

Leadership for Education Achievement in Delaware

LEAD Committee

Established by Governor Ruth Ann Minner, Executive Order #98

LEAD Committee Cost Efficiency Study Frequently Asked Questions

About the LEAD Committee

What is the LEAD Committee?

The Leadership for Education Achievement in Delaware (LEAD) Committee was established in June 2007 by Governor Ruth Ann Minner.

What are the goals of the LEAD Committee?

The Governor charged the LEAD Committee with addressing three Vision 2015 priorities:

- To identify opportunities for cost efficiencies through a thorough analysis of the \$1.65 billion that Delaware spends today on public K-12 education. Status: completed January 2008; see below for more information.
- To develop an easy-to-understand “performance dashboard” with at-a-glance information on how well individual schools, districts, and the state are performing. Status: underway.
- To analyze and make recommendations on the optimal way to generate and distribute state and local education funding, including consideration of a “weighted” funding formula that accounts for individual student needs. Status: underway, with report due, Spring 2008.

Who serves on the LEAD Committee?

LEAD Committee members—all appointed by the Governor—include public, private, and civic leaders from throughout the state:

- Marvin N. “Skip” Schoenhals, Chairman, WSFS Bank – Chair
- Valerie A. Woodruff, Delaware Secretary of Education – Vice Chair
- Jean W. Allen, President, Delaware State Board of Education
- Kevin E. Carson, Superintendent, Woodbridge School District; Past President, Delaware Chief School Officers Association
- Sally C. Coonin, Education and Policy Advisor, Office of Governor Ruth Ann Minner
- Jennifer W. Davis, Director, Delaware Office of Management and Budget
- Carol A. DeSantis, Secretary, Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families
- Barbara Grogg, President, Delaware State Education Association
- Paul A. Herdman, President and CEO, Rodel Foundation of Delaware

- Frank R. Ingram, Jr., Board Member, PolyTech School District
- H. Raye Jones Avery, Executive Director, Christina Cultural Arts Center
- The Honorable Vincent A. Lofink, Chair, House Education Committee, Delaware General Assembly
- Gregory Meece, Director, Delaware Charter School Network; School Director, Newark Charter School
- G. Scott Reihm, Executive Director, Delaware Association of School Administrators
- Daniel Rich, Provost, University of Delaware
- The Honorable David P. Sokola, Chair, Senate Education Committee, Delaware General Assembly
- Connie Bond Stuart, President, PNC Bank Delaware
- William H. Willis, President, Willis Chevrolet, Inc.

About the Cost Efficiency Study

Why a Cost Efficiency Study?

The Governor called for the Cost Efficiency Study for several reasons:

- The current system can be made more efficient to maximize student achievement. Delaware is already 8th among states in per-pupil spending, but we rank 27th in math and reading proficiency.
- Vision 2015 recommended the study be conducted in order to realize efficiencies in the current system so they can be reallocated to maximize student success, in areas such as early childhood education, the Vision Network of districts and schools, and teacher recruitment.
- The study provides independent assurances to either confirm or deny many pre-existing assumptions about the inefficiencies of the system.

What were the findings of the Cost Efficiency Study?

The report identifies “efficiency opportunities” with an annual value of between \$86 million and \$158 million within the state’s \$1.65 billion education budget.

There are 16 efficiency recommendations in seven categories: transportation, purchasing, energy, salary and benefits, construction, administration and central support, and the Delaware Department of Education. The full final report can be found at: www.doe.state.de.us.

Did the Cost Efficiency Study make recommendations about where savings should be redirected?

Near-term priorities for reallocation, which are aligned with the goals of Vision 2015, include the expansion of the Vision Network of districts and schools, early childhood education, and the recruitment and training of math and science teachers for high-need schools.

How was the Cost Efficiency Study funded?

The study was funded privately by the Delaware Business Roundtable because public funding was not available. The business community’s interest in investing in a public education system in which dollars are focused on student performance prompted this significant investment.

How did the LEAD Committee reach its final recommendations?

The work of the LEAD Committee was supported by The Boston Consulting Group (BCG), an international management consulting firm engaged to provide independent, unbiased research and analysis. In undertaking its work, BCG worked closely with Delawareans and built upon an extensive body of prior knowledge.

After being presented with an initial set of hypotheses covering a broad range of potential efficiency opportunities, the LEAD Committee analyzed and discussed priority areas, resulting in the sixteen specific recommendations in seven categories.

Over more than five months, the Committee considered and debated each recommendation, and employed an agreed-upon approach for offering amendments and voting on final language.

At the LEAD Committee meeting on December 17, 2007, the committee voted to submit the slate of efficiency opportunities presented in the final report. Each committee member, regardless of how he/she voted (or if no vote was cast due to absence or abstention), was given the opportunity to submit an unedited Committee Members Statement, which could include both general comments as well as specific comments directed toward any of the opportunity areas listed in the report. These statements can be found in Section 4 of the final report.

Studies like this have been done in the past and nothing has changed. What makes this different?

The LEAD Committee made a decision to put everything on the table for discussion, even things that will be politically challenging to address, since the ultimate goal—delivering the best education to Delaware students—is so important. Members of the committee are now working to make sure the recommendations are vetted fully among the members of the General Assembly to make decisions that will deliver the greatest results for our students.

What kind of impact could the public see if recommendations from this study are implemented?

The Cost Efficiency Study has done a great service by identifying tens of millions of dollars within the current public education budget that could be “spent smarter.” By reallocating dollars that are not currently put to the most efficient use, the goals of Vision 2015—to make Delaware schools the best in the world by 2015—can become a reality.

Although there will be implementation challenges, the LEAD Committee's ultimate objective was to provide the best possible information to the Governor and General Assembly that can be used to bring about the most benefits for the children of Delaware. The Cost Efficiency Study points to a potential of \$86 million to \$158 million per year for reallocation.

What does that mean? If just over \$4 million were saved and reallocated Delaware could fund high-quality early childhood education for 600 low-income children. If \$1 million to \$2 million were saved and reallocated, that would be enough to launch a regional initiative to recruit about 100 new teachers to our highest-need subjects areas—like math and science.