

# Progress Report

## P-20 Council

### November 2006

The P-20 Council met October 10, 2006 at Buena Vista to hear a presentation on the Performance Level I Longitudinal Study conducted by the Delaware Education Research and Development Center. Dr. Audrey Noble presented a summary of the findings in the PL 1 Study conducted by the R&D Center at the University of Delaware. This study was commissioned by the State Board of Education last fall and its objective was to determine whether students scoring at PL (Performance Level) 1 in grade 3 were able to perform at PL 3 by grades 8 and 10 in reading and mathematics.

- The findings are as follows:
  - The longer a student stays at PL 1, the less likely they are to move to PL 2 or PL 3
  - It is more likely for a school to move a student from PL 1 to PL 3 in the elementary grades than it is to move the student to PL 3 in middle or high school
  - The majority of students who start out in PL 1 are still at PL 1 by grade 8 and grade 10
  - School districts differ in their success in moving students. These results were distributed to district superintendents.
  - Race and income status, though observable, are not an overwhelming factor distinguishing students at PL 1. The gap between those subgroups was 10% to 15%, much lower than many studies would lead one to expect.
  - Special education as a subgroup was not pulled out in the analysis.
- The policy implications are as follows:
  - Access to quality instruction may be the most important factor in whether students improve
  - Emphasis needs to be added to math performance in the early grades where the emphasis has been on reading literacy.
  - Schools need to look at their data and identify the students and determine what resources they are receiving and when those resources are made available.
  - Title 1 resources need to be more available at the middle and high school levels. Alternate ways of identifying Title 1 students need to be determined.

Kelly Sherretz did the second presentation on the progress made on the correlates of achievement database. A server has been purchased for the database and it should be up and running by the end of the year. The formation of the database is just about complete as well. Mrs. Sherretz demonstrated how the database could be used to identify the different correlates of success as noted in the ETS report "Parsing the Achievement Gap." The database connects the information from the schools via their eSchoolPlus database and the databases at the DOE to create the data on the correlates. Training will be underway for educators that will be using the database so they understand its full use.

Each school will only be able to see its data and each district will only be able to see the data regarding its schools. This was done to promote the use of the data for decision making rather than as an accountability tool. The question of funding came up during the discussion. Although the cost of the initial funding has been covered, funding is still needed to maintain and update the database for the extent of the database's lifetime.

Ann Wick presented the council with an update on the progress made to increase the quality of early child care in Delaware. Each of the members was given a copy of "Early Success: Delaware's Early Childhood Plan" which promotes a holistic approach to child care and is a part of Vision 2015. They are now working with United Way to use the Stars ranking system on child care centers in the hopes of tying higher ratings with higher reimbursement. This is a very important topic since about 70% of children less than five years of age in Delaware are in early childhood centers. There are around 50,000 licensed care centers and an unknown number of unlicensed centers. There has been some difficulty when trying to regulate faith-based care centers. It was noted that anything done with regulating child care centers should be presented as tools rather than mandates. This has been the practice so far.

### **Achievement Gap Action Group**

The Achievement Gap Action Group met on September 21, 2006 to discuss their progress toward their goals. The goals and progress made on them are listed below.

1. Establish a technical committee to work with the Department to create a data plan and secure the technical expertise: The Department has addressed this objective without creating a committee.
2. Conduct case studies to examine how to develop school cultures that can make a real difference in student learning: This is under development through a contract with the R&D Center.
3. Determine what funding would be required at the school level to build and support a cultural shift: This objective is dependent on completing #2.
4. Determine if there is a way to capture and analyze meaningful data for special populations such as LEP and ILC students. The PL 1 Study conducted by the R&D Center provides a new way to look at DSTP data longitudinally for subsets of students. This report was released to the State Board of Education on the day of the AGAG meeting.
5. Determine how the longitudinal gap data can be added to school profiles. These data will be added with a link to the profiles this fall.
6. Begin a larger effort to discuss the Educational Testing Service report on the full list of 14 Correlates of Achievement and their significance in closing the achievement gap. Initial efforts started at the Policies and Practices Conference held in late June 2005. From that point, individual professional groups would be encouraged to continue the conversation with their members for a sustained focus. Paul Barton from ETS attended and presented at the SAELP Conference in June 2005. Professional Development is also being provided through SAELP training and DASL.
7. Request the State Board of Education require consistent course content, titles and numbers across districts: This has not been taken to the State Board but discussions around this topic are taking place in the Department.

The groups also heard the presentation from Dr. Audrey Noble on the PL1 Longitudinal Study that the P-20 Council heard at their meeting.

The next meeting of the group will take place after this year's Achievement Gap Report is published.

### **Subcommittee on Dual Enrollment**

The subcommittee on Dual Enrollment met for the first time on October 12<sup>th</sup>. They went over the definition of dual enrollment, the goals of the program and an overview of the current dual enrollment practices in Delaware schools. The members then split into small groups to discuss the topics of a target population and admission criteria. The general agreement was that all students should have access to dual enrollment but information should be targeted to students that are often overlooked for such opportunities, namely minority and low-income students. Dual enrollment could also be a useful tool as an alternative means of study for those students that are at risk of dropping out. Most of the members agreed that only students that show the capacity to succeed should be allowed to participate in dual enrollment. This can be demonstrated in a number of ways including GPA in the content area to be studied, school recommendations, and test scores. However, it was noted that these criteria should be used as an "or" situation so that the least amount of students would be excluded. The members came back into the larger group to discuss funding. A consensus was not reached as more research on the different ways of funding needs to be done. This will be on the agenda for the next meeting which will be held on November 6<sup>th</sup>.

### **Higher Education Data Cube Subcommittee**

The Higher Education Data Cube Subcommittee will meet November 28<sup>th</sup>.

These are the outstanding issues to be discussed:

- Revision of a document for granting password protected access at the high school/district level as well as at the higher education level with appropriate sign-offs on who can.
- Assignment of a code for each higher education institution
- Reports that can be generated from the data.
- Process for entering the data into the data warehouse.
- Determination of which institutions want to begin the data entry process this year and what data can be entered.

### **High School Graduation Requirements Committee**

The high school graduation requirements committee published its report on its findings. The changes to the Department of Education regulation 505 were presented to the State Board of Education in August of 2006 and approved.

The next meeting of the P-20 Council is scheduled for February 6, 2007.

If you would like additional information about any of our work, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs. Allen or Mrs. Woodruff at your convenience.