



February 10, 2022

Kathleen Comanto Appointed as New Jersey's Deputy Secretary of Higher Education

TRENTON – The Murphy Administration today announced the appointment of Kathleen Comanto, currently serving as Senior Counsel in the Office of the Governor, as New Jersey's Deputy Secretary of Higher Education.

"Over the last two and a half years, Katie's legal counsel on education-related issues has been invaluable, particularly as our schools and colleges have dealt with the tremendous challenges brought by a global pandemic," **said Governor Phil Murphy**. "I am confident that Katie's experience, coupled with her dedication and passion for higher education, will allow her to bring a unique perspective to her new role as Deputy Secretary of Higher Education. I look forward to continuing to work with her in her new role."

"After a thorough and competitive search, it is my pleasure to welcome Katie to our humble but mighty team," **said Dr. Brian K. Bridges, Secretary of Higher Education**. "Katie's experience working at the Governor's Office and her familiarity with New Jersey's education landscape will allow her to hit the ground running. I look forward to achieving our statewide attainment goals and student-centric vision for higher education together."

"I am truly passionate about higher education in New Jersey and the countless opportunities it offers students and families," **Comanto said**. "I am honored to serve as Deputy Secretary and look forward to advancing the Governor's groundbreaking higher education agenda alongside the incomparable team at the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE)."

Comanto will step into this role made vacant by Diana Gonzalez, who departed the Murphy Administration in August 2021. In her current role, Comanto's portfolio is primarily focused on elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education, working closely with OSHE as well as the Departments of Agriculture, Education, and Military and Veterans Affairs. As Senior Counsel, Comanto manages the movement and development of State legislation and regulations and collaborates with State agencies to implement COVID-19 pandemic response efforts.

Prior to working at the Governor's Office, Comanto spent three years at Sciarillo, Cornell, Merlino, McKeever and Osborne, LLC, a New Jersey-based law firm representing approximately 100 public boards of education, where she advocated for matters pertaining to employment termination, collective bargaining, unfair practice charges, and special education. Previous to her experience in private practice, Comanto clerked for the Essex County Assignment Judge, the Honorable Sallyanne Floria.

Born and raised in New Jersey, Comanto earned her Juris Doctor (J.D.) at Seton Hall University's School of Law and her Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Psychology at The College of New Jersey (TCNJ), graduating cum laude at both institutions. While earning her law degree at Seton Hall, Comanto served as Managing Editor of the Seton Hall Circuit Review and President of the Women's Law Forum. At TCNJ, she ran

varsity cross country and track and field and was a National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) All-American athlete.

Comanto will begin serving as Deputy Secretary on February 14, 2022 and expresses a commitment to providing New Jersey students and those who enroll in the state the best educational experiences, opportunities, and outcomes.