

# Progress Report of the Delaware P-20 Council MAY 12, 2009

The Bi-annual meeting of the P-20 Council took place on May 12, 2009 at the Buena Vista Conference Center in New Castle, Delaware. Mr. Jorge Melendez, Vice President of the State Board of Education and acting co-chair of the Council, welcomed council members and introduced himself. He informed the committee members that in the absence of the State Board President the State Board Vice President fulfills the duties and responsibilities of the President.

Dr. Lillian Lowery, Secretary of Education and co-chair, then introduced herself and welcomed council members. This was the Secretary's first P-20 Council meeting since her appointment. She stated that while she planned to participate fully in the meeting, she acknowledged that she was still in a learning mode. Dr. Lowery then asked Dr. Coffield to review the *Summary and Scope of Delaware's P-20 Council* (January 2009) document that was drafted specifically to aid with the transition in administrations. The document provided a history of the inception of the Council, the language in code that established the Council's purpose and membership, past and present subcommittees, and subcommittee memberships. The document also posed several questions for future consideration in regard to moving forward with the work of the Council:

## Transition

- *How can we ensure continuity and forward momentum during the transition period?*
  - *What work should be maintained?*
  - *What new work should be added to the agenda?*

## Coordination

- *How can we link VISION 2015 into the work of the Council to ensure effective collaboration?*

## Finances

- *Are there financial structures that incentivize P-12 and postsecondary collaboration?*
- *What support is required to maintain a vibrant Council?*

## Accountability Structures

- *Should the Council adopt a discipline that requires creation of explicit measures and deadlines for achieving its goals?*
- *Should we consider a tier of membership at each institution with the authority and responsibility to implement the recommendations approved by the Council, or are the subcommittee structures sufficient?*

The council members felt that these questions and potentially others should be addressed in a meeting dedicated to working on developing a more clear vision, mission and goals along with a strategic plan. By doing so, the Council will be able to provide greater focus, direction and guidance to the work of the subcommittees. It was pointed out that this type of work would require more frequent meetings than the bi-annual meetings that are currently the norm.

## **Governor's Education Reform Agenda**

Dr. Lowery provided an overview of Governor Markell's education reform agenda. She highlighted the Governor's three main objectives:

- Eliminate the Delaware Student Testing Program and replace it with a testing program that measures student progress over the course of a school year.
- Pay the state's highest-performing teachers a comparatively higher salary, and those high-performing teachers in high-risk schools at the state's highest salary level. This portion of the plan would not go into effect until the state's current budget situation improves, and might begin on a pilot basis in individual school districts.
- Provide local schools and districts with substantially more discretion to make financial and other decisions that make sense for the kids they serve, while simultaneously holding them more accountable for spending their funds responsibly.

Dr. Lowery also spoke of the changing role of the Department of Education (DOE). DOE is trying to shift gears from predominantly compliance monitoring to trying to step up the technical assistance early on by assigning liaisons to each district and charter school so that compliance isn't as big an issue. Compliance monitoring will continue to fall upon state education agencies as a result of federal mandates, but the proposed changes are designed to move as much of the non-instructional work as possible off of the plate so that districts and schools can focus their efforts on teaching and learning.

## **Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS) Update**

Dr. Lowery shared that RFPs are being reviewed for the new Delaware student assessment. She told committee members that the new assessment was both formative and summative in nature. The assessment is to be an adaptive and delivered online. It will provide immediate feedback to teachers so that they can modify instruction based upon student need. For those schools where the technology infrastructure is not currently in place, a scanable paper and pencil version will be available. This new assessment will allow for measuring student growth over time. It will give students and teachers credit for demonstrating growth based upon where the students' assessed levels are at the beginning of the school year compared to their assessed levels at the end of the year. The assessment will no longer be a one-time event, but rather, students will have up to three opportunities to take the assessment. The proposal for high school assessments involves moving to end of course exams. Overall, it is believed that the new assessment will be more informative and helpful to schools.

## **Department of Labor Statistics- Workforce Challenges for Delaware:**

Mr. Ed Simon, DEDO, provided an overview of workforce challenges for the state. He shared recent trends in Delaware's labor market, the potential impact of population trends and occupational projections for Delaware. The current recession is resulting in a very difficult labor market and the growth of the labor force is expected to slow. Demographics show an increase in workers aged 55 or older which will create some opportunity for job openings due to replacing retirees, and other vacancies. Delaware is currently experiencing the highest number of unemployed ever at 33,600 (Mar 09). It is anticipated with fewer number of job openings,

competition for those positions will be greater. In addition, the jobs with the fastest rate of growth and the highest compensation will require more training/education and will require advance skills and knowledge. Mr. Simon stated that we need to advise students to stay in school and obtain as much education as possible. Mr. Simon shared that employers are looking for employees with soft skills such as communication, leadership, teamwork, interpersonal skills as well as skills in problem solving, presentation, analysis and computer literacy.

The data from the Census Bureau (American FactFinder, 2007) show that educational attainment in Delaware is below that of other states in the region for Bachelor's degrees and graduate/professional degrees, but that we lead the region in attainment of Associate's degrees. The data also indicate that Delaware leads the region with the highest percent of the population who have some college, but hold no degree. Delaware leads the region in the percentage of residents whose educational attainment is high school graduate or higher.

### **High School Study- *High Schools That Are Beating the Odds:***

Joan Buttram, R & D Center at the University of Delaware, provided a preview of a current study being commissioned by the State Board of Education. This study is a continuation of a previous study about Elementary Schools in Indian River School District whose students were beating the odds with performance on the student assessment above what one would expect for a school with their demographics. The research question to be answered is: What policies and practices do successful high schools use to promote student achievement and graduation? Three schools were chosen from a pool of schools who met the definition of "beating the odds" for inclusion in this study. The definition of "beating the odds" included criteria based upon demographics, student performance on the DSTP and graduation rates. The study methodology will incorporate screening of policies and practices; interviews of administrators, teachers and students; observations; discipline data and other documentation. The participating schools are Dover High School, Sussex Technical High School and Indian River High School.

### **Committee Reports:**

#### Delaware's Promise Dropout Prevention Committee:

Dr. Coffield, Chair of the DE Promise Committee, shared that the committee was established by the previous co-chairs of the Committee to implement and sustain the work of the America's Promise grant. The charge is specifically to review and implement the action plan that resulted from of the America's Promise Dropout Prevention Summit held in October of 2008. The committee held its first meeting on March 23, 2009. The group consensus was that our next move should be to develop a survey to determine who is out there providing dropout prevention services or interventions and what exactly they are doing. With this baseline information, the group believes we can more effectively plan and target efforts where they will have the greatest impact. The survey was developed and released. The data will be presented to the subcommittee at their next meeting.

Delaware College Access Network (DECAN) Committee:

Dr. Coffield provided an update of the status of the DECAN Committee. She shared a memo drafted by committee chair, Dr. Joseph Pika, regarding proposed next steps for the committee. Dr. Pika illustrated the alignment of the work being done by the DECAN committee with the Governor's education reform agenda and his *Blueprint for a Better Delaware, 2008*. Dr. Pika emphasized that the education issue before us is also an economic and labor issue as well. He proposed that the Council is a valuable framework for coordinating efforts across agencies and other public/private partners. The memo proposed the following recommendations for consideration:

1. Make college access and degree completion an explicit statewide goal supported by a broad coalition. We propose that the Secretaries of Education and Labor, as well as the Director of the Delaware Development Office guide the future work of DE-CAN to make Delaware #1 in the region and the nation. This would be a critical step in advancing the "Workforce 21<sup>st</sup> Century" effort that Governor Markell articulated during the campaign that would link the work already accomplished by DE-CAN to the efforts of related departments, particularly Labor and the Delaware Development Office.
2. Authorize a pilot project targeted on three communities in the state where research shows a three-tiered strategy is needed in order to make a difference.
3. Create a statewide effort based on lessons learned from the three pilots designed to move Delaware to the lead position on measures of college access and completion.

Data Committee:

Alan Phillips, DHEC and Chair of the Data Committee, presented an update on the progress of the Data Committee. He reviewed the charge of the data committee. The original purpose of the committee was to create the P-20 Data Cube to identify indicators at the high school level that lead to student success in college. The P-20 Council made the P-20 Data Cube Subcommittee a permanent, standing committee and its name changed to the P-20 Data Committee. The P-20 Data Committee is to serve as the P-20 Council's data arm that can be used to inform the Council's policy recommendations. In addition, the P-20 Data Committee can be a forum where institutional data users can meet with state data users to exchange information on other collaborative data projects.

He also spoke about the development of an MOU for the Longitudinal Data System. The purpose of the MOU is to ensure that all parties are in agreement as to the purpose and scope of the project as well as how the data would be used. Policies and procedures were also incorporated into the document, but could be separated from the MOU in order to allow them to be more fluid. Mr. Phillips requested that the Council determine an action plan for reviewing the proposed MOU and making recommendations. Alan will provide a copy of the MOU to each of the provosts and will arrange to meet with them to work on developing this process.

The P-20 Data Cube currently contains three cohorts of high school graduates: 2006, 2007 and 2008. There are some 30+ sample reports of various aggregations. The committee believes there is enough data to begin to develop more specific queries that will begin to pinpoint success indicators and also to make sure the data is clean and consistent across institutions. The

Curriculum Cadre members were presented and overview of the Data Cube and were asked for their input on relevant query questions. Staffing and time is currently impacting the rate at which this project is able to develop. The P-20 Data Cube is also perceived by DOE to be the higher education link in what will one day be a seamless, integrated state P-20 education longitudinal data system.

It was noted that a FERPA question had come up as far as what data would be ultimately disclosed to high school personnel. Dr. Stephanie Smith said the question came from Del Tech and that their lawyer had advised them that revealing student-level college GPA's violated privacy protections. The intention for the Data Cube is to have tiers or levels of access to the data. District and high school administrators would view aggregations of their school-specific data.

Transfer of Credit Matrix Committee:

Alan Phillips, DHEC, presented an update on the progress of the Transfer of Credit Matrix Committee. Development has begun on underlying database structure and on a screen for entering individual course information. The format of the information provided by the institutions of higher education was not conducive to populating a database; therefore, it appears a large amount of data entry will need to be done. The Provosts were asked if it was possible to furnish work-study students to do the data entry for this project. It was agreed that Mr. Phillips would work through the Matrix Committee on this point. A meeting will be scheduled for this summer.

**Action Items:**

A motion was made by Dr. Harry Williams to conduct quarterly 2 hour meetings of the Council. The motion as seconded by Dr. Angela Suchanic. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Mr. William Allen to form an Early Childhood Subcommittee of the Council. The motion was seconded by Dr. Harry Williams. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Dr. Lillian Lowery to appoint Paul Harrell as the chair of the Early Childhood Subcommittee of the Council. The motion was seconded by Mr. William Allen. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Dr. Harry Williams to form a standing Provosts' Subcommittee of the Council. The motion was seconded by Jim Wolfe. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.