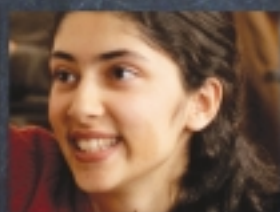


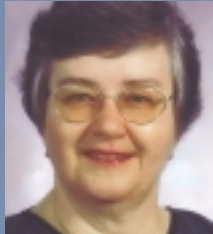
Educational Accountability

A Partnership
of School, Community,
and Family.



Delaware's Mission

A Quality Education for Every Child.



Message from the Secretary

For more than a decade, Delaware has embarked on a mission of education reform to ensure all of our children are afforded the quality education they so richly deserve. From school and district administrators and support staff to the teachers and professionals who provide the daily instruction, everyone is accountable for the academic success of every student.

Prior to the implementation of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2002, Delaware had an accountability system in place. However, NCLB required us to make changes to our system. In 2003 we made changes to our accountability system to reflect the requirements of NCLB. In 2004 we have made changes that will better reflect the work that our schools and districts are doing to help our children succeed.

This brochure explains school and district accountability and what it means to you as a parent or guardian. The brochure also provides information on what all of us who are involved in our students' futures – schools, families, government, businesses and the community – can do to ensure our children are prepared for a successful, productive and fulfilling future.

Valerie A. Woodruff

Valerie A. Woodruff
SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



achieve

Delaware Student Testing Program

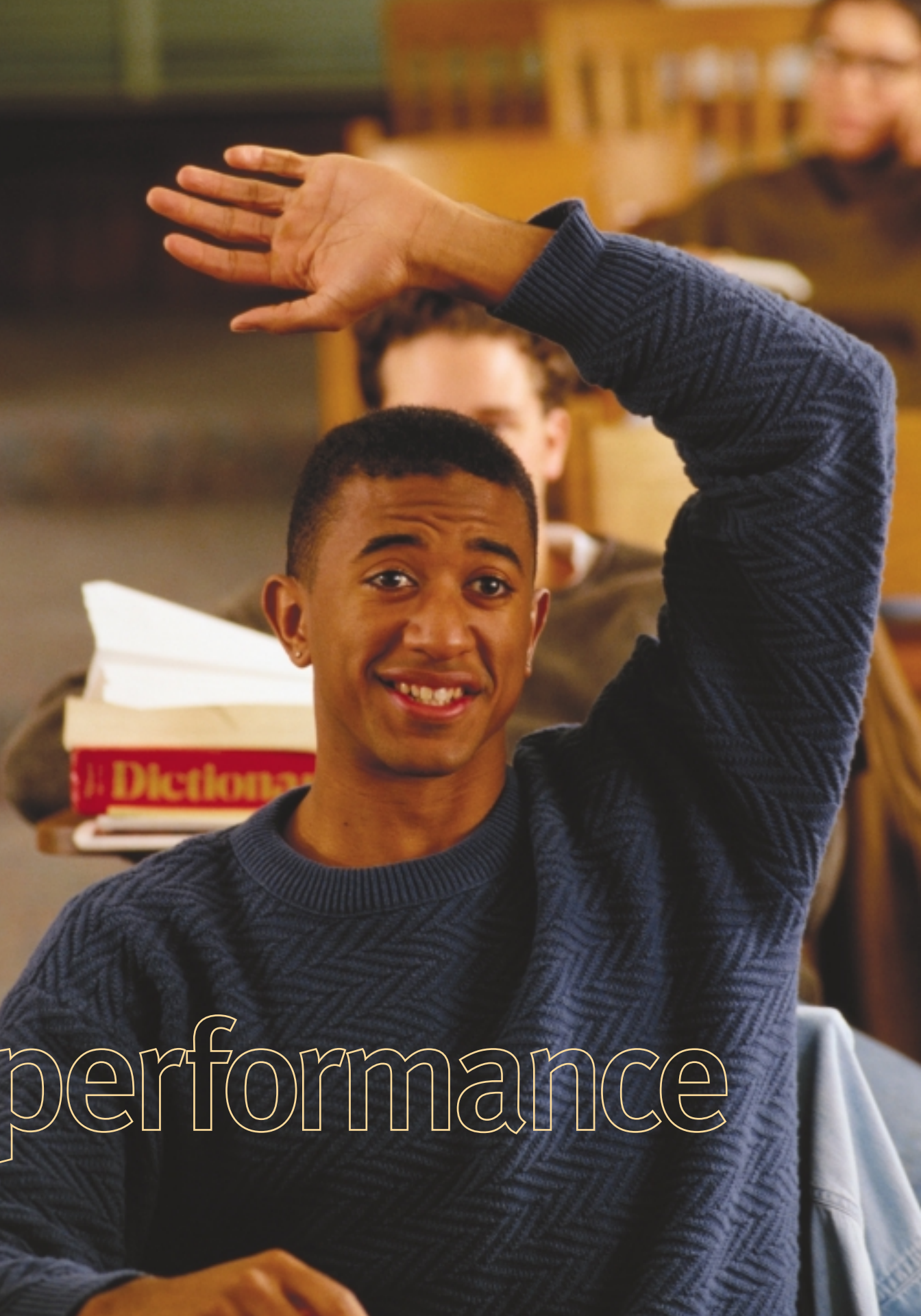
Identifying Student's Strengths and Needs.

The Delaware Student Testing Program (DSTP) is the foundation for student, school and school district accountability. The DSTP has been in place since 1998 and helps measure how well students are performing against the standards established by Delaware educators, parents and the community. Test results help identify student strengths and individual learning needs and guide teachers as they enhance instruction. DSTP results also help districts determine student promotion from grade to grade. Students in grades 3, 5, 8 and 10 are tested in reading, writing and mathematics while students in grades 4, 6, 8 and 11 are tested in science and social studies. We often refer to these grades as the "accountability grades" since they are used to determine district and school accountability ratings. There are five performance levels for these grades:

- Level 5 Distinguished
- Level 4 Exceeds the Standard
- Level 3 Meets the Standard
- Level 2 Below the Standard
- Level 1 Well Below the Standard

Students in grades 2, 4, 6, 7 and 9 are also tested in reading, writing and mathematics. The scores for these grades are used to help us know if students are making progress towards the standards and serve as an "early warning" for students who need extra help. Beginning in 2006, these grades will become part of the school and district rating determinations.





No Child Left Behind

Establishing Goals for Student Achievement.

The federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law required states to set student performance targets for English/Language Arts and for Mathematics. Schools and districts are to meet or exceed the targets set for each year. Schools and districts are required to test at least 95% of their students in the tested grades each year. In addition, they are to maintain or make progress on Other Academic Indicators (OAI). NCLB requires school and district ratings to be based on the performance of ALL students and on the performance of subgroups of students. There are eight subgroups including the five major racial/ethnic categories: White, African American, Hispanic, Asian American, and American Indian as well as Special Education students, Limited English Proficient students and Economically Disadvantaged students.

Adequate Yearly Progress

Performance Targets for Every Student Group.

In order for a school or school district to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) the school or district must meet every performance target for every subgroup for English/Language Arts and for Mathematics if there are at least 40 students in the subgroup. Also, at least 95% of each subgroup must take the test and the school or district must meet the OAI.

Other Academic Indicators

An Additional Measure of Progress.

In 2004, the Other Academic Indicator (OAI) for elementary and middle schools was changed. The Other Indicator for elementary and middle schools is measured by an increase in the average of scale scores for students performing at Performance Levels 1 and 2 in reading and mathematics combined or a decrease in the percentage of students performing at Performance Level 1 in reading and mathematics combined. The OAI for high school is the graduation rate.

Group	ELA % Proficient	ELA % Participation	Math % Proficient	Math % Participation	Other Indicators
All Students	√	√	√	√	√
American Indian	√	√	√	√	
Asian American	√	√	X	√	
African American	√	√	√	√	
Hispanic	√	√	√	√	
White	√	√	√	√	
Economically Disadvantaged	√	√	√	√	
Special Education	√	√	√	√	
Limited English Proficient	√	√	√	√	

In the example above, since one sub-group did not meet AYP requirements in one content area – i.e., Math proficiency – the school is considered “not meeting AYP.”

Delaware Accountability System

Changes and Enhancements.

In 2004, changes were made to the accountability system that would not only meet the NCLB requirements but also incorporate elements of Delaware's original accountability system. We did this to ensure more valid and reliable accountability ratings and to reflect the positive work our schools and districts are doing to help our children succeed.

State Progress Determination

Measuring Improvement in Core Subjects.

One new element is the State Progress Determination (SPD). This measures the improvement in the composite scale score in reading, mathematics, science and social studies, combined.



School Ratings

Defining Schools by Student Performance.

School ratings are given based on their student's performance on the DSTP. The ratings are as follows:

SUPERIOR: AYP is met while the school is not under improvement and additional rigorous state criteria are met.

COMMENDABLE: AYP is met while the school is not under improvement.

ACADEMIC REVIEW: AYP is not met for one year and SPD is met *or* AYP is not met for one year and SPD is not met *or* AYP is met and SPD is not met (second year).

ACADEMIC PROGRESS: AYP is not met (different subject) two or more years and SPD is met.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS – UNDER IMPROVEMENT: AYP is not met (same subject) two or more years and SPD is met.

ACADEMIC WATCH: AYP is not met two or more years (different subject) and SPD is not met.

ACADEMIC WATCH – UNDER IMPROVEMENT: AYP is not met two or more years (same subject) and SPD is not met.

AYP (Absolute Performance)	State Progress (Improvement Performance)	State Accountability Determination	After 2 Consecutive Years
A	A	Superior	
A	M	Superior	
A	B	Commendable	
M	A	Superior	
M	M	Commendable	
M	B	Commendable	Academic Review
B	A	Academic Review	Academic Progress
B	M	Academic Review	Academic Progress
B	B	Academic Review	Academic Watch

Rewards and Consequences

Acknowledging Achievement. Encouraging Improvement.

Superior schools and districts receive a banner that they can display in their school or district office. Commendable schools receive a custom engraved plaque for display in their school or district office.

For schools that do not meet Adequate Yearly Progress, specific consequences result. It is important to understand there are two kinds of schools that receive these ratings. Some schools are Title I schools that receive federal funding to support low income students who need additional academic help. Since Title I schools receive this funding, the federal government has special requirements for them. Other schools that do not receive this funding are called Non-Title I Schools. The consequences for each are explained in the following charts:

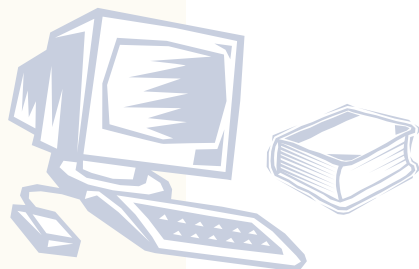
Consequences of not meeting AYP

TITLE I SCHOOLS

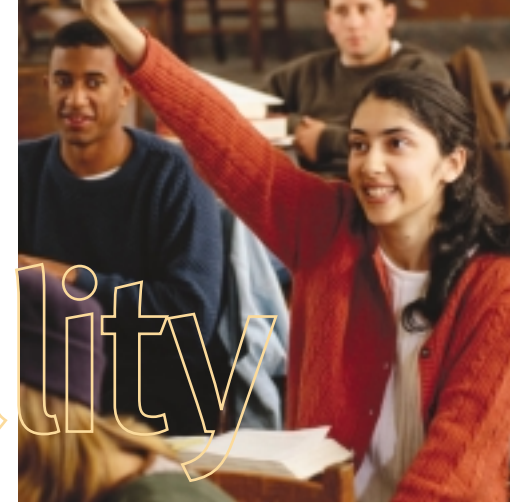
- 1 Year No consequences
- 2 Years Under School Improvement (USI) – begin Title I parental choice option and improvement plan required
- 3 Years Remain Under School Improvement – begin supplemental services option for low-income students
- 4 Years Corrective Action – select one or more NCLB corrective action options
- 5 Years Restructuring Plan – select one or more NCLB restructuring options
- 6 Years Restructuring Implementation

NON-TITLE I SCHOOLS

- 1 Year No consequences
- 2 Years Under School Improvement (USI) and improvement plan required
- 3 Years Remain Under School Improvement - begin prioritization of extra time services for subgroups not meeting target
- 4 Years Corrective Action – select one or more corrective action options
- 5 Years Restructuring Plan – select one or more restructuring options
- 6 Years Restructuring Implementation



quality



For districts that do not meet AYP, specific consequences also result. All districts in the state receive Title I money and are subject to the consequences explained in the following chart:

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

- 1 Year No consequences
- 2 Years Under District Improvement (UDI) and improvement plan required
- 3 Years Remain Under District Improvement and continue with improvement plan evaluation
- 4 Years Corrective Action – select one or more NCLB district corrective action options
- 5 Years Corrective Action – corrective action plan evaluation and modifications

Title I Parental Choice

The Right to Transfer to Another School.

If a Title I school is determined to be “Under School Improvement,” parents can choose to transfer their children to a designated public school that is not “Under School Improvement” within the same district. If parents exercise this choice, the school district must provide transportation up to a specific limit. If transportation costs go above the required amount, low-income low-achieving students are given priority.

Title I Supplemental Services

Additional Educational Opportunities.

If a Title 1 school is “Under School Improvement” and does not meet AYP for an additional year (i.e. a third year of not meeting AYP), low-achieving students from low-income families are eligible to receive additional educational opportunities for instruction. These services are designed to increase the academic performance of students. Supplemental services may include tutoring, remediation and other educational interventions, and must be provided outside of the regular school day. Parents select the provider of the services from the state-approved list.



Success

Your Child's School

How to Learn More About Your School and District.

School and District Profiles are available for every school district and school. The profiles can be accessed through the Department of Education's website at www.doe.state.de.us. Printed copies can be requested from the schools and districts. The profiles include the school/district rating, student academic achievement data on the DSTP including data disaggregated by subgroups of students, high school graduation rates, Other Academic Indicator information, professional qualifications of teachers as well as other information about the school or district that is important to you.

The Delaware Department of Education

What Delaware is Doing to Support Schools and Districts.

The Department of Education (DOE) works with schools and districts to provide support based on the needs of the individual school and/or district. Those needs are outlined in the School Improvement Plan and District Improvement Plan. In addition, the state provides additional funds for these schools to help with the actions they decide are necessary in their School Improvement Plans. DOE will also provide help in specific areas as we see several schools or districts that need it.



Parents as Partners

How You Can Help Your Children Succeed.

Parents can help make the accountability system succeed by being involved. Parents play a crucial part in helping accountability work to improve students' academic performance. Along with schools, administration, teachers and community partners, parents need to be aware and take part in the education of their children.

Be sure your child is in school every day unless he/she is ill. Check homework. Help as much as you can and encourage students to do their best every day. Answer teacher phone calls and call the school if you have questions or need help. Set high expectations just as our schools and teachers must do. Praise children often and help them establish good learning habits. Help children develop a positive attitude toward learning early on by referring to school as a place where they will learn things that are interesting, important, fun and necessary.

Interact with teachers and talk with them to find out what is happening at school and learn what their children will be doing. Teachers are also available to give advice. They know about child development and they spend a lot of time with children. Parents also should let teachers know about things that may be happening in their children's lives that may affect schoolwork, such as a divorce or the death of a family member or pet.

Parents are encouraged to find out the many different ways they can volunteer in schools from mentoring individual students to chaperoning events. Volunteering is essential to improving education and is a great way to contribute to a child's learning.

Above all, become involved with your child's school and with your child's education. Learn all you can about your child's school either from the school profile on the Department of Education website (www.doe.state.de.us) or make an appointment to visit with the school principal and learn what you can do to become part of your child's educational process. Become a part of a team. Your willingness to help will contribute to a strong system of support for the students and staff of that school.

The Delaware Department of Education welcomes your questions.

If you want to know more about the Accountability System, the Delaware Student Testing Program or No Child Left Behind, please call 1.877.838-DSTP (3787), or you can reach us on the web at www.doe.state.de.us.

For specific questions about your child's performance on the DSTP, please contact your local school.

