

## Delaware's Promise Dropout Prevention Committee Meeting Highlights

Cabinet Room, Townsend Bldg.

January 19, 2010

1:00 – 3:30 pm

- Dr. Coffield welcomed the committee members and asked for introductions. She recognized two guests from the Regional Education Lab (REL), Felix Fernandez and Alex Porowski. Felix will be taking the place of Jennifer Bausmith, who is no longer working with the Lab. She has taken a job with ECS/College Board. We will miss her expertise, but wish her well in her new job. The committee approved the meeting highlights as presented for the November meeting.
- **Race to the Top Application-** Mr. Dan Cruce, Deputy Secretary of Education/Chief of Staff, provided an overview of Delaware's Race to the Top Application. The application is built around four assurances: standards and assessments, accessing and using State data, improving teacher and principal effectiveness and turning around the lowest-achieving schools. The state plan includes the adoption of the CCSSO Common Core Standards, a state-wide assessment of college readiness and the implementation of the new DCAS student assessment that includes both formative and summative components. The state also plans to improve access to, and use of, the State's longitudinal data system by creating a portal of data dashboards targeted to stakeholder groups. The plan proposes to support the use of data to inform instruction using data coaches and to support the implementation of a revised DPAS II appraisal system using development coaches. In addition, the plan addresses the equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals with financial incentives to recruit and retain effective staff in high-need schools and subjects. Delaware's complete RTTT application is posted online and can be found at: <http://governor.delaware.gov/information/racetothetop.shtml>
- Felix Fernandez provided an overview of the Regional Education Lab (REL) Mid-Atlantic Report *Creating an Early Warning System: Predictors of Dropout in Delaware*-The Technical Brief presents an historical analysis of key indicators of dropout for Delaware students in grades 9-12. Cut points for key risk indicators of high school dropout for the State of Delaware are provided. Using data provided by the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE), relationships between student dropout and several student indicators were empirically evaluated. Three key indicators of dropout were identified:
  1. students' attendance,
  2. students' math course grades, and
  3. students' English language arts (ELA) course grades.

The derived cut points for high school students were: an attendance rate of 88 percent; a z-score (i.e., a transformed score with a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1) on math course grades of -0.47; and a z-score on ELA course grades of -0.63. A high school student who falls below any of the above noted cut points can be

considered at-risk for dropout. Derived cut points predict current year dropout, therefore the derived cut points for a 9th grade student can be used to predict whether that student will drop out by the end of their ninth grade school year. One limitation of the derived cut points is that they may over identify students as being at-risk than those who will actually dropout, however given the nature of dropout this over-estimation is arguably more preferable than the alternative. Some methods for developing an early warning system for students at-risk for dropout, and increasing the precision of the cut points, are presented. A brief exercise is also provided in which the three indicators are combined; the results support the general expectation that the greater the number of risk indicators among a group of students, the higher the rate of student dropout in that group. It should be noted that these results apply to students in Delaware and may not apply to other states.

- Joe Fitzpatrick shared information regarding a REL Bridge Event: IES Dropout Prevention Practice Guide. The event will take place on February 24, 2010 @ DSU. Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m. Bridge Event begins @ 9:00 a.m. Registration will be handled through the Regional Education Lab Mid-Atlantic. Following the forum a technical assistance session will be held to roll out the Delaware Dropout Early Warning System (DEWS) beginning at 2:30 p.m. and ending at 4:30 p.m.
- Lisa Marcum led a discussion re: Early Warning Dropout Prevention Tool. They TMD workgroup has developed an interim solution by generating COGNOS reports that will utilize the REL research to identify the students at risk of dropping out until the Spring 2010 release of the updated Student Success Module in ESchool.
- Dr. Judi Coffield shared feedback received from the NGA Center for Best Practices regarding Delaware's application for the *Achieving Graduation for All* Grant. The reviewers felt that the problem and context sections of the application were strong, but felt that the work plan, team and budget sections did not provide enough detail.

A few other comments from the reviewers include:

- The state is well on its way to addressing the dropout problem, and has a very good data system, so it is likely to accomplish all activities regardless of the grant.
- The proposal relied too heavily on the GED, which the committee was opposed to as a significant recovery option.
- The budget needed more specificity around the use of consultants and the team section needed to describe the core member's roles.
- The committee appreciated that the proposal including a broad focus on juvenile justice and adult education, as well as the state's efforts to leverage current funding streams.
- The application lacked details of dropout activities at the State Education Agency.

- Dr. Coffield told the committee of two upcoming opportunities for Delaware. In an effort to help Delaware continue to harness the ongoing energy in our state around increasing high school graduation and college readiness rates, Delaware was invited to send a team of policy leaders to participate in **two exciting learning opportunities** from America's Promise Alliance (APA) and the American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF). These sessions are aimed at providing resources and tools to support our efforts to end the dropout crisis. APA and AYPF are offering this opportunity to a select group of states based upon the strength of their recent proposal to the National Governors Association's (NGA) *State Strategies to Achieve Graduation for All* initiative.
  - The first opportunity is an invitation for a five-member team from our state, representing the key stakeholders addressing the dropout issue, to participate in an **all-expense paid, fact-finding trip to Boston, Massachusetts on March 24-26, 2010**. This trip will be organized by AYPF in partnership with APA and NGA. This learning experience will offer an opportunity to engage in substantive policy discussions with key leaders about critical issues related to dropout prevention and recovery and to participate in strategically designed and intensive visits to research-proven programs that reengage at-risk youth. Sessions on this trip include a conversation with Secretary of Education Paul Reville, panel discussion with members of the Graduation and Dropout Prevention and Recovery Commission and visits to nationally recognized dropout recovery programs.
  - The second opportunity is invite-only technical assistance training sponsored by America's Promise Alliance in partnership with the Everyone Graduates Center at John Hopkins University and NGA. This training provides an ideal opportunity to move from action planning to implementation. Top national experts and leading practitioners will provide technical assistance and guidance to invited teams. This training will take place in **Arlington, Virginia on April 22-23, 2010**. **Costs for travel and lodging for four representatives will be fully covered by APA**. Topics to be addressed include implementing dropout early-warning systems; developing state dropout communication initiatives; and creating effective business partnerships.