms to public education this state has ever enacted. Our children and the education we provide them were always the paramount interest of Leo Klagholz. Education in New Jersey is forever improved because of his effort and commitment," the Governor said.

"I will miss his advice, guidance and never-failing good sense and good humor," she said.

Hesse, who currently serves as the First Assistant Attorney General, was formerly Assistant Commissioner of the NJ Department of Education. He also served as Governor Whitman's Assistant Counsel for Education Policy and as Associate Counsel in the education section for the non-partisan Office of Legislative services.

"David Hesse has been a trusted member of our education team from the early days of this Administration. Even before his selection as

assistant counsel, David Hesper was a force in education policy. His experience in education policy and his familiarity with the Legislature will serve our children well," she said.

For the past decade, Hesper has been involved significantly in almost every major education initiative in New Jersey including school funding, charter schools, the Abbott v Burke lawsuit, curriculum standards and assessments, and state operation of troubled school districts. He presented the State's school facilities construction plan during the Abbott v Burke remand proceedings.

Hesper is married to the former Cindy Lombardi. The Hesper's have a son, Nicholas. Hesper was born in Park Ridge, NJ in 1960. He is a graduate of Rutgers University and the Rutgers University School of Law.