

# Progress Report

## P-20 Council

### June 2006

The P-20 Council met April 24, 2006 at Buena Vista, with members of the subcommittees, to hear a presentation from the higher education community and a presentation on early care and education professional development. The two topics were relational in that the better the quality of the early child care and early education programs, the better prepared the child is to enter the public education system and be successful.

The presentation from Delaware's higher education community, including Delaware State University, University of Delaware, Delaware Technical and Community College, Wilmington College and Wesley College focused on the requirements high school students aspiring to a college education need to be successful in higher education should take. The recommendation included:

- 4 credits in English Language Arts with emphasis on critical reading, documenting and writing research papers
- 4 credits in mathematics
- 4 credits of science
- 2 to 3 credits of world language
- 2 credits of history
- 2 credits of social studies
- 2 credits of electives

In addition, the institutions recommended that students complete at least 5 core credits in their senior year. It was further noted that this was one of the first times that the public and private higher education institutions have been engaged in common discussions, and the intention was to continue the relationship.

The second presentation centered on early child care professional development programs in the state and the need for well-qualified child care workers. The current professional development programs contain the core knowledge and competencies that are important for early learning foundations, but are offered in a way that can be inconvenient for child care workers.

Ideally the professional development would be required as part of licensing, but it is not, since the pre-licensing requirements have not been revised since 1988. In addition, a better trained workforce is emerging from high school and community college programs, but it is difficult to retain these individuals due to low pay and no benefits. It was requested that the P-20 Council members appoint representatives to serve on a Professional Development Workgroup to identify the barriers and the solutions to improving the quality of early child care and education professional development. This recommendation is being reviewed by the chairs to determine how best to proceed.

### **Achievement Gap Action Group**

At its most recent meeting in March 2006, the Achievement Gap Action Group released the below noted report.

## **Awareness to Action 2005: Tracking the Achievement Gap in Delaware Schools**

This is the second annual report showing four years of achievement gap data for Delaware schools. The data is displayed by district and by school for each third, fifth, eighth and tenth grade for whom 4 years of information is available, using data from the Delaware Student Testing Program (DSTP) scores for reading and math. The percentages of students in each subgroup meeting or exceeding the standard are displayed in a graphic format along with school demographics and the most recent Annual Yearly Performance (AYP) rating under No Child Left Behind (NCLB). From that data, the “gap” is calculated using the reference group against the subgroup. This report is web-based only and can be accessed either through the webpage for the State Board of Education or the Research & Development Center at the University of Delaware.

In addition, the committee discussed the status of the Correlates of Achievement work.

### **Correlates of Achievement**

The specific Correlates of Achievement were developed by the Educational Testing Service as a measure designed to identify indicators that contribute to an achievement gap.

The Correlates of Achievement work done by the R&D Center is creating a dynamic, web-based program to help teachers and administrators analyze data within their schools on a continuous basis. The data are disaggregated by student, teacher, and school level factors, and incorporate class size, curriculum level, teacher experience, and group demographics. The data are constantly updated as teachers and administrators enter more elements into the system. At the present time, the University of Delaware, through the State Action for Education Leadership Project, is training teams in the use of the correlate data using real school level queries.

As a result of the presentations and discussions, seven specific action steps were identified:

1. Establish a technical committee to work with the Department to create a data plan and secure the technical expertise (possibly from the private sector) to achieve it.
2. Conduct case studies to examine how to develop school cultures that can make a real difference in student learning.
3. Determine what funding would be required at the school level to build and support a cultural shift.
4. Determine if there is a way to capture and analyze meaningful data for special populations, such as LEP and ILC students.
5. Determine how the longitudinal gap data can be added to school report cards or school profiles.
6. Begin a larger effort to discuss the Educational Testing Service report on the 14 Correlates of Achievement and their significance in closing the achievement gap. Initially this discussion could start at the Policies and Practices Conference scheduled for late June. From that point, individual professional groups would be encouraged to continue the conversation with their members for a sustained focus.

7. Request that the State Board of Education require consistent course content, titles, and numbers across districts.

The Achievement Gap Action Group will reconvene once some progress has been made on the seven areas noted above. In the interim, small groups will be convened to work on the priorities.

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

The Committee has determined its recommendations for increasing the number of required courses and the rigor necessary for high school students to graduate in 2011 prepared to be successful either at the post secondary level or in the work force. The recommendations are as follows:

#### English Language Arts: 4 credits

The committee recommends the components of the English Language Arts standards be required components of the ELA credits.

#### Mathematics: 4 credits

A requirement of 4 credits, with one to be taken in the student's senior year would be required. The course content required would be Algebra I, II, and Geometry, or their equivalent integrated math courses. All courses should be aligned with the mathematics content standards.

#### Science: 3 credits

The committee recommends requiring 3 science credits, including Earth Science/Physical Science, Biology, and Chemistry or the equivalent integrated science courses, all with "lab" experiences. Courses should be aligned with the science content standards.

#### Social Studies: 3 credits

The committee agreed that 3 credits of Social Studies should be required, which encompass the four strands of the social studies content standards of history, geography, civics, and economics, either in specific courses, or in an integrated course approach.

#### Computer Literacy: 0 credits

It was decided that the requirement should be moved to the middle school level. The federal government is requiring this level of competency by the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

#### Career Pathways: 3 credits

These credit requirements would be continued.

#### Electives: 3 1/2 credits

These credit requirements would be continued.

#### Health and Physical Education: 1 ½ credits

These credit requirements would be continued.

#### Senior Year

The committee concurred on the need for a rigorous senior year. Requirements such as Senior Projects, research papers, dual enrollment opportunities, work/study programs and community service were all debated.

The committee recommended that students be required to be engaged in educational pursuits for both semesters senior year that would earn them more than 50% of the available credits that could be earned in that year. In a school that offers six credits per year, each senior would be required to complete at least four credits. The district

will determine what options it will allow in order to accomplish that engagement and submit their plan to the Department of Education and the State Board of Education for review.

### Optional Requirements

The committee discussed allowing optional graduation requirements in certain cases. The dilemma recognized from the outset was expecting high standards for all students and then making exceptions for some.

It was agreed that all students entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade would pursue the required curriculum. After each marking period, student progress will be reviewed. Students not making satisfactory progress in any core academic areas will be targeted for intervention and support by a coordinated school-wide review. The structure of the school-wide review will be determined by school officials. Five-year plans for graduation are also an option at any point. The plan combines a number of intervention steps, including adjustments to a student's Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and parent conferences.

### World Language

The committee recommended that freshman entering high school in 2009 should be required to graduate with 2 credits in a comprehensive world language program. The committee further recommended that a task force on world language implementation be established to resolve issues regarding resources and providing world language exposure in the elementary and/or middle school.

## **Data Subcommittee**

This subcommittee has not met since the fall. It was the intent to pilot the data cube with Wesley College. That did not take place as it was discovered that not all student ID numbers were on the transcripts. That has been rectified and as of the end of this school year, all transcripts will contain the K-12 student ID number. It has also been determined that the Department of Education data warehouse system needs to be upgraded to allow the data to flow more easily. Based on the above noted conditions, the pilot has been delayed until late summer. At that time we will beta test the transfer of data, the ease of use and the password protections for the system.

## **Subcommittee on Post Secondary Success**

This subcommittee has not met for some time. Members of the subcommittee also serve on a number of the other committees and subcommittees of the P-20 Council. It is anticipated that the Subcommittee will become active with the issue of dual enrollment policies.

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