

Progress Report

P-20 Council

November 2005

Since the last report, the P-20 Council gathered to review the National Governor's Association Grant on High Schools. The discussion centered around the Council's two year work plan for implementing the key strategies of restoring value to the high school diploma, redesigning high schools, and setting goals that hold high schools and colleges accountable. After a brief review of the progress of each subcommittee, attention shifted to the measurable goals proposed for the P-20 Council and its subcommittees. For the Council's current main focus, the K-12 grade levels, proposed goals include:

- Increase graduation rates
- Increase graduation requirements
- Increase the number of highly qualified educators by way of:
 - Identification of critical needs
 - ARTC program support
 - Scholarship programs (Teacher Corps, McAuliff)
 - Future teachers' associations
- Eliminate the achievement gap
 - Use the Gap Report to identify successful methods
 - Utilize the Standard & Poor's data
 - Continue to develop the Correlates of Achievement
- Increase business engagement

In recent months, the Data Subcommittee has made significant progress in developing a data cube that integrates collection and collaboration methods across grades and into higher education. The Subcommittee has identified common variables that schools, districts, higher education institutions, and the Department can access to monitor the progress of Delaware students. These variables include: State ID, First and Last Name, Date of Birth, High School Code, High School Graduation Year, College Code, College Term, Class at College (eg. Freshman, Sophomore, etc.), Content ID, Course ID, Score Type, Score Value (in numeric form), and College Student ID. Richard France, Director of Institutional Research at Wesley College, has agreed to administer a pilot program that will include about 200 full-time students and track their progress through the core courses for freshmen year.

In October, the Achievement Gap Action Group met to continue work on the Correlates of Achievement program and discuss proposed measurable goals for the committee. The Correlates of Achievement is a web-based program that helps teachers and administrators analyze data within their schools on a continuous basis. The data can be disaggregated by student, teacher, and school level factors, and incorporates class size, level, teacher experience, and group demographics. The program's main advantage is that it presents a real-time image of school characteristics because the data are constantly updated as

teachers enter it into the system. Professional development for the Correlates of Achievement will begin in November and include a pilot, program-based learning activity, a presentation, and feedback. The completed system will be available to all middle and high schools beginning in February or March 2006.

The Achievement Gap Action Group meeting also identified two measurable goals that the committee is progressing towards. An emphasis has been placed on utilization of the Correlates of Achievement, as it represents the next level of achievement gap data. It will be necessary in the future to monitor which schools effectively use the program and how to encourage all to do so. The committee also continues to advocate the usage of the Achievement Gap Report to highlight schools that successfully lower the achievement gap. The group realizes the importance of recognizing schools that create an environment of improvement and suggest additional measures, such as demographic group and grade level information, that could provide even more valuable data sources.

The first meeting of the Committee on Graduation Requirements was held on September 27th, 2005. The members sought to identify guiding principles that will influence their work over the next 6 months. These principles include an emphasis on preparedness, a rigorous curriculum, relevance, and a vision of future needs. In a second meeting on October 21st, the committee analyzed the important components of the English Language Arts requirements for graduation. The discussion focused on the development of writing skills, communication, both oral and written, and reasoning or interpretation. There was also an emphasis on extending the English Language Arts standards through grade 12 and a consensus that each successive grade level should require increased complexity in literature, writing, and oral communication.

Scheduled Meeting Dates:

P-20 Council: January 23rd, 2006

Data Subcommittee: TBD

Achievement Gap Action Group: February 7th, 2006

High School Graduation Requirements Committee: November 18th, 2005

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.