

Frank Edelblut

Department of Education

Biography



Frank Edelblut was sworn in as commissioner on Feb. 16, 2017. The commissioner is responsible for the organizational goals of the department and represents the public interest in the administration of the functions of the department of education. The commissioner is responsible to the governor, the general court, and the public for such administration. In his role as commissioner, Edelblut serves on a number of boards, including as a trustee for the University System of New Hampshire, which includes the University of New Hampshire, Plymouth State University, Keene State College and Granite State College; as an ex-officio trustee for the Community College System of

New Hampshire; a member of the New Hampshire Higher Education Commission; among others. Edelblut is a businessman who started his career as a certified public accountant with a large international accounting firm. He briefly worked as a chief financial officer for a public company and then took the "entrepreneurial plunge" starting his own company, which was sold to a French firm in 2009. Edelblut continues to be active as an investor in early stage companies across a range of industries including technology, med-tech, and even a wine company. Edelblut was a Republican member of the New Hampshire House of Representatives. During his term in the House, he served on the Finance Committee, Special Committee on Pensions and the Child and Family Law Committee. Edelblut attended the University of Rhode Island where he earned a Bachelor of Science, Business Administration - Accounting. He also holds a Masters of Theological Studies from the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. Frank has been married for 32 years and has seven children.

About

Appointment Start Date - 2017

Residence - Wilton, NH

Previous Experience

CEO/Founder, Control Solutions International

Certified Financial Officer, Small Manufacturing Company

Certified Public Accountant, Pricewaterhousecoopers

[Quorum Biography, [Accessed 1/12/2024](#)]

Other

Commissioner Frank Edelblut worked publicly and privately to push for a far-right media group to operate in New Hampshire schools. While publicly championing to allow PragerU, a rightwing media organization founded by Dennis Prager, Education Commissioner Frank also coordinated with the organization privately, including speaking to the donors in a closed meeting. According to New Hampshire Public Radio, “Edelblut’s collaborations with PragerU, which have not previously been reported, took place while PragerU was seeking state approval to offer an online course to New Hampshire students to fulfill a new financial literacy requirement... According to public records obtained by NHPR, as the application was pending, Edelblut spoke to PragerU donors at an event in California, received lodging paid for by PragerU, and agreed to record interviews for PragerU’s marketing campaign... A state law that governs gifts, honorariums and expense reimbursements for public officials requires them to disclose such exchanges. A spokesperson for the Secretary of State’s office said it received an expense reimbursement report from Edelblut regarding his trip on Friday, several days after NHPR began inquiring about the trip.” [New Hampshire Public Radio, [10/6/2023](#)]

Frank Edelblut’s Department of Education sought the authority to subpoena teachers. In a departmental policy change, Frank Edelblut’s Department of Education requested that teachers get subpoenaed during any investigation into potential code of conduct violations. Previously, they would receive a notice in the mail. According to the New Hampshire Bulletin, “The New Hampshire Department of Education is pushing to be given the power to subpoena teachers or school district officials that it is investigating, sparking a new debate over the regulation of public schools. Proposed legislation in the House would allow the commissioner of the department to issue a subpoena ‘for persons, relevant documents, and relevant items’ that would help it carry out any investigation.” [New Hampshire Bulletin, [3/7/2023](#)]

Unlike previous Education Commissioners, Frank Edelblut never held any position in public education nor belonged to a parent-teacher association. Though Frank Edelblut holds tremendous power over public education policy in New Hampshire, he has never held the profession of teacher or administrator, and his closest affiliation with education is with a conservative Christian college. He also chose to homeschool his seven children. According to the New Hampshire Business Journal, “As a CPA, his professional experience was confined to business and finance. Unlike his predecessors, Edelblut has never worked in a school as either a teacher, principal, superintendent or administrator. Nor has he served on a school board or even belonged to a parent-teacher association. Although himself a product of public schools, his seven children were all home-schooled. Despite his lack of experience with public education, Edelblut holds strong views on both the philosophy and provision of education. His primary educational affiliation has been with Patrick Henry College of Purcellville, Virginia, a self-described ‘conservative Christian college,’ which exists for ‘Christ and Liberty.’” [NH Business Journal, [4/19/2023](#)]

Commissioner Frank Edelblut launched a webpage encouraging parents to file complaints against teachers who allegedly teach so-called divisive concepts. Moms For Liberty claimed they would pay individuals \$500 in bounties if people reported teachers. In a chilling attempt to intimidate teachers, Frank Edelblut's Department of Education created a web page allowing parents and students to lodge complaints for alleged discrimination. According to Public Radio, "The New Hampshire Department of Education has launched a web page to make it easier for parents and students to lodge complaints against teachers for alleged discrimination. The new webpage comes in response to a contentious new law banning specific kinds of teaching about race, racism, and sexism. If parents or students believe a teacher has violated this law, they can now fill out a questionnaire on the Department of Education website about an incident. The issue is then investigated by the New Hampshire Commission for Human Rights, which decides whether someone has the basis to file a formal charge. An educator found to have violated the new law could have their teaching license removed." Moms for Liberty tweeted, "We've got \$500 for the person that first successfully catches a public school teacher breaking this law. Students, parents, teachers, school staff...We want to know! We will pledge anonymity if you want." [New Hampshire Public Radio, [11/20/2021](#); Forbes [11/12/2021](#)]

Calling the interactions "alarming," Civil Rights groups had to step in when Commissioner Frank Edelblut's Department of Education began harassing school districts over library books. After Education Commissioner Frank Edelblut and his deputies pushed multiple times for the Dover School District to explain its library content, Civil Rights groups had to intervene. According to New Hampshire Public Radio, "Local civil liberties and LGBTQ advocacy groups have also raised alarms about the education department's inquiries in Dover. In a series of letters released this week, lawyers from the ACLU of New Hampshire and GLAD rebuked the education department for what it called 'alarming and extraordinary communications' with the Dover School District. Though Edelblut did not tell the district to remove books, the attorneys warned that his communications are 'insinuating' that Dover should consider whether to remove texts from the library. Doing so could be a violation of free speech and anti-discrimination protections, they said." [New Hampshire Public Radio, [12/6/2023](#)]

Frank Edelblut penned an op-ed attacking teachers and falsely claimed they were introducing classroom bias. Education Commissioner Frank Edelblut attacked teachers in an op-ed warning them not to "undermine the sacred trust" when describing the curriculums of public schools. According to the New Hampshire Bulletin, "The opinion piece, which Edelblut released April 15, stresses the importance of teachers respecting 'the value systems of the families responsible for raising them.' It states that 'biases are beginning to seep into our own institutions' and points to teachings in New Hampshire around gender identity, personal pronouns, anti-racism literature and the Black Lives Matter movement, and LGBTQ+ students 'that parents have identified as conflicting with their values.' The piece was released alongside a 74-page document of photographs and screenshots of New Hampshire classroom instructional materials that Edelblut says have been submitted to the Department of Education by concerned parents. [New Hampshire Bulletin, [4/22/2023](#)]

In 2021, as cases of COVID-19 started to surge, Commissioner Frank Edelblut urged schools to avoid distance learning. In 2021, as New Hampshire school districts switched to remote learning protocols after COVID-19 cases spiked, Education Commissioner Frank Edelblut urged schools to avoid distance learning. According to the New Hampshire Bulletin, “Schools across the state are facing COVID-19 cases among both teachers and students – and wrestling with what to do about it. But when considering whether to move classrooms to temporary remote learning, districts are bumping against Department of Education recommendations... In an email sent to all superintendents earlier in September – and in calls to district superintendents themselves – Education Commissioner Frank Edelblut has discouraged schools from initiating mandatory remote learning, instead advising that they offer it as a voluntary option for parents.” [New Hampshire Bulletin, [10/21/2023](#)]

Commissioner Frank Edelblut refused to define an adequate education at a school-funding trial. As a named defendant, Commissioner Edelblut took the witness in Rockingham County Superior Court in a trial with the ConVal School District and ten other districts. According to the New Hampshire Business Journal, “He repeatedly insisted the responsibility of his department is to implement, not question, inform or influence, the will of the Legislature. This mirrors the primary defense mounted by the state that the authority to define the components and determine the cost of a constitutionally adequate education is the exclusive preserve and prerogative of the Legislature... ‘I am not in a position to be able to adjudicate that. So I don’t have responsibility for determining what an adequate education is.’” [NH Business Journal, [4/19/2023](#)]

In his capacity as Education Commissioner, Frank Edelblut has spoken at far-right events. Commissioner Frank has spoken at various far-right events in his capacity as the New Hampshire Education Commissioner, including a forum hosted by the Government Integrity Project and an event hosted by Koch Brothers-funded Americans for Prosperity. According to New Hampshire Public Radio, “On Sunday, Edelblut spoke at a forum hosted by the Government Integrity Project, a conservative activist group that has been involved in several right-wing and libertarian controversies in recent months. Members of the group have encouraged baseless accusations of fraud in state elections, promoted local efforts against public health initiatives related to the pandemic, and lent support to protests against vaccine mandates in the state. [New Hampshire Public Radio, [10/18/2021](#); WMUR, [11/14/17](#)]