



Educators Will Not Be Silenced!

Proposed regulations would trample on educators' free-speech rights

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has proposed regulations that would vastly expand the disciplinary powers of Commissioner of Education Mitchell Chester and trample on the constitutional and statutory rights of educators in the Commonwealth.



RALLY FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION






2 p.m. May 20 | Boston Common

New Regulations Explained

The commissioner's expanded powers are included in a package of proposed regulatory amendments that could be approved in June. Currently, the state can revoke an educator's license on various grounds, including commission of a crime. The proposal would give the commissioner new rights to suspend, limit or revoke a license if, *in his opinion*, the educator has engaged in undefined "misconduct" that "discredits the profession, brings the license into disrepute, compromises student safety or the integrity of the student-educator relationship."

MTA's Legal Services Division concluded: "The proposed language is fatally flawed because it is so overbroad and so vague that it sweeps within its scope all kinds of speech and behavior that are constitutionally and statutorily protected." Lose your license for speaking out against the MCAS? For putting up a Black Lives Matter poster? For publicly criticizing the governor? For engaging in a work-to-rule action? If the commissioner thinks your speech discredits the profession, he can investigate you and take action against your license — and your livelihood!

Districts already have the power to discipline educators who break the rules or jeopardize student safety. Giving the DESE new disciplinary authority is unwarranted, unwelcome and unwise.

-  **NO to threatening educators' free-speech rights**
-  **NO to Betsy DeVos/Jim Peyser privatization schemes**
-  **NO to Donald Trump's agenda to cut taxes for the rich, defund services for families and communities, and inflame animosity toward immigrants**
-  **NO to the test-and-punish accountability system**
-  **YES to fully funded, high-quality public schools and public higher education for all**

Exercise your First Amendment rights to free speech and free assembly on May 20.
Speak out for the schools our communities deserve.