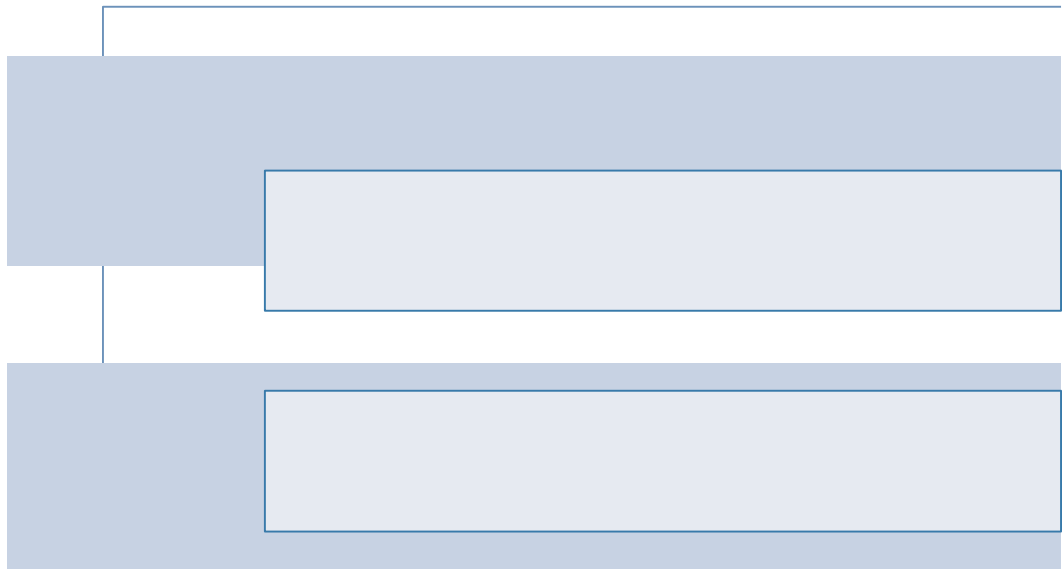


Delaware

Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators for All Students (2015–2025)

August 25, 2015



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Section 1. Introduction: Delaware's Commitment and the Delaware Context

Despite the deeply held American belief that a democracy thrives through a well-educated populous, it is only since 1965 that state education agencies have been bound by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to provide equitable access to education for all students, with particular attention paid to students from low-income and minority backgrounds. For the last 50 years, we as a nation have fallen short of a duty that we should have addressed before the first school ever opened. Across the nation, poor and minority students do not always have access to a level playing field with their nonminority and more affluent peers when it comes to obtaining an excellent education. In Delaware, although many student achievement and access gaps continue to persist, there are several schools and districts that have begun to demonstrate that history need not repeat itself. Delaware has long focused on closing educator equity gaps because we, as a state, believe that *we will only close the achievement gap for our highest need students if all students have equitable access to the most capable and well-prepared educators*. Despite our concerted efforts to date, our student achievement data persistently tell us we have more work ahead. The good news is that many of Delaware's educators and local leaders are already showing what is possible for ALL students by re-doubling efforts to ensure that "excellent educators for all" is a statewide reality.

Recent state data illustrated that significant achievement gaps exist among Black, Hispanic, low-income, students with disabilities, and English language learners (ELLs) compared with their White peers (see Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1. Difference in Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced, DCAS 2013–14

Student Subgroup	English Language Arts	Mathematics
Black/White	23*	27*
Hispanic/White	20*	18*
Low-income/non-low income	21*	22*
Students with disabilities (SWD)/non-SWD	49*	48*
English language learner (ELL)/non-ELL	42*	33*

Note. This sample includes all students in Grades 3–10 who participated in 2013–14 English language arts and mathematics assessments. All data are from Delaware Department of Education records.

* Difference is statistically significant at the 5 percent level.

As a state, Delaware recognizes that these persistent achievement gaps strongly predict how likely a student is to attend and excel in college or in a career. The National Center for Education Statistics (2015) recently reported that in 2013, the immediate college enrollment rate for high school completers from high-income families (80 percent) was 31 percentage points higher than the rate for those from low-income families (49 percent). More than half of Delaware public school students who enroll in the state's colleges have to take remedial courses that are not credit-bearing. Although this fact is concerning, perhaps more alarming is that only 30 percent of

Delaware high school freshmen make it to their sophomore year of college, and only 17 percent of low-income freshmen persist to their second year of college. Further, although much has been written about other contributing factors to these gaps (e.g., poor health care and funding shortfalls), the state-specific data reviewed from Delaware suggests that the achievement gap can be closed by ending educator quality disparities.

Educator quality remains the number-one in-school factor affecting whether Delaware’s students have access to the great education that they deserve.

To that end, the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) is pleased to submit to the U.S. Department of Education the following plan for improving equitable access to excellent teachers and leaders in our state. This plan responds to Education Secretary Arne Duncan’s July 7, 2014, letter to all state education agencies (SEAs), as augmented with additional guidance published on November 10, 2014. Delaware’s plan complies with (1) the requirement in Section 1111(b)(8)(C) of ESEA that each state’s Title I, Part A plan includes information on the specific steps that the SEA will take to ensure that students from low-income families and students of color are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers, and the measures that the agency will use to evaluate and publicly report the progress of the agency with respect to such steps; and (2) the requirement in ESEA Section 1111(e)(2) that a state’s plan be revised by the SEA if necessary. Given the importance of strong school leadership, the plan also addresses access for students from low-income families and students of color to high-performing school principals.

Delaware is eager to be a leading state in the nation in the development and implementation of this state plan to ensure equitable access. Delaware is uniquely positioned for three key reasons: our commitment to generating and reviewing high-quality educator effectiveness data, our commitment to authentic stakeholder engagement with the full spectrum of actors in the system, and our commitment to a comprehensive, coordinated, urgent approach to ensuring that all students have access to excellent teachers and leaders.

Delaware’s Commitment to High-Quality Educator Effectiveness Data. One way in which Delaware hopes to lead the nation in ensuring equitable access to all educators is through effective establishment and usage of educator effectiveness data. The state’s first-round win in the 2010 Race to the Top (RTTT) competition was predicated on state and local leadership’s historic commitment to educator excellence, which dates back to the 1980s. Delaware was one of the first states to institute a statewide educator evaluation system, and one of the first to establish statewide data platforms. The educator evaluation system was revised in 2005, creating the critical capacity to link student and educator data and allowing educators and policymakers to quickly analyze the performance of students over time, track how graduates perform in college, and link teachers to teacher preparation programs, all of which provide rich opportunities to use data to drive performance at the system, school, and classroom levels.

Delaware’s Commitment to High-Quality Data

One way in which Delaware hopes to lead the nation in ensuring equitable access to all educators is through effective establishment and usage of educator effectiveness data.

Delaware knows from available research data that the presence of a highly skilled teacher is the strongest in-school predictor of a student’s academic success, with high-quality school leaders being the second most important factor. However, several recent national studies (Glazerman & Max 2011; Goldhaber, Lesley, & Theobald, 2014; Isenberg et al., 2013; Kalogrides & Loeb, 2013; Sass, Hannaway, Xu, Figlio, & Feng, 2012; Schultz, 2014) demonstrate that educator equity gaps continue to endure for students from low-income and minority backgrounds, according to almost every educator effectiveness metric, at the classroom, school, and district levels. Delaware’s educator excellence work is focused on the principle that ensuring equitable access to

teachers and school leaders—those who have the mind-sets and skills to guide their learning—will lead to success both in the classroom and into college and careers. This belief is informed, in part, by the state's extensive longitudinal data systems and recent work with Harvard University's Strategic Data Project (SDP). Through its partnership with SDP since 2011, Delaware has seen its culture of data use expand into the relatively new field of educator effectiveness analytics at the state, district, and school levels. The SDP human capital and college-going diagnostic research has prompted a strong demand for data on school, teacher, and student performance within DDOE and in the field. Last year, a four-member analyst team was formed within the Teacher & Leader Effectiveness Unit (TLEU); this team is led by an SDP alumni and includes two Cohort 6 SDP Fellows. As part of the development of this equity plan, Delaware partnered with SDP further to conduct a series of equity-related analyses. SDP's work is perhaps even more important because of their national perspective, and Delaware continues to learn from other states, districts and charter networks about how to improve its data systems in the spirit of better understanding and acting upon educator effectiveness data.

Delaware's Commitment to Authentic Stakeholder Engagement. The development of this plan provided staff at DDOE the opportunity to share data, challenges, and opportunities with diverse stakeholders from across the state. Delaware has committed to another six months of stakeholder engagement in 2015. Hundreds of Delaware educators, parents, community leaders, district leaders, policymakers and elected officials had the opportunity (in the first half of 2015) to review statewide data, ongoing state and local initiatives in the area of educator equity, and perhaps most importantly, an opportunity to comment on the work currently underway and to inform future directions. The state has a long history of stakeholder participation in policy and practice and appreciates USED's attentiveness to the importance of soliciting input from educators, partners, parents, and others concerned with ensuring that all Delaware students are taught by excellent educators.

As noted, the stakeholder engagement process on current equity gaps and potential long-term strategies to address them will continue beyond the submission of the plan. Delaware is committed to a comprehensive approach to stakeholder engagement, and, therefore, many of the additional discussions focused on potential strategies will occur during summer and into fall 2015. Some of these conversations will include groups that have participated in the initial discussions around equity gaps and their root causes while others will be engaged for the first time. DDOE's leadership continues to welcome feedback about additional groups that should be involved.

Delaware's Commitment to a Coordinated, Comprehensive Approach. A third way in which Delaware is well-positioned—with a vision of eliminating key educator equity gaps that exist within our state by 2025—is through a coordinated approach to addressing the issue. First, because of the state's small size, Delaware remains uniquely poised to tackle the pervasive problem of inequitable access to excellent teachers and leaders in a coordinated way. Delaware's plan demonstrates the state's commitment to addressing inequities across all student demographics, across all 19 districts and 24 charter schools.¹ Part of the longer term plan will focus on a smaller subset of districts serving disproportionately higher numbers of students from low-income communities—DDOE hopes to forge deeper partnerships with several LEAs in developing local plans and driving key strategies at the level closest to students.

But more important than size is our commitment at the state and local levels to developing educator effectiveness policies in a way that strategically addresses the full spectrum of critical policy areas (e.g., recruitment, retention, evaluation, professional development) and align initiatives to ensure coherence across them. This educator effectiveness "systems approach" involves coordinating within DDOE to ensure that all leaders working to improve educator effectiveness are aware of one another's initiatives and able to leverage and strategically build

¹ In 2015–16, three additional charter schools will open, bringing the total number of local education agencies (LEAs) to 33.

upon them. Building on the state's 2010 RTTT efforts, in 2013 Delaware has developed sustainability plans for its great teachers and leaders efforts, building upon statewide work dating back to the 1990s. In 2010, Delaware created the TLEU to help fuel ongoing efforts, which has allowed the state to make great strides in establishing a foundation for this equitable access focus. More importantly, however, districts and charters have developed deeper capacity (through more than \$70 million in RTTT funds, ongoing technical assistance, and the leadership of the state's superintendents) in the realm of educator effectiveness.

Notably, Delaware's districts and charters have developed new partnerships with preservice providers, stronger selection models and screening tools, new approaches to mentoring and induction, uniquely tailored educator evaluation systems, greater opportunities for individualized professional development, and early efforts in creating more meaningful retention strategies. They also have invested in early childhood, wraparound services, and improved culture and climate (based on new data streams). Thus, Delaware continues to form an approach to educator effectiveness that is a "both/and" instead of an "either/or" approach, attempting to eliminate the foible of false choices. This plan thus builds on a strong foundation for improving student performance and access to teacher and leader excellence, which will be detailed throughout the plan.

To ensure that DDOE began this work with a clear vision of the policies and initiatives already underway, the team conducted a policy inventory using the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (GTL Center) Talent Development Framework. This policy inventory involved bringing together the state's educator effectiveness leaders to systematically document the full spectrum of educator effectiveness policies and initiatives, and consider areas of strength and areas where less policy attention had been devoted to-date (see Section 5 for more details on this policy inventory).

Despite Delaware's leadership in the areas of data, stakeholder engagement, and comprehensive educator effectiveness approaches, the in-depth review suggested that Delaware still has work to do before "equitable access" will be achieved. In April 2013, Delaware released its *Educator Effectiveness Diagnostic*, which found, among other results, the following:

- ▶ **New teachers in Delaware leave more quickly:** Two out of three new teachers, on average, leave their school by their fourth year. One out of every three new teachers, on average, leaves Delaware entirely after four years. After the 2012–13 school year, 22.1 percent of early career teachers left their schools, which is nearly double the rate for teachers with three or more years of prior experience (12.9 percent). The rate at which teachers leave Delaware schools entirely also is much higher for early career teachers (12.3 percent) than it is for more experienced teachers (7.8 percent).
- ▶ **High-need schools have higher rates of teacher turnover:** For *high-need schools*, defined in Section 2 of the plan, on average, nearly 45 percent of teachers have left a high-need school after four years, compared with 58 percent in all other schools.
- ▶ **Delaware's neediest students might not be consistently interacting with the highest-performing teachers:** On average, high-need schools have 60 percent of their teachers rated *Exceeds* or *Satisfactory* on their Student Improvement Component (Measure A ratings²) versus 76 percent in all other schools. Overall school performance in Delaware's highest need schools (and subgroups) continues to lag behind state averages, though this is not true in every situation.

² Measure A of DPAS-II (R) for teachers is comprised of student academic growth targets, which are based on the change in performance of students in Grades 3–10 on reading and/or mathematics state assessments from fall to spring.

- **Poorer schools exhibit higher shares of newly hired teachers:** Newly hired teachers in Delaware constitute about 9 percent of the workforce in schools above the state median in economically disadvantaged student composition, compared with 6 percent in those schools below the median. Further, novice teachers are roughly twice as common in schools in the top quartile of economically disadvantaged students (poorest) as they are in schools in the bottom quartile (most affluent).

These and other data continue to drive the work of TLEU, DDOE, LEAs, and policy leaders. In response to these facts and the federal requirement that all states submit a plan to address educator equity, Delaware partnered with the GTL Center at American Institutes for Research and has taken the following steps to engage a broad community of stakeholders in the creation of our statewide equity plan:

1. Reviewed data provided by ED, Harvard University's SDP, and the state's Public Educator Data Systems (see Section 2).
2. Developed and began implementing a long-term strategy for engaging stakeholders in ensuring equitable access to excellent educators (see Section 3).
3. Conducted a root cause analysis, based on data and more than twenty meetings/sessions with a broad cross section of education stakeholders, to identify the challenges that underlie our equity gaps, and to co-develop shared understandings of the resulting strategies intended to address these root causes (see Section 4).
4. Developed a menu of potential strategies and solutions with concrete guidance to continue or direct implementation (see Section 5).
5. Set measurable goals and created a plan for measuring and reporting progress and continuously improving this plan as well as informing our stakeholders of our progress (see Section 6).

The resulting plan reflects the thoughtful analysis of more than 200 state leaders, educators, and Delaware citizens. This plan will provide a roadmap for the state's comprehensive approach to strengthening teacher and leader effectiveness across Delaware. Specifically, it will review the current data that speak to the most relevant and persistent equity gaps that exist in the state, and it will share the root causes of those gaps that emerged from these stakeholder conversations and further data review. Finally, the plan will present the state's approach and timeline for communicating progress to stakeholders and the broader public on an ongoing basis, noting that a second phase of data review, stakeholder engagement, and LEA technical assistance will occur during the second half of 2015 as the plan is finalized. The plan addressed the core in-school issue of educator equity—Delaware understands that both formal and informal support and accountability for districts, schools, and educators combined with ongoing engagement of the broader citizenry and of civic and community groups will ensure that all Delaware students have the opportunity to succeed in school, in college, and in their careers.

Delaware's Commitment to Stakeholder Engagement

The resulting plan reflects the thoughtful analysis of more than 200 state leaders, educators, and Delaware citizens.

Section 2. Equity Gaps

A critical step in moving toward more equitable access to excellent educators is to better identify important indicators of educator equity and equity gaps³ so that state leaders and stakeholders can discuss root causes behind these equity gaps and identify potential strategies that directly address these gaps. Although Delaware's focus on providing equitable access to effective teaching and leadership is long-standing, critical data highlighting the depth of the challenge have become available only in the last few years. This section provides a brief history of Delaware's commitment to continually developing its educator effectiveness data infrastructure to enable meaningful analysis of educator effectiveness and equitable access trends. The section also defines key terms, presents the outcomes of DDOE's data analysis, and identifies four key equity gaps that will be continuously referenced throughout the plan as the state moves from data analysis to concrete action.

Delaware's Commitment to High-Quality Data

The data presented in this plan build on almost a decade of dedicated efforts to improve educator data quality in Delaware. In 2006, the DDOE submitted an educator equity plan to ED that detailed the steps that the state would take to ensure that all students were instructed by a highly qualified teacher (HQT).⁴ The plan included a number of steps to achieve this goal, including the increased use of Title II monitoring and providing technical support to districts. In 2006, roughly one quarter of Delaware schools and more than a third of classes were instructed by teachers who did not meet the federal definition of HQT. Today, more than 98 percent of the teachers of core academic subjects in Delaware meet that definition. Although this dramatic increase in HQT trends in the state is very encouraging, Delaware recognizes that HQT is not a strong enough indicator of educator effectiveness and has not translated into increased achievement for all students. There is still significant progress needed in understanding the next generation of indicators and data that will shape the state's equitable access goals.

In the years following 2006, the state's emphasis on understanding equitable access to effective educators remained resolute. In its RTTT grant application three years later, Delaware outlined a number of initiatives aimed at increasing educator effectiveness, especially in the state's high-need schools.⁵ The RTTT opportunity led to the creation of TLEU within DDOE, the distribution of nearly \$60 Million in federal funds to districts and charters based on need, and ultimately the implementation of a number of equity-focused initiatives such as a statewide educator recruitment portal (www.joindelawareschools.org) and the Delaware Talent Cooperative (see Section 5). A plan for building a more complex understanding of the state's educator equity landscape was charted.⁶ Recognizing educator effectiveness as more indicative of student success than HQT, the state pushed ahead based on student achievement trends and other key educator equity data points; however, there was consensus within Delaware that state leaders needed a research partner to help it analyze decades of workforce data.

³ Equity gaps are defined as the difference between the rate at which certain groups of students (e.g., minority or high-poverty) are taught by excellent teachers and leaders and the rate at which their peers are taught by such teachers and leaders.

⁴ See the 2006 Delaware educator equity plan (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/teacherqual/hqtplans/de.doc>).

⁵ See Delaware's Race to the Top Application for Initial Funding (<http://governor.delaware.gov/docs/DERTTTNarrativeFinal1001190116.pdf>).

⁶ See "HC Analytics" Delivery Plan submitted to ED in 2010–11 as part of the state's RTTT Scope-of-Work.

In 2012, DDOE partnered with Harvard University's SDP to increase the DDOE's analytic capacity relating to issues of educator effectiveness. Full-time Strategic Data Fellows have served within DDOE during this time. This investment has allowed Delaware to conduct sophisticated analyses relating to equitable access. In April 2013, the state released the *Educator Effectiveness Diagnostic*⁷ after a 12-month engagement with Harvard's senior researchers (<http://www.doe.k12.de.us/domain/355>). The major objective of the state's data analytics efforts were achieved, and state and local education leaders could not cite "not having the data" as a reason for not addressing critical issues of educator equity. This report was publicly released in spring 2013 and has been shared with state legislators, local school boards, district superintendents, principals, and others. Delaware's efforts to create these new understandings and to share them with educators and policymakers to inform legislation and implementation have been recognized nationally by the Data Quality Campaign.

In February 2015, the state's Data Fellows were invited by the Equitable Access Support Network to present their approach in identifying equity gaps with other New England state equitable access teams at a Northeast Comprehensive Center (hosted by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB)). Several other states are now taking a similar approach to Delaware, building a deep understanding of their data with external research partners that have deep expertise in the field. Thus, to summarize, during the past decade, Delaware has been committed to understanding and publishing statewide trends concerning this important data management and analysis issue (including equitable access specifically) that historically has not been a priority for state agencies. This commitment to high-quality data has earned our state regional and national attention and builds the foundation for a strong and long-lasting commitment to securing excellent educators for all students.

All analyses presented in the state's equity plan herein are a product of the ongoing collaboration between the Harvard Strategic Data Project and the Delaware Department of Education.

Definitions

As noted earlier, Delaware's 2006 educator equity plan focused primarily on HQT status. In contrast, the current plan focuses instead on ensuring that all students are taught by "excellent" teachers, who in turn are supported by "excellent" leaders. Clearly, there are multiple important dimensions of educator effectiveness (e.g., qualifications, expertise, performance, and effectiveness in improving student academic achievement and social-emotional well-being). Delaware has broadly defined *excellent educators*, in collaboration with stakeholders, as follows:

- ▶ An *excellent teacher* is fully prepared to teach in his or her assigned content area, is able to demonstrate strong instructional practices and significant growth in student learning (on student assessments and also in terms of social-emotional indicators, when available), and consistently demonstrates professionalism and a dedication to the profession both within and outside of the classroom.
- ▶ An *excellent school leader* is fully prepared to lead both instructionally and administratively, is able to demonstrate strong leadership practices and significant growth in student learning, and consistently demonstrates professionalism and a dedication to the profession both within and outside of school.

Because of the challenges associated with accurately and consistently capturing these attributes statewide, DDOE has elected to err on the side of comprehensiveness over simplicity in selecting metrics to capture educator equity. Rather than confine the analysis to the metrics required by the U.S. Department of Education,

⁷ See Appendix A.

DDOE will consider equitable access to excellent educators holistically herein, considering the following aspects of teachers and leaders themselves as well as teaching and learning conditions.

Outcome Measures⁸

- ▶ **Inexperienced Teachers**
 1. **Rates of First-Year Teachers.** Most teachers improve considerably during their first year of practice. The prevalence of first-year teachers is one indicator of equity.
 2. **Rates of Early Career Teachers.** Generally, teachers continue to increase in their effectiveness for at least the first few years in the classroom. For this reason, rates of early career teachers, or those with zero to two years of prior experience, also were examined.
- ▶ **Teacher Observational Scores.** Presented is the proportion of teachers who earn *satisfactory* ratings (*unsatisfactory* ratings are also included) for each of the four observational components (Components I–IV) of the state’s Delaware Performance Appraisal System II (DPAS-II) teacher evaluation system: Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, Instruction, and Professional Responsibilities.
- ▶ **Teacher Contribution to Student Growth.** Data on student growth measures also are used to broaden the understanding of equitable access to excellent teachers. The rates of Delaware’s Group 1 educators (those who teach English or mathematics) rated *exceeds*, *satisfactory*, and *unsatisfactory* on Measure A were also considered.⁹ Although the introduction of a new student growth model in Delaware may make it difficult to precisely compare equity gaps before and after the new model is implemented, examining this metric still provides important cross-sectional trends as well as critical longitudinal information.
- ▶ **Teacher Evaluation Summative Ratings.** The DPAS-II educator evaluation system historically utilizes the following four summative ratings: *highly effective*, *effective*, *needs improvement*, and *ineffective*. These ratings capture many of the qualities of excellent educators noted earlier. Prior data suggest that the majority of educators in Delaware are rated as *highly effective* or *effective* on their final summative evaluation. For this reason, the lower two teacher summative ratings (*ineffective* and *needs improvement*) were combined into the single measure *not effective* for the purposes of this plan.
- ▶ **Unqualified or Out-of-Field Teachers.** Delaware plans to continue to examine rates of HQT, or those teachers who hold full certification required for a particular class and have demonstrated subject matter competence for the content of the class (see Section 6, as Delaware is considering different ways to collect and report such indicators—such as developing an Educator Equity Quotient (EEQ)). In the interim, the percentage of classes instructed by a non-HQT teacher will be used as a proxy for the proportion of out-of-field and unqualified teachers in a school. As Delaware continues to update and

Delaware’s Use of Multiple Educator Effectiveness Metrics

Because of the challenges associated with accurately and consistently capturing these attributes statewide, DDOE has elected to err on the side of comprehensiveness over simplicity in selecting metrics to capture educator equity.

⁸ All data are from DDOE records.

⁹ Group 1 educators are Grades 3–10 reading or mathematics teachers whose students receive individualized growth targets. Measure A is determined by the number of students assigned to Group 1 educators who reach their growth target.

improve teacher licensing and certification—and ultimately how “highly qualified” is viewed in the state—this metric may change in future years.

- ▶ **Teacher Salary.** Teaching salary plays a role in ensuring that excellent teachers are attracted to schools. To determine whether poor and minority students are taught by less well-paid teachers, net pay as well as experience- and education-adjusted teacher pay were examined.
- ▶ **Teacher and Principal Turnover.** High rates of teacher turnover are a cause and a symptom of school and teacher quality issues. The rates of out-of-school (total) teacher and principal turnover were examined as an additional indicator of excellence.
- ▶ **Principal High-Tenure Rates.** School culture benefits from having a stable principal in place, as it often takes a number of years for school leaders to establish an environment of trust and high expectations. For this reason, the composition of principals who have been at their school for five or more years was examined.
- ▶ **School Working Conditions.** Poor teacher working conditions may be seen as a cause and effect of low school quality. In this report, the average school composite score from the Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning (TELL) Delaware survey was examined; this score measures educator perceptions of teaching and learning conditions.

Student Subgroups

- ▶ **Students From Low-Income Families.** Students are categorized as “low income” if they receive either Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (jointly referred to as “Direct Certification”).
- ▶ **Students of Color.** Students are categorized as students of color if they self-identify as any race other than White.
- ▶ **ELLs.** This subgroup includes students who meet the federal definition of ELL, also known as “limited English Proficient” (LEP), according to Public Law 107-110, Title IX, Part A, Sec. 9101 (25).
- ▶ **Students With a Disability.** This subgroup includes students with an identified disability who have received services through an individualized education plan.
- ▶ **Urban Students.** Students who attend a school in an urbanized area, as defined by the National Center for Education Statistics.
- ▶ **Students From Wilmington.** Students who attend a school within the city limits of Wilmington.
- ▶ **Students From a High-Need School.**¹⁰ A school is considered high need (for the purposes of this plan) if it has met at least one of these four conditions:
 1. It has been a partnership zone or priority school since 2010
 2. It participated in the state’s Talent Retention initiative during the first half of RTTT (in 2012–13).

¹⁰ DDOE is currently reviewing all business rules concerning student achievement data and school characteristics. Revised definitions will be included in an updated version of the plan in late 2015.

3. It is one of the top 15 schools in at least two of these three statewide categories: highest percentage of non-White students, highest percentages of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals, or highest percentages of ELLs.
4. At least 75 percent of its students are non-White, eligible for free or reduced-price meals, or ELLs.
Note: the state's calculation of poor/"low-income" has changed in 2015, and the state's Equity Plan utilizes historic definitions in some cases while utilizing newer definitions in others. See footnote.

For each of the first four subgroups, school quartiles are constructed. For instance, a school would be in the first quartile (Q1) of low-income students if its rate were in the lowest quartile (i.e., the most affluent). Conversely, a school would be in the fourth quartile (Q4) of low-income students if its rate were in the highest quartile (i.e., the poorest). Urban students are compared with nonurban students, while students from Wilmington are compared with non-Wilmington students. Exhibit 2 presents the differences in subgroups—or equity gaps—for all outcome measures examined in this report. All public schools in Delaware are included in these analyses.¹¹

Data Analysis

Exhibit 2 highlights meaningful equity gaps along a number of dimensions. For instance, schools in the highest quartile of low-income students and those in the highest quartile of students of color have rates of early career educators roughly 5 percentage points higher than schools in the lowest quartile of each category, respectively. Similar gaps are found across urbanicity and high-need status. Fourth quartile schools in student income, composition of students of color, and high-need schools exhibit meaningful gaps across nearly all indicators, including teacher observation scores, Measure A scores, summative teacher ratings, teacher turnover, and TELL composite scores (working conditions). Findings across ELL and special education populations, as well as urban/nonurban and Wilmington/non-Wilmington schools, were mixed.

¹¹ One exception is the exclusion of charter schools in analyses related to experience, as there were data quality issues in this area.

Exhibit 2. Delaware Equity Gaps^a

Outcomes	Student Subgroups						
	% Low Income	% SOC	% ELL	% SWD	Urban/ Non-Urban	Wilm/ Non-Wilm	School HN Status
	Gap (Q4–Q1)	Gap (Q4–Q1)	Gap (Q4–Q1)	Gap (Q4–Q1)			
Share of teachers who are novices	2.3*	2.5*	0.5	0.7	1.6*	-0.1	2.2*
Share of teachers who are early career (0–2 years of experience)	4.5*	5.7*	-0.5	2.7*	5.1*	-0.4	4.7*
Share of teacher rated as <i>unsatisfactory</i> on one or more DPAS I–IV components	1.6*	1.8*	1	0	2.4*	-0.5	1.5*
Share of teachers rated as <i>unsatisfactory</i> on DPAS Measure A	18.0*	14.6*	9.9*	5.2*	12.7*	10.8*	12.3*
Share of teachers rated as <i>satisfactory</i> on DPAS Measure A	-5.1	3.5	2.8	5.3	-5.2	5.3*	-8.5*
Share of teachers rated as <i>exceeds</i> on DPAS Measure A	-12.9*	-18.1*	-12.7*	-10.5*	-7.5*	-16.1*	-3.8
Share of teachers with a summative rating of <i>ineffective</i> or <i>needs improvement</i>	2.7*	1.8*	1.8*	0.2	1.8*	0.6	2.0*
Share of teachers with a summative rating of <i>effective</i>	5.6*	6.7*	2.3	5.0*	5.5*	5.0*	3.2
Share of teachers with a summative rating of <i>highly effective</i>	-8.3*	-8.5*	-4.1	-5.2*	-7.3*	-5.6*	-5.2*
Percentage of classes taught by HQTs (Unqualified or Out-of-Field)	-1.2	-1.6*	0.5	0.6	-0.2	-0.2	-1.4
Average teacher salary	-4903.4*	-2539.5*	-726.9	-4035.8*	-2582.3*	5205.0*	-2343.6*
Average teacher salary, adjusted for years of experience and advanced degree	-1830.7*	819.9*	356.9	-1752.5*	-787.9*	4754.5*	287.7
Percentage of teachers who left teaching in Delaware Public Schools in 2012–13	0.5	3.6*	-1.9*	0.7	2.9*	0.4	2.1*
Percentage of teachers who transferred districts in Delaware in 2012–13	1.0*	1.4*	-0.4	0.7	1.6*	-0.4	1.5*

Outcomes	Student Subgroups						
	% Low Income	% SOC	% ELL	% SWD	Urban/ Non-Urban	Wilm/ Non-Wilm	School HN Status
	Gap (Q4–Q1)	Gap (Q4–Q1)	Gap (Q4–Q1)	Gap (Q4–Q1)			
Percentage of teachers who transferred schools within a district in Delaware in 2012–13	3.8*	3.2*	2.8*	2.5*	0.8	–1.7*	3.2*
Overall percentage of teacher turnover	5.4*	8.2*	0.6	4.0*	5.3*	–1.7	6.8*
Percentage of principals who left Delaware Public Schools in 2012–13	–2.3	–1.5	–13.6*	–1.1	5.2	–1.3	1.1
Percentage of principals who transferred districts in Delaware in 2012–13	3	1.1	2.6	2.9	–3.1*	0.1	3
Percentage of principals who transferred schools within a district in Delaware in 2012–13	–5.6	5.6	–5.9	–4.5	–3.1	–5.3	6
Overall percentage of principal turnover	–4.9	5.2	–16.9*	–2.7	–1.1	–6.4	10.2
Percentage of principal whose tenure at school is three or more years	–10.3	–8.5	–2.1	2.6	–1.3	10.7	–11.8
Average TELL composite	–5.8*	–7.4*	1.6	–2.2	–6.9*	–3.6	–6.2*

Note. The sample includes teachers with teaching job codes in comprehensive, vocational, and magnet schools. Teacher experience, salary, percentage of classes taught by highly qualified teachers, and DPAS outcomes are from the 2013–14 school year. Retention outcomes and TELL scores are from the 2012–13 school year. All data are from DDOE records.

Abbreviations for Student Subgroups are as follows: SOC (Students of Color), ELL (English language learner), SWD (students with disabilities); School HN Status (school high-need status).

^a See Appendix B for a technical description of the data definitions and methods used to create this table.

* Difference is statistically significant.

This table represents a comprehensive examination of equity gaps in the state of Delaware. In the coming years, the state will continue to monitor the progress of these gaps (see Section 6). It is important to take such a comprehensive approach, as Delaware acknowledges that the successful solution to closing gaps depends on the type of gap (e.g., salary gaps versus gaps in experience) as well as the subgroup being considered (e.g., ELL students versus students from low-income families). After performing a comprehensive examination of equity gaps, a number of priority equity metrics were selected based on reasons described herein. Using priority metrics will allow the state to improve clarity and focus discussion on these matters. The contributing equity gaps are considered as some of the root causes (named in stakeholder engagement sessions) of the priority equity gaps.

Delaware's extensive data analysis in 2014-15 resulted in greater understanding of equity gap outcomes. From this comprehensive examination, the Teacher & Leader Effectiveness Unit (TLEU) made determinations about

which priority gaps would be presented to stakeholder groups during the state's three months of stakeholder engagement. This is not to say that all student subgroup gaps are not priorities. In fact, Department of Education officials and multiple stakeholders named root causes and potential solutions in direct relation to both priority equity gaps and contributing equity gaps. While equity gaps for important student groups (ELL, SWD) were smaller than they were for low-income families or students of color, the high-needs schools that they attend have extensive overlap and the state's identified solutions seek to eradicate both. As part of Delaware's plan, additional stakeholder engagement will take place during the second half of 2015 to ensure that all equity gaps receive public attention, scrutiny, and solution-generation. Key partner organizations representing all student subgroups will be engaged and proposed strategies re-examined to ensure that they are targeted to all equity gaps identified. The TLEU believes that Section 5 charts a path forward that will close inter-school and intra-school gaps for all sub-groups—Delaware's data will continue to be examined and publically reported (see Section 6) to ensure this happens.

To obtain a complete understanding of Delaware's equity gaps, researchers examined all key metrics across school need status. The U.S. Department of Education's FAQ guidance requires states to look at the extent to which poor and minority students are taught by excellent teachers compared to other students. Delaware's definition of high need schools (described above) takes into account the proportion of minority and poor students in schools (in addition to other factors), and we therefore turn to this definition as a way to more clearly state our equity gaps. Table 3 illustrates how the high-need, high-minority, and high-poverty school measures relate. For example, note that more than 90 percent of the schools in the highest minority group of schools in the state are also considered high-need, and more than 70 percent of the schools in the highest poverty quartile of schools in the state are considered high-need. In closing gaps between high-need and non-high-need schools, one would likely be closing the gaps across related subgroups as well. Moreover, the equity gaps across need status are large and meaningful, as the following analyses expand upon.

Exhibit 3. Characteristics of High-Need and Non-High-Need Schools in Delaware

Student Population	High-Need Schools	All Other Schools	Difference
Percentage ED students	63.2	35.8	27.4*
Percentage minority students	74.2	44.7	29.6*
Percentage ELL students	16.0	4.1	12.0*
Percentage of students with disabilities	14.7	14.3	0.4
Percentage of schools in lowest income quartile	72.8	6.6	66.2*
Percentage of schools in highest minority quartile	91.1	8.1	83.0*

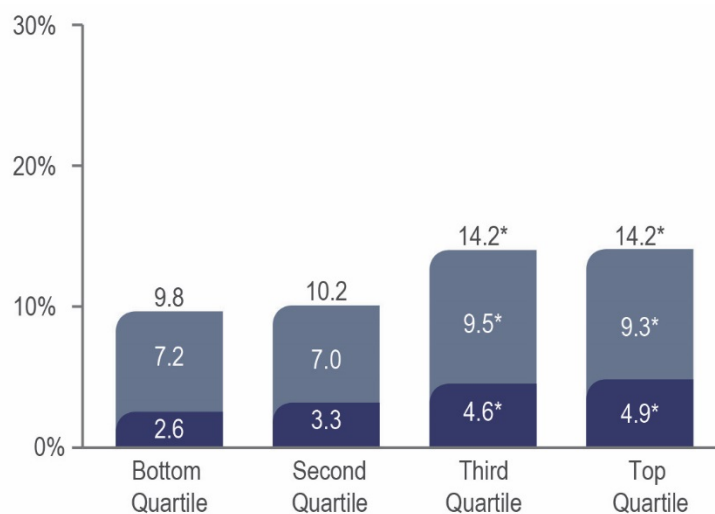
Note. Sample includes students in comprehensive, vocational, and magnet schools in the 2013–14 school year. All data are from DDOE records.

* Difference is statistically significant at the 5 percent level.

Numerous considerations went into choosing the outcome measures in the priority metrics. First, many discussions took place with community members across the state. During this dialogue, teachers, administrators, and local education leaders were given the opportunity to voice what they believed to be the most important factors to examine. We also were informed by internal and external research, discussed later. This research underscores that the chosen outcome measures offer variability across the state (and thus are practically useful to examine) and are widely seen as important indicators of educator quality. Three priority equity gaps emerged from this work which are elaborated upon below:

- **Priority Equity Gap 1: Students from high-need schools (and students of color and students from low-income families in-general) are more likely to be taught by inexperienced teachers than other students** (*rates of early career educators across need status*). Effective teaching usually requires time and experience. The first years of one’s teaching career provide opportunities for professional growth, yet new teachers have fewer experiences to draw on in planning lessons, managing classrooms, and creating assessment strategies. Therefore, one may expect beginning teachers to be less effective than their more experienced colleagues. A substantial body of literature suggests this case to be true—teachers improve their performance (again as measured by their contribution to student achievement) through their first few years in the classroom (Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hodges, 2004; Rockoff, 2004; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005). Exhibit 4 illustrates that high-need schools have a higher composition of early career educators, including a higher rate of first-year teachers, specifically. Other Delaware data shows strong correlations between that the inter-school gaps and intra-school school gaps (i.e. when student subgroup populations exist within non-high-need schools).

Exhibit 4. Early Career Teachers Across School Need Status

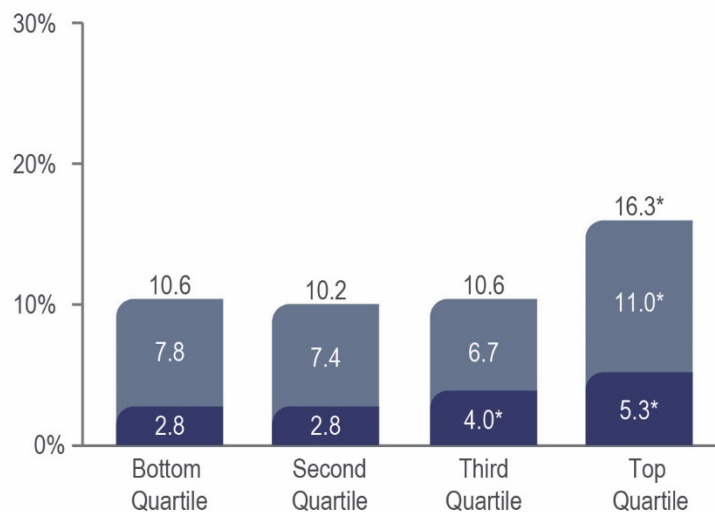


Early Career Teachers by School Low-Income Composition Quartiles

- Teachers With 1–2 Years of Experience
- Novice Teachers

*Significantly different from bottom quartile schools, at the 95 percent confidence level.

Notes: Sample includes 7,635 teachers with teacher job codes in comprehensive, vocational, and magnet schools. Data are from the 2013–14 school year. All data are from Delaware Department of Education records.



Early Career Teachers by School Minority Composition Quartiles

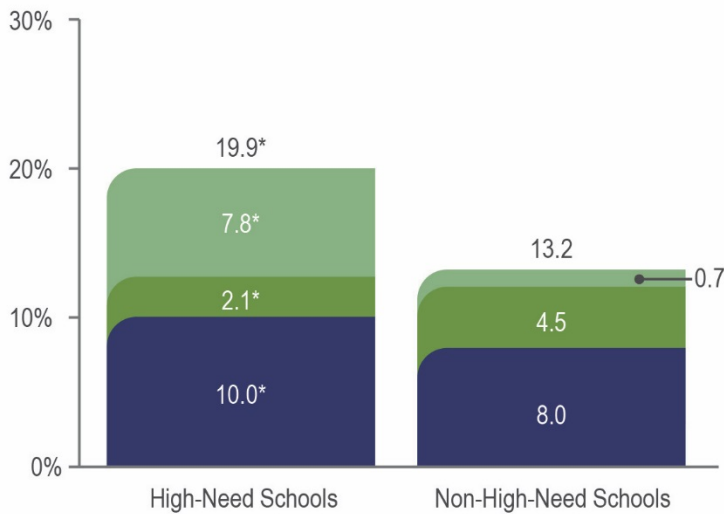
- Teachers With 1–2 Years of Experience
- Novice Teachers

*Significantly different from bottom quartile schools, at the 95 percent confidence level.

Notes: Sample includes 7,656 teachers with teacher job codes in comprehensive, vocational, and magnet schools. Data are from the 2013–14 school year. All data are from Delaware Department of Education records.

- **Priority Equity Gap 2: Students from high-need schools (and students of color and students from low-income families in-general) are more likely to experience higher rates of teacher turnover than are other students (out-of-school (total) turnover rate across high-need status).** Research has shown that turnover can have a negative effect on the effectiveness of all teachers in a school (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013). Exhibit 5 shows that teacher turnover—and especially between-district turnover—is a more common occurrence in high-need schools. Furthermore, this figure suggests that teacher migration between high-need and non-high-need schools is unidirectional: although only 1.2 percent of teachers in non-high-need schools moved to high-need schools, 7.2 percent of teachers in a high-need school left for a non-high-need school in 2013–14. Past research has also documented this “one-directional” turnover (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2007).

Exhibit 5. Average Teacher Turnover Across School Need Status

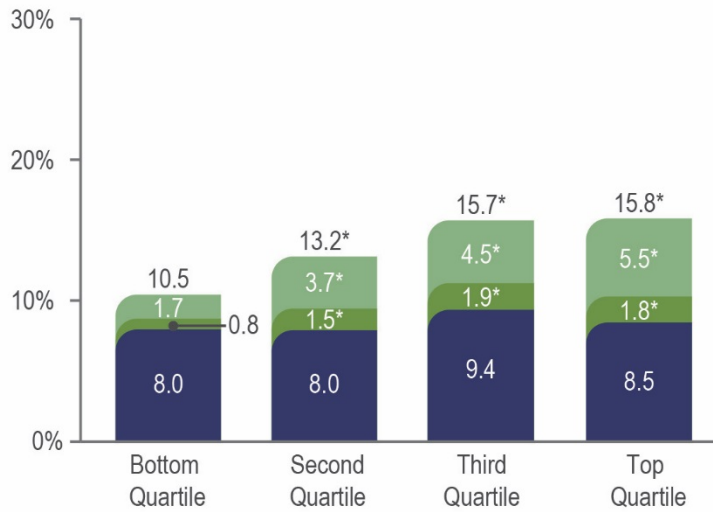


Average Teacher Turnover by School High-Need Status

- Transfer to School With Different High-Need Status
- Transfer to School With Same High-Need Status
- Leave Teaching

*Significantly different from non-high-need schools, at the 95 percent confidence level.

Notes: Sample includes 7,682 teachers with teacher job codes in comprehensive, vocational, and magnet schools. Data are from the 2012–13 school year. Retention analysis is based on one-year retention rates. All data are from Delaware Department of Education records.

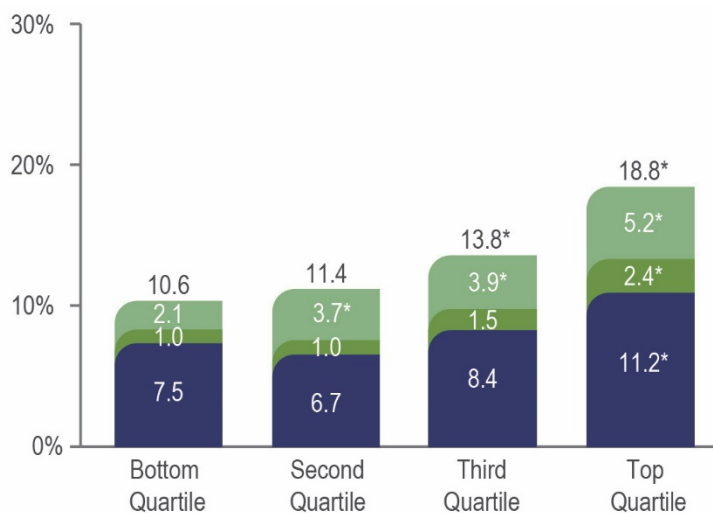


Average Teacher Turnover by School Low-Income Quartiles

- Transfer Within Districts
- Transfer Between Districts
- Leave Teaching

*Significantly different from the bottom quartile value, at the 95 percent confidence level.

Notes: Sample includes 7,527 teachers with teacher job codes in comprehensive, vocational, and magnet schools. Data are from the 2012–13 school year. Retention analysis is based on one-year retention rates. All data are from Delaware Department of Education records.



Average Teacher Turnover by School Minority Quartiles

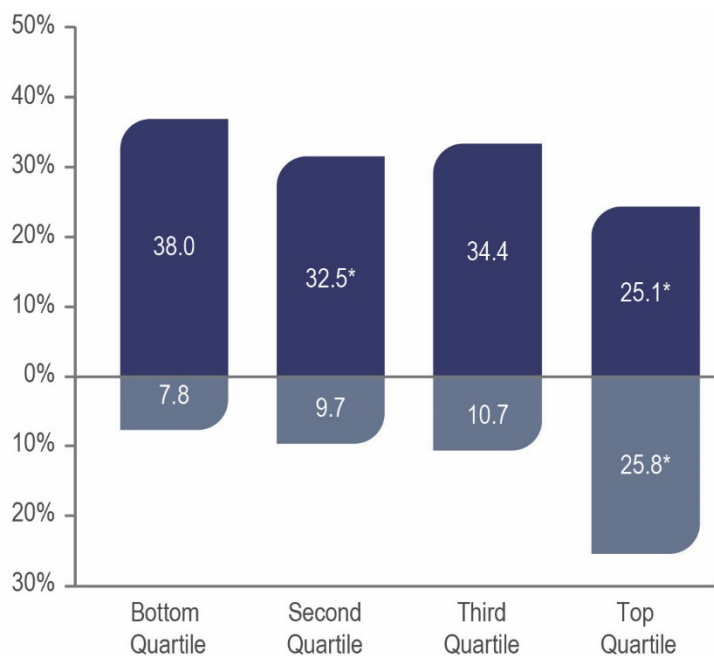
- Transfer Within Districts
- Transfer Between Districts
- Leave Teaching

*Significantly different from the bottom quartile value, at the 95 percent confidence level.

Notes: Sample includes 7,548 teachers with teacher job codes in comprehensive, vocational, and magnet schools. Data are from the 2012–13 school year. Retention analysis is based on one-year retention rates. All data are from Delaware Department of Education records.

- ▶ **Priority Equity Gap 3: Students from high-need schools (and students of color and students from low-income families in-general) have less access to effective teachers than other students** (*percentage of educators rated Exceeds and Unsatisfactory on Measure A, across need status*). See Exhibit 3 for the strong correlation between inter-school and intra-school effects. There is evidence to suggest that teachers who help students grow academically, also contribute to improvements in a number of long-term outcomes such as future earnings (Chetty, Friedman, & Rockoff, 2012). Considerable equity gaps in Measure A ratings exist between high-need and non-high-need schools (see Exhibit 6). This finding is consistent with a number of prior research studies, which also establish a connection between school poverty and estimates of teacher contribution to student achievement (Isenberg et al., 2013). It is important to note that although high-need schools have lower growth ratings, *not all educators in poor, high-minority, and urban schools earn lower marks* than other schools. Exhibit 7 shows that while poorer schools generally produce lower-than-average student growth ratings, there are numerous outlying schools that counter this trend by producing higher-than-predicted compositions of teachers rated as *Exceeds*. Although the adoption of a new student growth model will create analytical challenges in analyzing this particular gap before and after the adoption of the model, DDOE will continue to solve for such challenges and monitor educator-student growth estimates using new data as they become available. Nonetheless, this data presented below demonstrates two important headlines: the existence of a performance equity gaps and reality that many schools are “beating the odds”, thus highlighting that socioeconomic status need not be deterministic.

Exhibit 6. Measure A Ratings Across School Need Status

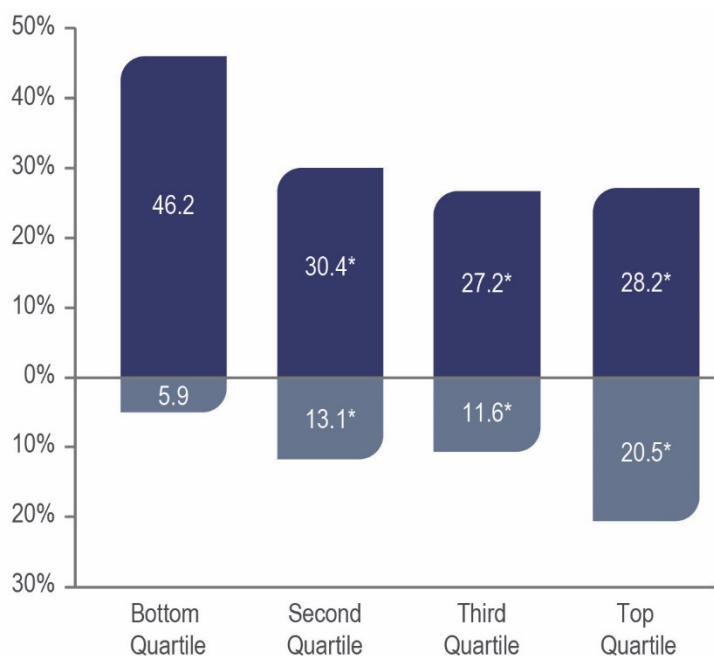


Teacher Ratings by School 2013-14 Economically Disadvantaged Quartiles

- Exceeds
- Unsatisfactory

*Significantly different from the bottom quartile value, at the 95 percent confidence level.

Notes: Sample includes 2,489 teachers with teacher job codes and Measure A ratings in comprehensive, vocational, and magnet schools. Data are from the 2013-14 school year. All data are from Delaware Department of Education records.



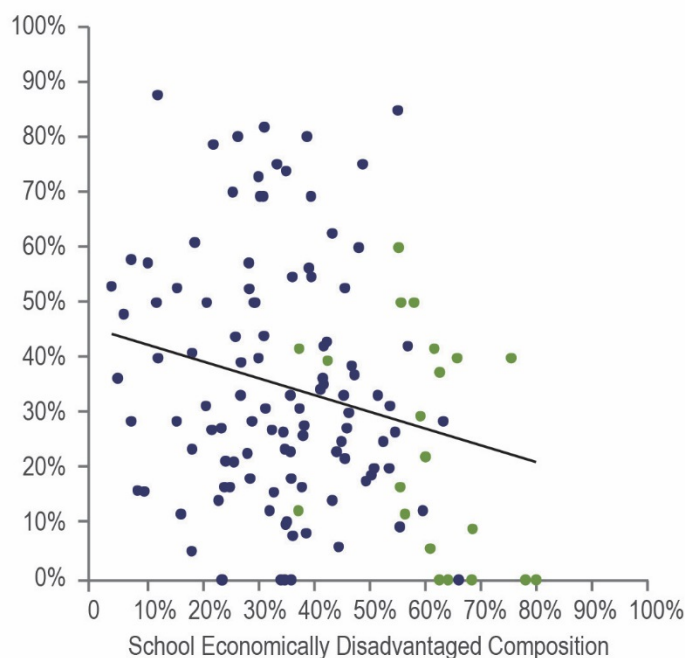
Teacher Ratings by School 2013-14 Minority Quartiles

- Exceeds
- Unsatisfactory

*Significantly different from the bottom quartile value, at the 95 percent confidence level.

Notes: Sample includes 2,489 teachers with teacher job codes and Measure A ratings in comprehensive, vocational, and magnet schools. Data are from the 2013-14 school year. All data are from Delaware Department of Education records.

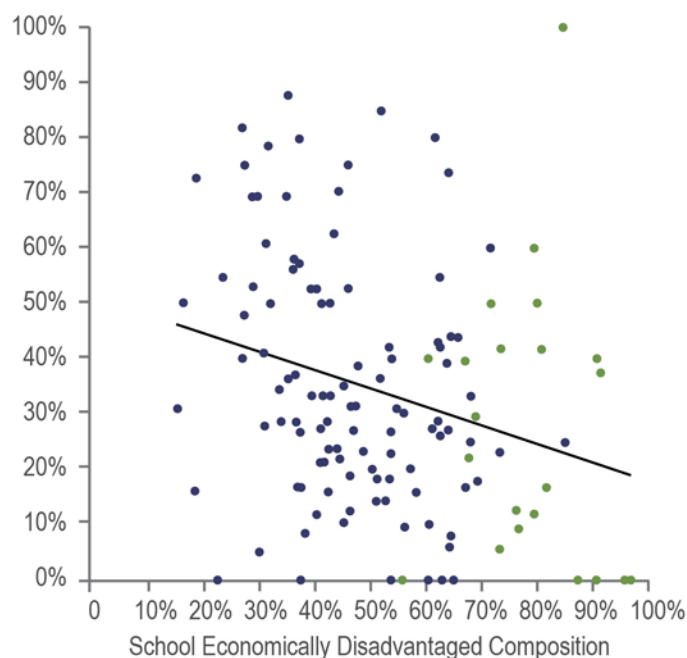
Exhibit 7. Measure A Ratings Versus School Low-Income and Minority Composition



Share of Teachers With Measure A Exceeds Rating by School 2013-14 Economically Disadvantaged Composition

■ Non-High-Need School
■ High-Need School

Correlation = -.22
Notes: Sample includes 2,489 teachers with teacher job codes and 2013-14 Measure A ratings in comprehensive, vocational, and magnet schools with at least 10 such teachers. All data are from Delaware Department of Education records.



Share of Teachers With Measure A Exceeds Rating by School 2013-14 Minority Composition

■ Non-High-Need School
■ High-Need School

Correlation = -.27
Notes: Sample includes 2,489 teachers with teacher job codes and 2013-14 Measure A ratings in comprehensive, vocational, and magnet schools with at least 10 such teachers. All data are from Delaware Department of Education records.

Having identified these three primary equity gaps based on a thorough analysis of the data, our stakeholder engagement, root causes analysis, and strategy development were then targeted at eliminating them.

- **Fundamental Equity Gap: Students of color and students from low-income families are slightly less likely to have access to “highly-qualified” educators (unqualified and out-of-field).** Over the past decade, Delaware’s state agency, local education agencies, and preparation program providers have closely collaborated to work towards ensuring that all Delaware students are served by highly-qualified teachers. There is a formal federal definition for “HQT” that has grounded this fundamental work over the past decade—DDOE has developed systems, processes, and supports to drive towards compliance under the law. As a result, Delaware’s HQT status has become stronger during this time period. The work of ensuring that all students have access to educators that are qualified for the grades/subject areas that they teach and thus assigned primarily to those classes is fundamental to the state’s educator equity work. The Delaware Professional Standards Board and other state officials have worked together to ensure that the state’s code, regulations, and policies are aligned with the federal mandate in the spirit of what is best for our students. Delaware data showed a relatively small, but statistically significant gap of 1.6% for students of color taught by highly qualified teachers (a proxy for the proportion of out-of-field and unqualified teachers) in Q4 vs Q1 schools (see below for an excerpt of Exhibit 2). The gap for students from low income families was not statistically significant, nor were the gaps for the other student subgroups. Though small, Delaware is committed to ensuring that these gaps are reduced and eliminated as all students – particularly students of color and those from low-income families – achieve better outcomes when taught by teachers who qualified and teaching classes within their field. Delaware has made great strides in this work over the past decade and believes that a sustained focus on eradicating the HQT gap – no matter the size – is fundamental to the elimination of the priority gaps of educator experience, turnover, and effectiveness detailed in this plan. The remainder of this plan is focused on the root causes of the three priority gaps and strategies aimed at eliminating them. Delaware believes that a focus on these priority equity gaps will also serve to reduce the HQT (unqualified and out-of-field) gap through strategies related to educator preparation, teacher supply, recruitment and selection (see section 5).

Outcomes	Student Subgroups						
	% Low Income	% SOC	% ELL	% SWD	Urban/ Non-Urban	Wilm/ Non-Wilm	School HN Status
	Gap (Q4–Q1)	Gap (Q4–Q1)	Gap (Q4–Q1)	Gap (Q4–Q1)			
Percentage of classes taught by HQTs (Unqualified or Out-of-Field)	–1.2	–1.6*	0.5	0.6	–0.2	–0.2	–1.4

Section 3. Delaware's Stakeholder Engagement Approach to Date

To understand the variables impacting equitable access to excellent educators within school communities, DDOE prioritized engaging directly with members of diverse stakeholder groups across the state. A comprehensive set of solutions and strategies calls for a comprehensive and long-term vision for stakeholder engagement that extends beyond the planning process and into implementation. The following section provides details on Delaware's vision for stakeholder engagement, the stages of the stakeholder engagement process, and the resulting contributions of participating stakeholders.

Vision for a Comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement Approach

Delaware's approach to stakeholder engagement centers on three core principles:

- ▶ The development of the educator equity plan will be fully informed by the ideas, insights, and perspectives of a variety of stakeholder groups.
- ▶ Stakeholders will participate throughout the development of the statewide equity plan and will continue their involvement during implementation.
- ▶ All stakeholder engagement events will be inclusive, collaborative or two-way, and solutions-oriented.

Having developed these principles, Delaware outlined a plan for engaging stakeholders widely and authentically.

Plan for Stakeholder Engagement

The plan connects with stakeholders at four distinct stages of the equity planning process:

1. Stage 1.¹² Stakeholders participate in a data review session and root cause analysis. Outcome: Common root causes *behind equity gaps* are identified.
2. Stage 2.¹³ Using the commonly identified root causes from the first stage, stakeholder groups are then gathered to identify and suggest potential strategies to address the root causes. Outcome: Stakeholders provide input on strategies.
3. Stage 3.¹⁴ Stakeholders provide feedback on the overall plan developed to address equitable access to excellent educators in Delaware. Outcome: Final plan submission reflects the input and views of the various communities within Delaware.
4. Stage 4: After plan submission, stakeholder engagement will continue with LEAs and other groups to determine how the state can best support effective implementation of the strategies set forth in this plan

¹² See Appendix C for Stage 1 root cause analysis protocol deck and materials.

¹³ See Appendix D for Stage 2 strategy protocol deck and materials.

¹⁴ See Appendix E for Stage 3 ad hoc review group deck and materials.

Outcome: Implementation reflects comprehensive stakeholder engagement on strategies and is differentiated to LEA needs.

To keep the conversations on data, root causes, and strategies focused and solutions-oriented, and to ensure that all stakeholder groups were participating in a consistent process, structured protocols were developed, modeled off those developed by the GTL Center. These protocols allowed Delaware to prioritize strategies linked directly to the root causes identified by our stakeholders. In Stage 1, stakeholders reviewed the priority equity gap data described in Section 2. After the data session, participants engaged in a guided dialogue to identify potential root causes for inequitable access to high-quality teaching. The facilitators for the sessions were well versed on the requirements of the plan and had previously served as classroom teachers, thus allowing them to structure and facilitate the sessions similar to a classroom lesson, with the objectives of dissecting and analyzing Delaware's priority equity gaps and developing potential root causes of one or more of the priority equity gaps.

First, DDOE staff opened the meeting, welcoming all participants and explaining that the focus of the next 60–90 minutes was to have an open and honest dialogue and to solicit their feedback for inclusion in Delaware's educator equity plan. Next, they delivered an overview of the Excellent Educators for All Initiative and educator equity plan requirements. A facilitator from Harvard University's SDP then shared data visualizations for the three priority equity gap areas of teacher experience, teacher turnover, and teacher contributions to student growth. The SDP facilitator also answered data methodology questions and considered suggestions for future analyses—many of which were conducted and included in the data section of the plan. Session participants were then asked to choose one of the priority educator equity gaps and to dig deeply into that gap and ask “why” the gap exists on a root cause and subcause level. In small groups or as individuals, participants completed a graphic organizer, where they named potential root causes for their chosen educator equity gap. Finally, in the Stage 1 sessions, the group debriefed as a whole—with participants naming their chosen equity gap and sharing their identified root causes.¹⁵ Throughout the months-long process, TLEU staff met regularly to discuss results and consider additional data analyses based on feedback from participants and staff review.

Delaware's Use of Structured Discussion Protocols

To keep the conversations on data, root causes, and strategies focused and solutions-oriented, and to ensure that all stakeholder groups were participating in a consistent process, structured protocols were developed

For Stage 2, a protocol was created for gathering possible strategies to address our root causes and, eventually, our equity gaps; the protocol was built directly off the results of the first protocol by presenting the common root causes collected by all stakeholders in Stage 1. Similar to the root cause analysis protocol (Stage 1), the session opened with a brief review of the plan requirements and priority equity gap data visualizations. Next, participants learned the six common root causes named in most root cause sessions along with the broader root cause categories across all those named (e.g., school leadership, educator preparation). An overview of all root causes named in each category was then presented, with the intention of having attendees chose one root cause category to address and generate strategies for in small groups. Participants were given a graphic organizer asking them to respond to the following questions given their root cause category: (1) What should Delaware continue to support in this area? (2) What should Delaware stop doing in this area? (3) What should Delaware attempt that is new or innovative in this area? To assist in this process, participants received a guidance document specific to the root cause area they picked. To help them frame their responses, on one side of the handout, the specific root causes within that category were listed. On the other side of the handout, a list of

¹⁵ See Appendix F for Stage 1 meeting notes and summaries.

current DDOE initiatives related to that area were described. To close the session, in a large-group discussion, the groups shared their responses to the questions posed on the graphic organizer. Delaware values diverse and robust feedback on these strategies and solutions and is still in the process of collecting stakeholder input on this topic. Results from the initial sessions are included in the appendices¹⁶ to this plan; DDOE plans to hold several more stakeholder engagement sessions soliciting feedback after plan submission but prior to implementation.

Stage 3 of stakeholder engagement in the planning process was dedicated to gathering feedback on the creation of the resulting SEA-proposed plan. A select group of stakeholders representing most of the protocols in Stages 1 and 2 were invited to participate in a review panel held for two hours in the state’s capital on May 8. The participant panel included two principals, two parents, a district superintendent, a district data analyst, a district human resources director, a district director of education services, a teacher and a teachers union representative, a DDOE educational partner, a Wilmington City Councilman, an education researcher and partner, and the executive director of the Professional Standards Board. Other groups were invited but were unable to attend (e.g., charter school leaders). At this session, a high-level overview of the plan was shared with six sets of reflection questions inserted at key points related to the plan requirements, stakeholder engagement, educator equity gaps (data), root cause analysis, potential strategies and solutions, implementation, ongoing monitoring, and public reporting.¹⁷ This group also expressed a willingness and desire to convene regularly as an educator equity working group to guide the implementation of the plan.

Delaware also held a number of meetings, set up informational calls, or sent e-mails to select stakeholders to brief them on the purpose and status of the plan, solicit their feedback, or ask for their assistance in convening a group of stakeholders.¹⁸

Participating Stakeholder Groups

External Stakeholders

External stakeholder groups were actively involved throughout this process and represented a variety of perspectives: principals, teachers, district-level administrators, SEA leadership, IHEs, charter-school-affiliated educators and leaders, parents, teachers and specialists, members of the Delaware Talent Cooperative, members of civic and community groups, educators unions, and other local community members. Going forward, Delaware plans to expand beyond this list to include additional parents and organizations representing specific student subgroups, including ELLs, students with disabilities, and representatives from early childhood education groups. Despite the small geographic footprint, Delaware has a variety of urban, rural, and suburban communities. To ensure Delaware connected with a representative set of stakeholder groups, communities across all three of Delaware’s counties (New Castle, Kent, and Sussex) were included. In addition, sessions purposefully included a full range of demographic and socioeconomic groups. Sessions were held in Dover and in Wilmington to ensure that as many Delawareans as possible could participate. In many cases, these sessions were tied to regularly scheduled meetings to ease the logistical burden of attending multiple sessions.

The following table details the stakeholders engaged and the nature of the engagement:

¹⁶ See Appendix G for Stage 2 meeting notes and summaries.

¹⁷ See Appendix H for Stage 3 meeting notes and summaries.

¹⁸ See Appendix I for an example of one of these e-mails.

Date	Stakeholder Group	Nature of Engagement
1/22	District administrators (including superintendents)	Root cause analysis protocol
2/9	Principals (Delaware Principals Advisory Group)	Root cause analysis protocol
2/18	Teachers and specialists in the Delaware Talent Cooperative	Root cause analysis protocol
2/20	Nonprofit partners and teacher or leader preparation programs	Root cause analysis protocol
3/11	Charter leaders	Root cause analysis protocol
3/18	District data analysts (Data Analyst Working Group)	Root cause analysis protocol
3/26	District administrators (including superintendents)	Root cause analysis protocol
3/28	Teachers and Specialists in the Delaware Talent Cooperative	Root cause analysis protocol
3/31	Delaware State Education Association (teachers union)/Delaware Association of School Administrators	Informational meeting and discussion
4/1	DDOE Director's Council (internal SEA meeting)	Combined root cause analysis and strategy protocol
4/1	Licensure and Certification Committee (Professional Standards Board)	Root cause analysis protocol
4/7	Delaware Workforce Development Board	Informational meeting and discussion
4/10	Wilmington Education Think Tank (civic leaders)	Root cause analysis protocol
4/13	P-20 Council	Root cause analysis protocol
4/14	Nonprofit partners and teacher or leader preparation programs	Strategy protocol
4/14	Teaching & Learning Cadre	Root cause analysis protocol
4/16	Congressional delegation	Informational call and discussion
4/22	District human resource directors	Strategy protocol
4/28	Educators (group formed with support from the teachers union)	Combined root cause analysis and strategy protocol
5/1	Wilmington Education Think Tank (civic leaders)	Strategy protocol
5/2	Parent Advocacy Council for Education	Combined root cause analysis and strategy protocol
5/7	Professional Standards Board	Plan overview and briefing
5/8	Draft plan review with stakeholder representatives from previous sessions	Draft plan review
5/21	Delaware State Board of Education	Plan overview and briefing

Internal Stakeholders

As outlined in the chart above, Delaware conducted intensive stakeholder engagement efforts with multiple groups of educators and citizens throughout the state. The state's plan was also discussed regularly within the Department of Education, with members of every branch contributing the content found herein. Noted in the chart is an April 1, 2015 Director's Council meeting where 15-20 of the Department's core leaders (including nearly all of its Directors) engaged in a full equity plan protocol, including both small and large group discussion of the state's data, root causes of the state's current status, and potential strategies to pursue to close the state's equity gaps. The Director's Council conversation also served as an opportunity to identify stakeholder groups that had not yet been engaged, many of which the TLEU immediately scheduled time with in April 2015. Additionally, the Department's senior leadership team, including the Secretary of Education and all branch leaders, received updates on the plan's status three times a month before and during regular meetings. Given the critical role the Governor's Office plays on key legislative issues such as compensation reform or weighted student funding, policy advisors from within that office also provided content for the plan. Updated equity plan presentations (such as the one shared by the TLEU with the State Board of Education on May 21, 2015), updates on working group committee members, and educator effectiveness data has also been shared and discussed internally over the past five months, with draft versions of the state's plan being shared with various senior team members throughout the month of May.

Moving Forward: Stakeholder Engagement in Implementation (Stage 4)

A critical piece of our long-term plan for implementation is to develop communication and feedback loops for the continuous involvement of educators, system leaders, parents and families, and engaged citizens. This work will provide Delaware with real-time feedback on the meaning of state data, the effectiveness of state and local strategies, the impact of new state and local programs and policies, and potential refinements to the state's plan going forward. DDOE believes that the long-term success of the plan will rely, in part, on a strong design for collecting and responding to feedback from the field on an ongoing basis while also providing a channel for sharing progress and celebrating milestones in the implementation of the plan.

Delaware asked various stakeholders to share feedback on other individuals, groups, regions and categories to be contacted for ongoing collaboration. In addition to those already involved in the planning and review process, the TLEU also plans to engage the following groups in future meetings in 2015, prior to full implementation:

- ▶ Additional teachers
- ▶ Students
- ▶ Additional parents
- ▶ Additional community and civic leaders
- ▶ Additional teacher preparation programs and IHEs
- ▶ Legislators
- ▶ Groups representing ELLs
- ▶ Groups representing students with disabilities
- ▶ Groups representing early childhood education professionals
- ▶ Sussex County educators, parents, citizens, and others

By collaboratively addressing inequitable access to high-quality educators, Delaware has strengthened critical partnerships with a broad set of stakeholders. DDOE believes that the resulting plan will *support the efforts to attract, deploy, support, develop, and retain effective teachers where they are needed most and thereby improve student access to excellent educators across the state*. Moving forward, effectively engaging and soliciting input from stakeholders will continue to be a significant focus of Delaware's work to ensure excellent educators for all Delaware students, with a focus on students with the highest need.

State websites will be a point of contact with a broad range of stakeholders on the progress of the plan, opportunities for involvement and for us to gather feedback. Delaware will post updates to various websites (including Equity Plan specific pages) and invite further dialogue on posted plans and potential revisions.

Section 4. Root Cause Analysis

Results of Stage 1: Data Review and Root Cause Analysis

To ensure that our State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators is meaningful, Delaware carefully considered the root causes behind the state's equity gaps alongside various stakeholder groups. It then sought to refine existing educator effectiveness strategies, again in collaboration with stakeholders, so that they were closely aligned with these root causes and, therefore, likely to succeed in addressing the root causes. The process and protocols used to conduct root cause analyses with various stakeholder groups are described in detail in Section 3. These processes, and a detailed description of the outcomes, as well as how quantitative data were used to complement the stakeholder feedback, are discussed below.

Delaware relied on the first stage of its stakeholder engagement efforts to identify the root causes of its priority educator equity gaps. It should be noted that while one stakeholder group argued that asking stakeholders to name root causes is not essential in determining what they are, another argued that DDOE leaders should not name root causes unless stakeholders named them. The Department heard a broad spectrum of input during this process.

Throughout, to prepare stakeholders to engage in the work of root cause analysis and strategy identification, participants were provided with materials and discussion protocols designed to create a common understanding about the equitable access data/issues facing Delaware. Delaware endeavored to identify root causes for each key equity gap based upon a deep consideration of the data provided by Harvard SDP for each equity gap (see Section 2). However, there was a large degree of overlap in responses (i.e., most root causes were named by stakeholders as having an impact on more than one of the state's major equity gaps presented herein).

The most common root causes identified by stakeholders were grouped into the following categories:

- ▶ Inadequate school leadership
- ▶ Inadequate educator preparation
- ▶ Lack of effective educator recruitment, selection, and staff management practices
- ▶ Inadequate educator induction and mentoring
- ▶ Lack of specific professional learning opportunities for educators
- ▶ Low compensation for high-need schools and lack of educator career pathways
- ▶ Poor school/neighborhood climate and lack of school-based resources

Within each of these categories, stakeholders identified specific root causes. Although the root causes identified by stakeholders often were expressed as applying across all equity gaps, DDOE understood the importance of considering each equity gap individually and developed deeper connections to clarify the specific causes behind gaps in access to teachers with experience, teachers who stay in their school, and teachers who are top performing. DDOE's analysis was based on:

- ▶ Sorting stakeholder-identified root causes and considering to which equity gaps they were most connected

- ▶ Exploring the recent body of research around educator equity from organizations such as TNTP¹⁹
- ▶ Considering the state's historic and institutional understanding of each equity gap

In the root cause tables herein, TEx refers to the teacher experience gap, TT refers to the teacher turnover gap, and TEf refers to the teacher effectiveness gap.

¹⁹ <http://tntp.org/publications/scroll/retention-and-school-culture>

Inadequate School Leadership: Root Causes	TE _x	TT	TE _f
Poor leadership skills create a negative school culture and a lack of buy-in or empowerment among staff. ^a		X	X
Principal turnover creates instability and a negative school culture.		X	X
There is a lack of thoughtful placement and class planning.	X	X	X
The school leader allocates resources ineffectively.		X	X
The school leader does not have autonomy to make decisions that would positively impact the school.	X	X	X
The school leader does not plan the school day to maximize time on task for students.			X
Inadequate Educator Preparation: Root Causes	TE _x	TT	TE _f
Preparation programs do not prepare educators (teachers and principals) with the skills necessary to be effective in high-need schools. ^a		X	X
Internships and student teaching opportunities do not give candidates or schools enough exposure to assess whether there is a mutual fit in high-need schools.		X	X
A lack of collaboration exists between districts and IHEs.	X		X
There is not equitable access to IHEs throughout the state.	X		X
Lack of Effective Recruitment, Selection, and Staff Management Practices: Root Causes	TE _x	TT	TE _f
There are too few candidates with the right mindset, “grit,” and cultural competency to be effective. ^a		X	X
There is no strategic recruitment or placement of teachers best suited to be effective in high-need schools.	X		
Late hiring timelines put Delaware at a disadvantage and do not allow for strategic placement.	X		X
Negative perceptions of teaching do not attract “the best and brightest” to the profession.	X	X	
Contractual hiring arrangements hinder the ability to place and keep effective educators in high-need schools.			X
It is difficult to remove ineffective educators from the classroom.			X
Inadequate Induction and Mentoring: Root Causes	TE _x	TT	TE _f
There is an inadequate mentoring program and a lack of strategic pairing of mentors to mentees to make a new educator feel supported and be effective in a high-need school.		X	X

Lack of Professional Learning Opportunities: Root Causes	TE _x	TT	TE _f
Professional development is not aligned or differentiated to skills needed in a high-need school. ^a		X	X
No ongoing support for teachers outside of the early years in the profession exists.	X	X	X
Low Compensation and Lack of Career Pathways: Root Causes	TE _x	TT	TE _f
Lack of monetary incentives to go or stay in a more challenging, high-need school where it is perceived to be more stressful. ^a	X	X	
Many educators go to neighboring states with higher pay	X	X	
Federal loan repayment programs contribute to turnover by attracting early career educators who will leave the school or profession as soon as their loans are repaid		X	
Lack of career pathway opportunities for high performing educators who want to stay in the classroom	X	X	X
Poor School/Neighborhood Climate and Lack of Resources: Root Causes	TE _x	TT	TE _f
There is inadequate funding for wraparound services and resources needed to meet the holistic needs of students. ^a	X	X	
Parental support is lacking in high-need schools.		X	
Negative perceptions of safety dissuade educators from wanting to teach in the neighborhood.	X		
The school culture is negative (high stress with a lack of collaboration). <i>Note:</i> All focus groups noted this issue as a subcause of school leadership issues.		X	
Educators live outside of the area where high-need schools are located.	X		
Student turnover increases instability and contributes to “burnout.”		X	
Many high-need schools are located in dilapidated buildings, lack state-of-the-art technology, and do not have access to the same opportunities that non-high-need-schools do.	X	X	

^a Delaware examined the feedback given by stakeholders and identified the six root causes frequently named at many sessions:

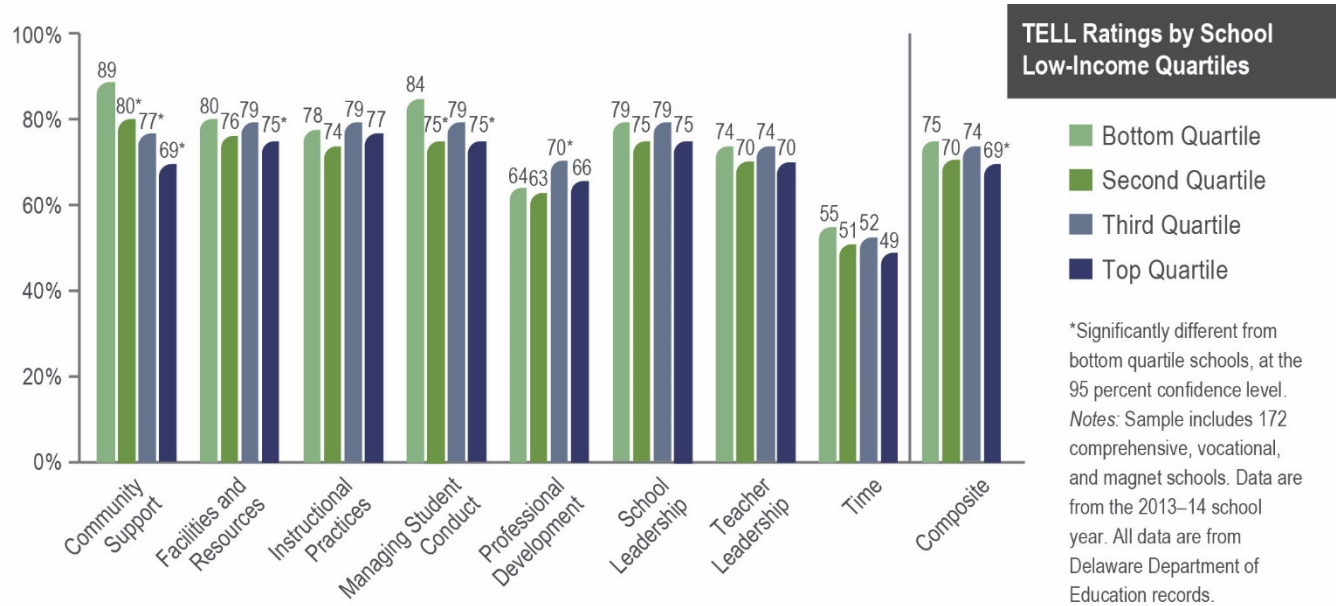
1. There is **inadequate funding for wraparound services** and resources needed to meet the holistic needs of students (poor school/neighborhood climate and lack of resources area).
2. **Professional development is not aligned or differentiated** to skills needed in a high-need school (lack of professional learning area).
3. There are **too few candidates with the right mind-set, “grit,” and cultural competency** to be effective (lack of effective recruitment, selection, and staff management practices area).
4. **Preparation programs do not prepare educators (teachers and principals) with the skills** necessary to be effective in high-need schools (inadequate educator preparation area).
5. **Poor leadership skills** create a negative school culture and a lack of buy-in and empowerment among staff (inadequate school leadership area).
6. **There is a lack of monetary incentives** to go to or stay in a more challenging, high-need environment, where it is perceived to be more stressful (low compensation and lack of career pathways area)

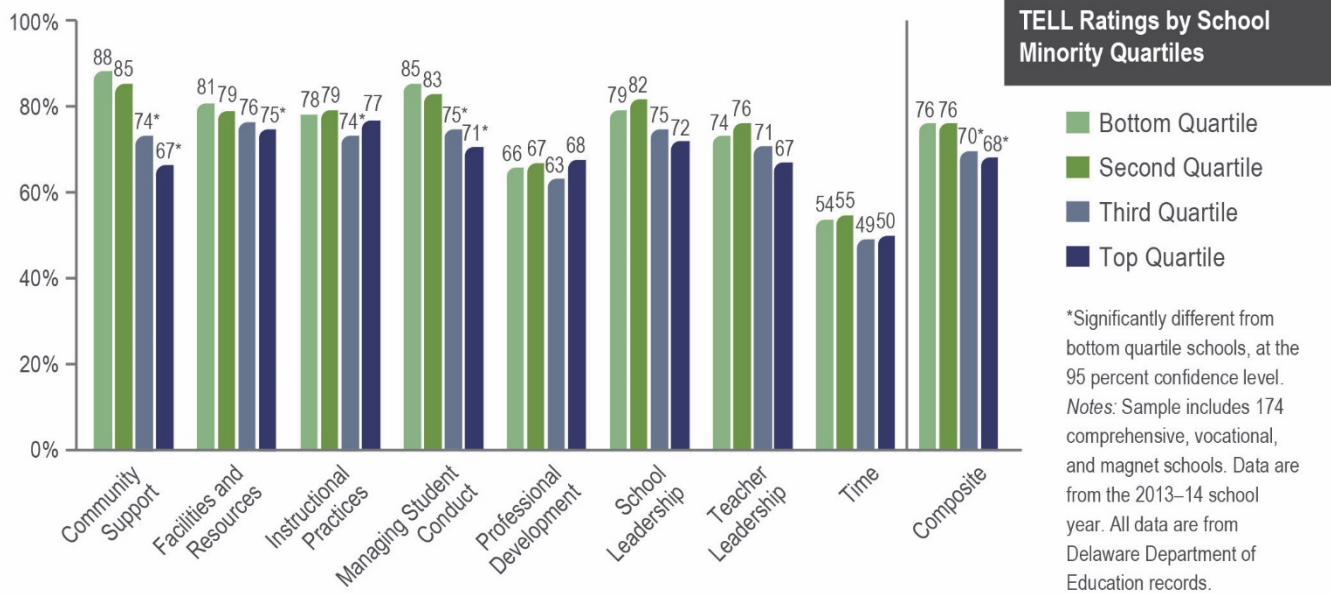
Though Delaware did not consult external stakeholders on root causes related to the fundamental equity gap of access to highly qualified teachers (unqualified and out-of-field), it identified several internally. DDOE believes that gaps in HQT can, in part, be contributed to the stakeholder identified areas of inadequate educator preparation and lack of effective recruitment, selection, and staff management practices.

Data on Root Causes. Although stakeholder feedback on the root causes behind Delaware’s equity gaps is critical, DDOE also is committed to considering deeper data analyses to inform and verify our work. Data were not available to support (or negate, as the case may be) the stakeholder feedback on all identified root causes, but DDOE did analyze existing data where they were available—specifically for two of the identified root causes: school culture (teacher perceptions of working conditions) and principal turnover. As shown here, stakeholder feedback in these areas was consistent with trends in high-need schools versus non-high-need schools in the state.

- **Teacher perceptions of working conditions across school need status.** This equity gap differs from the other three in that it is more a *root cause* of the first three priority gaps than it is a direct measure of teacher excellence within a school. For instance, research suggests that factors related to working conditions affect the quality of applicants, effectiveness of teachers within a school, and rates of teacher turnover (Ingersoll & May, 2012). Analyses suggest that working conditions vary considerably across Delaware: The overall composite score of working conditions for schools in the highest quartile of low-income or minority students is roughly 5 percentage points lower than for schools in the lowest quartile of each category, respectively (see Exhibit 8).

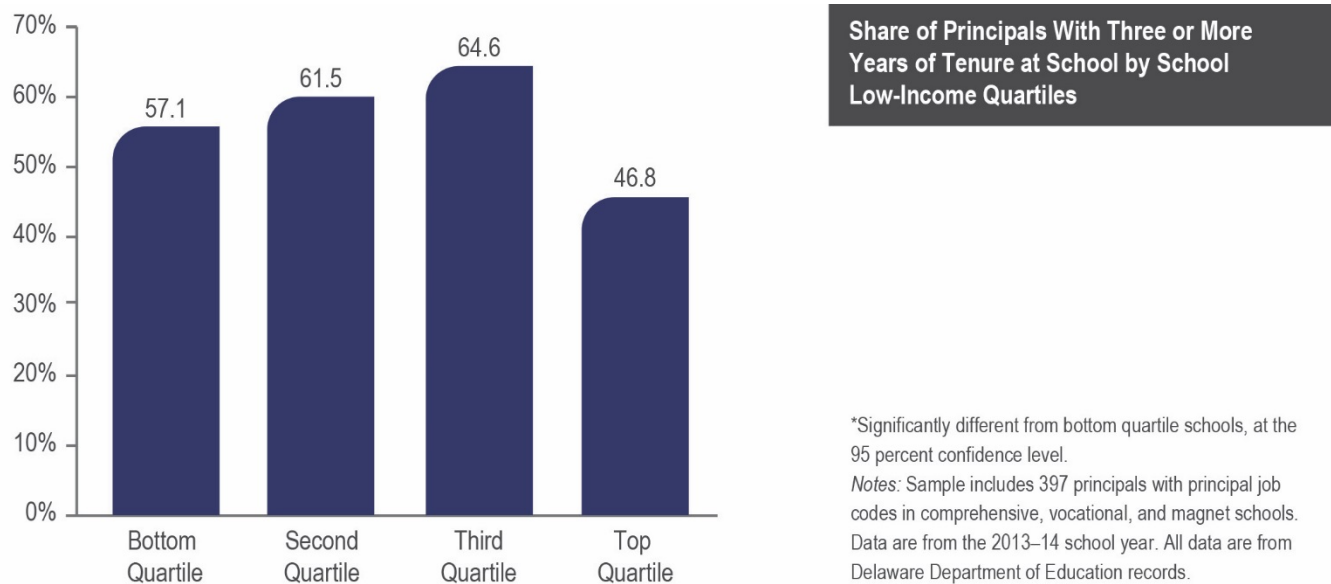
Exhibit 8. Teacher Perceptions of Working Conditions



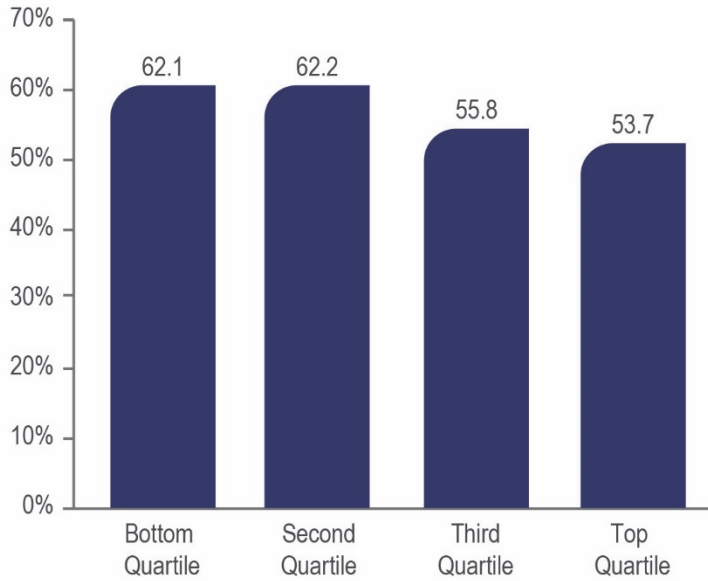


Principal stability across school need status. Access to high-performing school leaders also is an important equity issue for our students. Research suggests that principal stability has a positive impact on student achievement, even when accounting for a number of principal and school characteristics (Brockmeier, Starr, Green, Pate, & Leech, 2013). Exhibit 9 shows that high-need schools in Delaware have considerably lower shares of principals with at least three years of tenure at the same school.²⁰

Exhibit 9. Principal Stability Across Need Status



²⁰ This gap of 11.8 percentage points ($p = 0.066$) is significant at the 10 percent level.



Share of Principals With Three or More Years of Tenure at School by School Minority Quartiles

*Significantly different from bottom quartile schools, at the 95 percent confidence level.

Notes: Sample includes 401 principals with principal job codes in comprehensive, vocational, and magnet schools. Data are from the 2013–14 school year. All data are from Delaware Department of Education records.

Section 5. Potential Strategies and Solutions for Eliminating Equity Gaps

Delaware's commitment to strengthening educator effectiveness spans the last several decades, but a deeper review of the state's educator equity data and the subsequent development of this plan sparked a renewed energy for doing so and a refinement of the state's approach. As discussed in Section 2, Delaware's commitment to improving educator effectiveness started with building the data systems and analytic capacity to better understand the state's landscape and workforce. Although the field of educator effectiveness analytics is in its relative infancy, Delaware has taken initiative in developing data infrastructure, systems, strategies, and initiatives that have the potential to improve educator effectiveness. During the past five years, Delaware has made significant investments in its workforce—from pre-service preparation, to recruitment and selection, to evaluation, professional learning and compensation systems. Often these investments, financial and otherwise, have been directed toward ensuring equitable access to excellent educators for students in our highest-need schools.

As Delaware charts the next decade in educator effectiveness, it will require a more focused approach—the state's equity gaps have been closed in small pockets but persist at-scale. Delaware's stakeholders and leadership have consistently said that the state's 2015 equity plan should not precipitate a laundry list of new initiatives, but rather build on the foundation of promising initiatives from the past five years (or from the decade before). Delaware's state leadership also has used ED's directive as an opportunity to complete a full inventory of major educator effectiveness initiatives from the last five years (see Section 1) and to build updated educator effectiveness data sets with Harvard SDP. State leadership responded to the call, in collaboration with stakeholders, to develop stronger, triangulated connections among the state's equity gaps, potential root causes, and possible strategies and solutions that have an ongoing or increased likelihood of success.

It should be noted that the TLEU believes that Section 5 charts a path forward that will close inter-school and intra-school gaps for all sub-groups. While the state's highest-need schools were identified as a point of emphasis and analysis throughout Delaware's planning process, any generalities made were in the spirit of furthering the dialogue amongst key stakeholder groups. Section 5 outlines where DDOE has arrived with regard to the menu of strategies it plans to employ between 2015–25, seeking to alleviate root causes and dramatically shrink educator equity gaps, both between schools and within schools. The vast majority of the specific initiatives outlined in Section 5 have been and will continue to be made available to all Delaware LEAs. This section will undergo further review in collaboration with stakeholder groups during the second half of 2015. To-date, DDOE arrived at these strategies based on (a) our analysis of data and conversations with multiple stakeholder groups in the first half of 2015; (b) the results of a systematic policy inventory and gap analysis; and (c) our reflections on a meaningful theory of action to guide our efforts to ensure equitable access to excellent educators.

Stakeholder Feedback on Strategies that Will Address Root Causes. Having considered existing educator effectiveness policies and initiatives, DDOE drew on stakeholder feedback to refine the approach to implementing strategies that will address the priority equity gaps. Specifically, stakeholders identified seven equitable access strategy thematic areas, each with several specific sub-strategies or programs. *These strategy areas align with the categories that emerged from the root cause analysis of the state's priority equity gaps (experience, turnover, effectiveness).* Many of these initiatives and programs are already in progress statewide or in select

districts/charters but will be expanded on or modified to reflect root cause analysis findings and ongoing statewide engagement.

Strategies Aimed at Eliminating the Priority Gaps Address the HQT Gap (Unqualified or Out-of-Field).

Though not explicitly detailed in the text of this section, Delaware believes that addressing the priority gaps of teacher experience, teacher turnover, and teacher effectiveness will work to reduce the HQT gap (access to unqualified or out-of-field teachers) for students of color and students from low income families. By bolstering educator preparation, notably through legislation that created stronger requirements for licensure and certification and required a system of reporting to monitor program effectiveness, Delaware is working to ensure that students are being taught only by those teachers who are qualified for the grades/subject areas that they teach and thus assigned primarily to those classes (see Strategy 2 below). Additionally, Delaware's strategies that enhance the recruitment, selection, and staff management of excellent educators address the fundamental HQT gap by casting a wider net using marketing opportunities, by offering incentives to attract and retain excellent educators in high-need schools, and by achieving equity through early hiring practices (see Strategy 3 below).

Policy Inventory and Gap Analysis. Because of the breadth of existing educator effectiveness initiatives in Delaware introduced in the past decade, DDOE decided to begin the strategy dialogue with a policy inventory of existing policies and initiatives across the educator career continuum. Using the GTL Center's Talent Development Framework, the TLEU documented efforts in 13 areas of educator effectiveness policy and identified six areas of strength (e.g., areas where Delaware already had put in place significant policies or initiatives) and seven areas for development (e.g., areas where Delaware had paid less attention or been less effective to-date).²¹ The cross-department process served two purposes: first, we obtained a comprehensive perspective of where our efforts were already being placed so that decisions about new strategies could be made strategically with this information in mind; and, second, DDOE leaders representing various educator effectiveness areas gained detailed knowledge of their colleagues' initiatives so that opportunities for greater collaboration and coordination across initiatives can be achieved. *It should be noted that a similar inventory/analysis should be conducted by many of Delaware's districts and charters in order to build a full understanding of the Delaware landscape that is not limited by a heavy state-level emphasis.*

Theory of Action. Delaware recognizes that achieving its teacher and leader equity goals will require implementation of a comprehensive, multifaceted strategy built on a vision of organizational change at the state and local levels. Delaware's plan to ensure equitable access to excellent educators, therefore, is built on the following theory of action, which conveys that if these strategies are put into place, Delaware will address the root causes behind the equity gaps and, in time, the equity gaps will cease to exist.

²¹ See Appendix J for a summary of the policy scan outcomes.

IF a comprehensive approach to understanding and supporting educator effectiveness—in particular for low-income, high-minority, and high-need schools and districts—is implemented statewide, but in particular in schools serving larger than average numbers of high-need students; and if this approach is monitored and reported to our stakeholders over time,

THEN our state, districts, and charter schools will be better able to recruit, evaluate, develop, and retain excellent educators such that all students have equitable access to excellent educators who can help them achieve their highest potential in school, in college, and in their lives.

This comprehensive approach includes several strategies that fall into the broad categories of the educator effectiveness continuum, including recruitment, development and retention of top talent; teacher and principal preparation; fiscal equity as a resource to support educator effectiveness; better and more transparent use of data (including data on both educator effectiveness as well as school climate and conditions); and a commitment to create effective partnerships between the state and LEAs to close Delaware's persistent gaps and move toward equity. The following strategies mirror the list of root causes that surfaced from conversations with stakeholders. Both existing initiatives as well as some that Delaware would like to pursue in the future are addressed.

Throughout this section, Delaware has provided visual examples of the high-level links between the educator equity gaps of teacher turnover, experience, and effectiveness to relevant root causes and potential strategies and solutions aimed at closing these gaps. *Note that these visuals do not provide a comprehensive list of all relevant root causes and solutions, but rather are examples of some of the links in that root cause area.* The text in each section provides more information about these examples.

Strategy 1: Improving School Leadership and Retaining Our Best Leaders

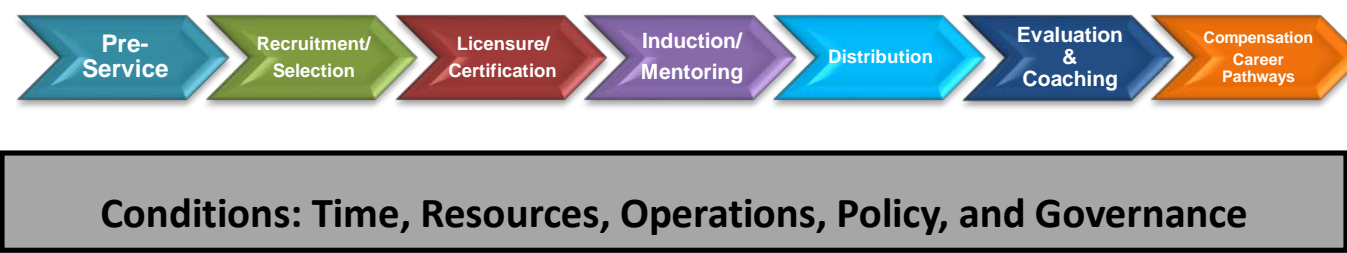
As noted, Delaware has consistent challenges with deliberate management of the educator effectiveness continuum, including struggles with educator retention in high-poverty schools and persistent challenges with educator performance in those contexts. Delaware stakeholders convened throughout the early spring of 2015, and two key themes emerged related to school leadership that cross all three Delaware priority equity gaps.

- ▶ Effective school leadership is critical in order to address all three equity gaps related to who is teaching our neediest students, teacher retention, and teacher performance.
- ▶ Principal turnover was noted as a root cause for teacher turnover and effectiveness equity gaps, and data confirmed that high-need schools experience lower principal stability.

Research supports Delaware's core belief that strong school-based leadership and improved student outcomes are linked (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Hallinger & Heck, 1998). For example, schools that lose a principal after one year underperform in the subsequent year. Conversely, schools who perform successfully on standardized tests also report high staff cohesion and positive working conditions established and nurtured by strong school leaders (Burkhauser, 2012).

To create effective school leaders in every building, especially for students who need them the most, the TLEU developed the School Leader Effectiveness Continuum as the theoretical framework in 2014. School leadership is a complex entity and, as a state system, cannot be improved by focusing on the single piece of the continuum. The continuum encompasses conditions such as a school leader’s preparation, professional learning, and evaluation, as well as policies to address the conditions in which our school leaders work.

School Leader Effectiveness Continuum



The following strategies are grounded in the belief that strong leaders are the best lever needed to recruit, develop, and retain excellent teachers.

Based on this theoretical framework, the findings mentioned earlier, and the previous efforts of DDOE, Delaware has set two state-level priority metrics that all school leadership strategies will be geared toward, with a particular focus on high-need schools.

- 1. Seventy-five percent of principals and assistant principals serving the state’s high-need schools (50) demonstrate “effective” leadership practices and higher than average rates of student growth by 2017–18.
- 2. Eighty percent retention rate of “highly effective” principals retained or promoted within Delaware districts or charters, as defined by the updated DPAS-II metrics for administrators by 2017–18.

The following section will address these two major needs related to school leadership—increasing effective school leaders and increasing retention of great principals, particularly in the highest need schools. It will outline existing strategies that have demonstrated impact or policy changes that support the plan to ensure excellent educators for all. Most important, it will include new strategies the state plans to explore as new approaches to the persistent challenges concerning school leadership.

Summary of Existing Strategies and Policies to Improve School Leadership

Based on its theoretical framework of the School Leader Effectiveness Continuum, the state engaged in numerous strategies to increase the effectiveness of school leaders. These strategies fall into three categories related to preparation, professional learning, and evaluation. The follow section elaborates on these categories and their associated strategies.

Preparation and Policy

Delaware continues to consider opportunities where state-level regulation can create momentum for improving school leadership preparation given the state’s belief that school leadership is a pivotal factor to ensuring achievement gains—especially with an emphasis on high-need students. For example, the TLEU has worked with policymakers to revise policies regarding the programs under which school leaders are prepared. In collaboration

with the Professional Standards Board (PSB), Regulations 1591–1595 were amended, allowing for new design in school leadership training and preparation. Program approval and renewal processes are similar to the charter school authorization and renewal process, based on the quality of your program plan, and ultimately based upon student outcomes and relevant program data. The PSB published the School Leader Preparation Program Application in fall 2013, which approved the Delaware Leadership Project (DLP) as the first alternative route to principal certification in Delaware. The key lever that these new regulations present is the opportunity for districts, partner organizations, and universities to create innovative ways to better prepare school leaders, with a focus on job-embedded training and authentic learning experiences to practice and receive feedback.

DLP was originally a RTTT initiative led by Innovative Schools, a nonprofit organization that supports school improvement in Delaware. Founded in 2011, the DLP is Delaware’s first “alternative route” to principal certification and a key part of Delaware’s plan for transforming the state’s highest need schools. The program includes an intensive five-week “boot-camp” experience designed to transition participants from effective teachers into effective school leaders. The summer program is followed by a 10-month paid residency as candidates serve as an administrator, working with a mentor principal to practice and develop their skills as part of a school leadership team in a high-need school. Graduates also receive two years of postgraduate coaching to support their leadership in a high-need school. According to a spokesperson at ED, “The Delaware Leadership Project is providing a unique training experience that is resulting in more collaborative, instructionally focused, talent-focused principals who are ready to lead a high-need school from day one.” To date, 15 leaders have completed the program, and 12 are currently serving as school leaders in high-need schools in Delaware.

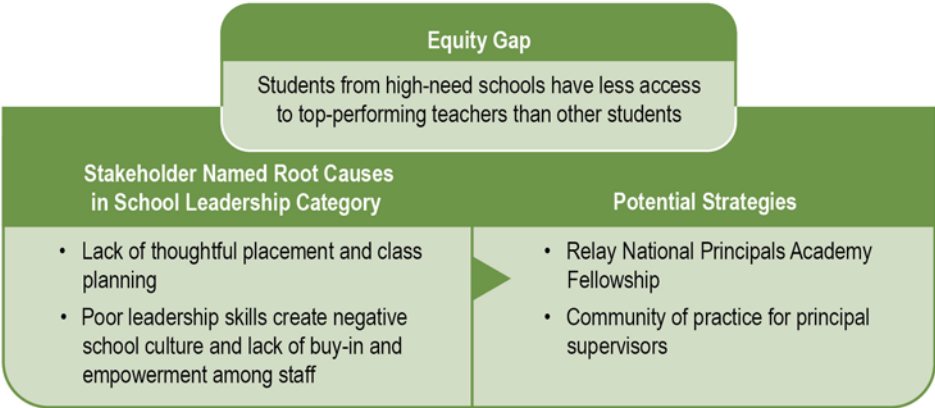
By bolstering the expectations for school leader preparation programs, fostering the development of new programs (University of Delaware’s alternative-route program was recently approved, becoming the second to earn approval, in April 2015) and supporting a focus on the preparation and development of leaders specifically for high-need schools, Delaware hopes to increase the supply of leaders who are well prepared and desire to take on the exciting challenge of leading high-need schools.

Professional Learning and Coaching

Delaware has invested resources in the past five years in the development of school leaders, with varying purposes and aims. Two initiatives that have yielded positive results and are slated to continue beyond RTTT include participating in the Relay National Principals Academy Fellowship (NPAF) and providing Development Coaches for school-level leaders. The Relay NPAF focuses on developing principals of high-need schools in observation and feedback protocols, data-driven instruction, and school culture. Development coaches focus on providing support to principals and assistant principals to implement the teacher evaluation system by bolstering leaders’ skills in conducting quality observations and coaching teachers. These initiatives strive to improve the quality of school leadership to increase teacher effectiveness and retention.

Delaware has formed a partnership with the NPAF to train 10 principals per year in an effort to prepare current principals of high-need schools to become instructional and cultural leaders in their buildings. To achieve this goal, the program focuses on the levers of observation and feedback protocols to build teacher capacity, and the use of data-driven instruction to drive results. School leaders attend a two-week summer intensive and four weekend “intersessions” throughout the year. The Relay NPAF approach emphasizes individualized, job-embedded practice. School leaders study their “game film”: they record their feedback and professional development sessions with colleagues, analyze them with faculty members, practice new approaches, and immediately apply what they learn to their own school contexts. Unique to Relay, the program requires that principal supervisors at the district and organizational levels attend key sessions during the summer to better

support NPAF participants throughout the year. From 2013 to 2015, 15 principals have participated in Relay NPAF, with 10 principals of high-need schools slated to attend the 2015–16 cohort. Delaware’s goal is to continue training at least 10 leaders per year, with a focus on supporting and developing principals to work in high-need schools as part of a national network of principals serving students from low-income communities.



In 2011, the Delaware Academy for School Leadership (DASL) in the University of Delaware's College of Education and Human Development launched the Development Coach Project as part of Delaware’s RTTT plan. This initiative provides school leaders with coaches that support them in their ability to observe and provide feedback to teachers through the implementation of the teacher evaluation system. Development coaches spend three hours a week in each school they work with conducting co-observations, providing feedback to principals on their feedback sessions, and performing calibration exercises. Development coaches provide on-the-ground support to principals and assistant principals. In the past four years, DDOE has supported an average of 65 development coaches a year. As noted by Susan Bunting, superintendent of Indian River School District:

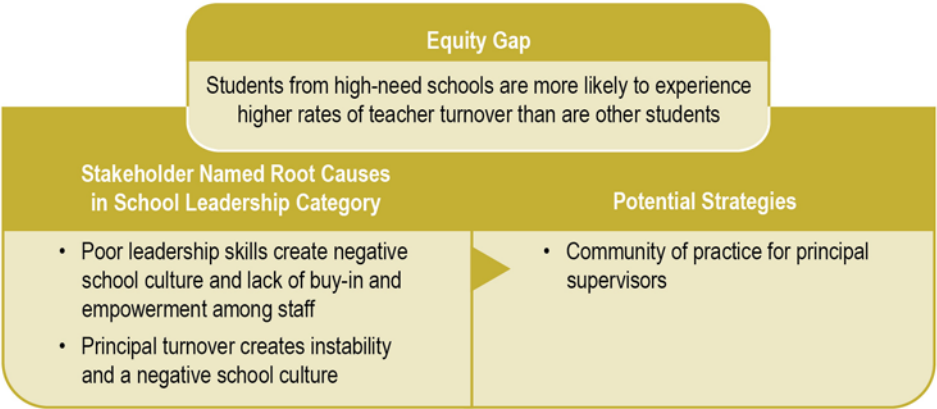
Since the onset of the Race to the Top initiative, Indian River’s students have profited immensely from the expertise shared with newest principals by the development coaches that have been assigned to the district. The “on-the-job training” in each specific setting has greatly impacted principals’ effective use of the DPAS II process to increase student learning. From the calibration following observations to the scrutiny of formative documents, the development coaches enable district principals to maximize the impact of the evaluation system.

School leaders consistently report that development coaches have provided great support in deepening their skills in observation and feedback skills. This support is critical to ensuring teachers have feedback and support to continue their professional growth.

Leader Evaluation and Community of Practice for Principal Supervisors

In 2013, Delaware began exploring the possibility of redesigning the administrator evaluation system. DDOE created a partnership with New Leaders and DASL to assist in the policy development and structure of the new system as well as to create a *community of practice (CoP)* specifically focused on the role of the principal supervisor. Developing a new evaluation system, differentiated by role as well as increasing the capacity and skills of principal supervisors, is one strategy to raise the development of school leader effectiveness. The purpose of this CoP is to build a shared and rigorous definition of effective principal practice among those

responsible for assessing it and to support the implementation of the new administrator evaluation system.²² This community also serves as venue for principal supervisors to share best practices in how they are coaching and developing school-based leaders. The CoP convenes three times during the academic year, and topics include goal-setting, evidence collection, providing feedback, and preparing for midyear and summative conferences. In addition, the CoP conducts two webinars to provide an additional vehicle for problem solving while minimizing time outside of the district.



In its first year, 72 participants were initially trained, and 45 principal supervisors participated in the CoP. According to DDOE staff:

The work has been instrumental in implementing the new administrator evaluation system, which will eventually encompass four systems—one for assistant principals, principals, district leaders, and superintendents. The principal evaluation system is the only one in full implementation this year, with the assistant principal and district leader system launching in full implementation during the 2015–16 school year.

The CoP is a strategy to improve not only school leaders’ effectiveness through evaluation and coaching but also principal retention by creating an environment where leaders are supported and provided opportunities for continuous growth. Creating this environment will incentivize high-quality leaders to remain in the school building.

New Priorities to Ensure Equitable Access

Delaware has invested in and established school leadership as a major priority area in the next two years. However, Delaware’s current strategies only partially deal with the equity gap root causes of teacher retention and effectiveness. Delaware therefore proposes to explore additional strategies as part of its ongoing work to address the identified equity gaps:

1. Increase high-quality preparation programs for leaders in high-need schools.
2. Expand Relay NPAF and create a network of leaders in high-need schools.
3. Create a Leadership Design Fellowship for district teams to develop principal pipelines.
4. Explore the creation of an advanced license for master principals, potentially including extra compensation for those producing extraordinary results, particularly in high-need schools.

²² The CoP-developed *DPAS-II Guide for Administrators (Principals): Principal Practice Rubric* is available in Appendix K.

Delaware believes these strategies will expand on the existing groundwork and address the two key metrics related to effective leaders in high-need schools and principal retention, particularly for students who need them the most. Following is a brief summary of the potential new strategies.

1. Increase high-quality preparation programs for leaders in high-need schools.

As noted above, Regulation 1595 allows for new and innovative approaches to developing school leaders. By addressing this root cause of educator equity gaps in pre-service, Delaware seeks to address the challenges associated with poor preparation for high-need schools. New programs include DLP and University of Delaware's Principal Preparation Program (PPP), with organizations such as Teach For America and Wilmington University also exploring new pre-service pathways in partnerships with schools serving low-income communities. Delaware's major pre-service partners have begun to coalesce and collaborate about the unique challenges that must be solved for in order to close educator equity gaps, notably around turnover and effectiveness.

2. Expand Relay NPAF and create a network of leaders in high-need schools.

Delaware plans to support at least 10 principals of high-need schools to attend Relay NPAF. In addition, DDOE will launch Relay Network this summer to provide an opportunity for school leaders who have completed the yearlong program to deepen their learning from the fellowship, continue the growth of themselves and their teams, and share key lessons learned. The network will be led by two early adopters; it will be a space where those who attended the fellowship can grow and find ways to share their key learnings with those outside of the fellowship to improve school cultures and student outcomes.

3. Create a Leadership Design Fellowship for district teams to develop school leader pipelines.

One role of the state is to build the capacity of districts, which is what the Leadership Design Fellowship would provide. The fellowship would include five to six districts, particularly those with equity gaps or contributing equity gaps, and provide the opportunity for districts to develop a clear process for the identification, development, and selection of leaders. Much effort has been paid to the development of leaders after they are already in the position, but more effort needs to be placed in the process by which districts are identifying, cultivating, and selecting their own leaders. This collaborative fellowship would help districts develop processes specific to their needs (e.g., clear process to identify "high potentials") yet can capitalize on the experiences and knowledge of the group for districts to determine a clear pipeline for principal development.

4. Explore the creation of an advanced license for master principals, potentially including extra compensation for those producing extraordinary results, particularly in high-need schools.

Delaware seeks to explore the possibility of creating an advanced license for master principals to provide an incentive for highly effective leaders to stay in the school building. Currently, there is no opportunity for school leaders, no matter their level of effectiveness or students they serve, to earn additional compensation. This type of policy change may provide additional compensation, multiyear contracts, or other incentives for school leaders who demonstrate extraordinary student results and positive school cultures, particularly for those in high-need schools. If the state is working to create excellent educators for all, then high-quality school leaders must remain in the schools to ensure positive school cultures, increase teacher retention, and support teacher performance.

To summarize, effective school leadership and ensuring high-quality principals remain in the schools are two critical levers for addressing identified teacher equity gaps. Stakeholders consistently note and data confirm that instability and ineffectiveness in leadership lead to these equity gaps, and without correcting these two concerns, it will be difficult to overcome these gaps. As referenced in the School Leader Effectiveness Continuum, focusing on one area of school leader effectiveness will not affect the system overall, so Delaware’s approach is multifaceted and includes strategies from preparation to professional learning to evaluation. Delaware’s school leadership strategies build on our existing strengths while deepening the focus on schools and districts where there is a greater need.

Strategy 2: Strengthen Educator Preparation for Urban and Rural Schools

To ensure excellence in teaching and learning, Delaware must ensure that all of the educators working in our schools are well prepared to take on the critical job of ensuring their students’ academic success. Inadequate teacher preparation for high-need schools was cited as a root cause for teacher turnover and teacher effectiveness gaps. This determination presumes that training affects retention and performance. Therefore, this finding highlights that there are potential differences in how teachers are trained and that the training itself can be improved. Delaware believes that improved teacher preparation will result in stronger teachers. As the approver of all educator preparation programs operating in Delaware, the state has some authority to oversee and dictate the standards for teacher preparation, and to arrange technical assistance when appropriate.

Strong educator preparation is a strategy that Delaware has been investing in for several years. As an SEA, Delaware is committed to the preparation of teachers in well-designed and competitive programs and to supporting those educators in their early years in the classroom. Senate Bill 51 is one of the vehicles through which Delaware is working to improve teacher preparation.

In May 2013, Governor Jack Markell signed Senate Bill 51 (2013), which raised the standards of teacher preparation programs by setting competitive enrollment requirements and requiring a system of reporting to monitor program effectiveness. Specifically, Senate Bill 51 and its corresponding regulation require the following:

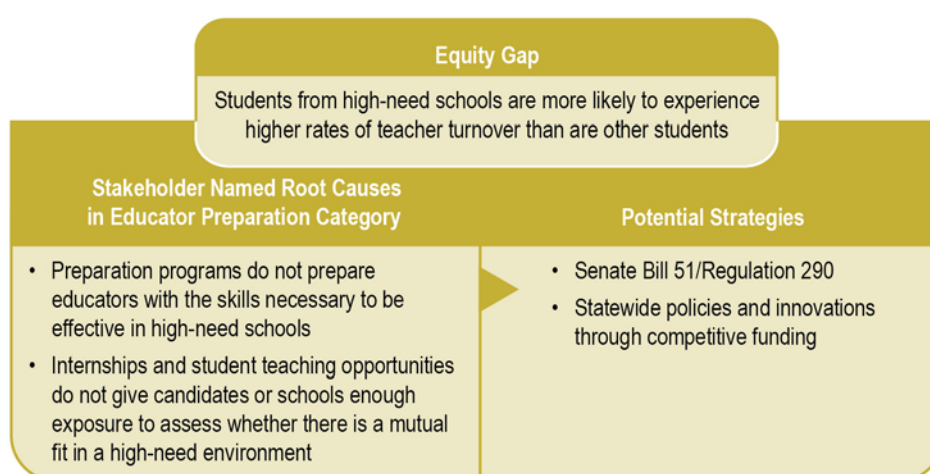
- ▶ To be accepted into a teacher preparation program, candidates must have either a 3.0 grade point average (GPA) or have a GPA in the top 50 percent in the most recent two years of their general education, or demonstrate mastery of general knowledge deemed to be college-ready on an assessment normed to the college-bound population.
- ▶ To exit a program, teacher candidates must pass a subject-matter exam and a performance assessment, as well as demonstrate their teaching skills through observation in a minimum 10-week classroom residency supervised by a high-quality cooperating teacher and clinical supervisor.
- ▶ Program data, including data related to student outcomes of program graduates, be collected annually and publicly reported.

To date, most of the state’s teacher preparation work has focused on the following policy levers articulated in Senate Bill 51 and other policy platforms:

Delaware’s Approach to Securing Effective School Leaders for All

Focusing on one area of school leader effectiveness will not affect the system overall, so Delaware’s approach is multifaceted and includes strategies from preparation to professional learning to evaluation

- ▶ **Increasing accountability, data, and transparency** to highlight improvements and deficits to spur change
- ▶ **Expanding options for training and creating a competitive marketplace for high-quality training programs** (traditional and alternative)
- ▶ **Setting or raising standards for existing programs**, as noted earlier, in the following ways:
 - Raising standards for becoming a teacher (entry and graduation)
 - Setting standards for what and how aspiring teachers learn (content, residency, etc.)
 - Increasing accountability in approval and renewal, including outcomes data
- ▶ **Targeting funding in each of these areas** to seed innovation and high-quality programs



Within each of these areas, there are specific areas for potential innovation and expansion for emphasis on the highest need schools. Some of these examples are detailed in the following section.

Increasing Accountability, Data, and Transparency

Currently, programs “report cards” have been developed for educator preparation programs. These report cards will include multiple measures of performance, including metrics on placement, retention and performance. Within these score cards, DDOE will have specific metrics on each of these measures in high-need schools, as a way of measuring performance of candidates in these situations, and providing transparency about the level at which teacher preparation programs serve high-need contexts.

To ensure equity, this reporting should continue, and DDOE may use this data to create other state-level reports on teacher preparation related to high-need schools that can be the basis of other collaborative higher education reforms or the basis for further funding for innovation.

Expanding Options for Training and Creating a Competitive Marketplace for High-Quality Training Programs (Both Traditional and Alternative)

Delaware has committed significant resources to funding teacher preparation innovations, in both traditional and alternative formats. Specifically, for high-need contexts, Delaware has provided funding for programs that specifically target training placement in high-need schools. These programs work to curb the root causes of inadequate preparation for high-need schools and work to provide a pipeline of candidates with the mindset and cultural competency to be effective in that environment. They include the following:

Teach For America

Delaware has partnered with TFA since 2009—initially as part of the Philadelphia/Mid-Atlantic region. The partnership was a result of early support from the public and private sectors, including local philanthropy and the business community. As an alternative route to certification, TFA became and remains the only program in Delaware that deliberately recruits teachers into our highest needs schools statewide. TFA's corps is seven times more diverse than Delaware's teacher force. TFA Delaware became its own region in 2011. The program recruited 19 teachers in its first year and currently has grown to include 60 educators teaching in 23 schools in six districts and five charter schools in all three Delaware counties.

According to TFA:

Teachers who lead with a clear and inspiring vision, drive dramatic academic and personal growth, and partner with students, families, and colleagues are in demand in Delaware. As a state, we are working towards honoring and developing the profession of teaching through effective professional development that focuses on practice, cultural competency, and leadership.

TFA is working with high-need schools and programs that serve students from early childhood through high school and teach in urban and rural schools statewide. There is particular demand for teachers of color and bicultural, bilingual teachers to serve Delaware's swiftly growing ELL population. TFA seeks to ensure that all students have access to passionate and committed teachers who are held accountable to closing persistent achievement gaps and to create pathways into the profession that will meet statewide demands for talented professionals who are willing to teach in some of our most challenging schools.

Relay Graduate School of Education

Delaware formed a partnership with Relay GSE to train educators specifically to work in high-need schools. Relay is an accredited graduate school of education that focuses on training educators to work in high-need schools and is the first accredited program to require that teachers demonstrate growth while teaching in a classroom prior to earning their degree. Relay's practical approach to teacher preparation enables degree candidates to learn their craft while teaching, to be mentored by effective teachers, and to observe and analyze their own practice through thousands of video clips taken as they teach. Relay graduates are expected to demonstrate that their students have achieved one year's growth during the academic year to earn their Masters of Arts in Teaching (MAT).

Relay GSE will launch in fall 2015 with a first cohort of alternative certification and MAT candidates who will work in district and charter schools statewide. Relay also is partnering with other Delaware teacher pipeline organizations to better understand the unique needs of the state and ensure programmatic success for its degree candidates as well as Delaware's students.

Delaware Transitions to Teaching Program (TTT) at the University of Delaware (part of UD's ARTC)

One of the state's recent initiatives is the Delaware Transitions to Teaching Partnership (DT3P)—a new program at the University of Delaware designed for individuals with a background in mathematics, science, English, or technology and engineering who wish to become full-time teachers for high-need, Grades 6–12 Delaware public schools. This alternate route to certification program does not require any previous education coursework but enables participants to complete course requirements in as few as three years while fully employed as a teacher. Applicants must have a bachelor's degree and 30 credits in one of the content areas listed. After selected and placed, DT3P participants are given a one-year emergency credential, which can be renewed up to three times until all certification requirements have been met.

Current partners include ED, DDOE, three high-need districts (Capital, Seaford, and Woodbridge), Moyer Academy, a charter school, and the University of Delaware Center for Teacher Education. In its first year, the program included 15 teachers who taught mathematics, science, technology and engineering, and English, in some of Delaware's neediest schools. The program seeks talented candidates, especially from among traditionally underrepresented groups (e.g., women, racial and ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities) and provides training, employment assistance, and professional support during the first four years of teaching. Participants take advantage of the following supports:

- ▶ A sequence of University of Delaware courses to ensure a highly effective preparation program that meets the state's alternative certification requirements
- ▶ An intensive summer institute before teaching
- ▶ School placement assistance
- ▶ On-site coaching during the first year of teaching
- ▶ Professional development seminars for program participants and their mentors
- ▶ Financial support through tuition scholarships and reimbursement

To ensure equity, moving forward, seed or incentive funding should focus on alternative or traditional programs training specifically for high-need schools, with the aim of increasing teacher retention and effectiveness. This work will include encouraging and supporting high-need school applications for State Agency for Higher Education (SAHE) grants.

State Agency for Higher Education Grants

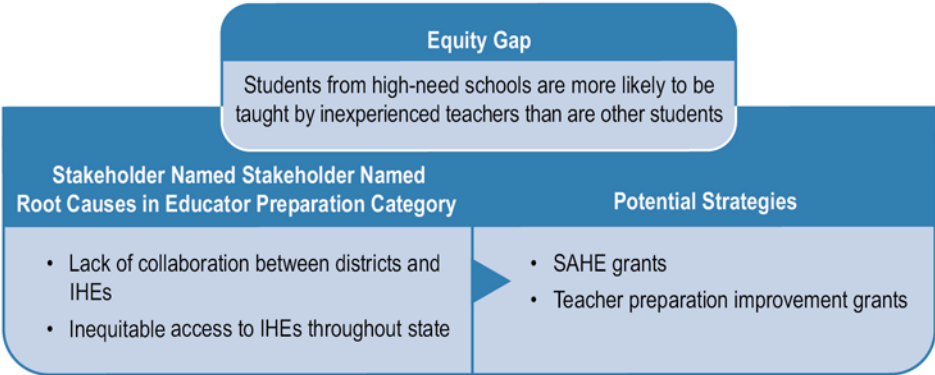
Since 2010, the State Agency for Higher Education (SAHE) through DDOE manages the SAHE federal grant process and oversight for funds awarded to eligible partnerships to support innovative and effective professional development that improves teacher content knowledge and teaching skills to help all students achieve to high academic state standards, as part of Title II, Part A.

Specifically, grants support scientifically based practices that will improve teaching to increase student achievement in 10 core academic subjects: arts, civics and government, economics, English, geography, history, mathematics, reading or English language arts, science, and world languages.

The higher education program component of Title II, Part A provides an opportunity for eligible partnerships composed of IHEs and high-need districts or charter schools to apply for grants on a competitive basis.

Stakeholders have named both lack of partnerships between districts and IHEs and inequitable access to IHEs throughout the state as root causes of teacher experience and effectiveness gaps. Through a continued focus on leveraging the use of SAHE grants in a meaningful way, DDOE can incentivize LEAs and IHE partnerships. This, in turn, works to positively impact their schools by increasing effectiveness and attracting/retaining experienced educators.

Moving forward, DDOE can maximize focus on teacher preparation for high-need schools by continuing to fund programs that specifically train candidates for those contexts and that show demonstrated results in their outcomes for students. These programs may be alternative or traditional. DDOE also could provide seed funding for traditional programs to pilot innovations or new methods of providing exposure and high-quality training for teachers in high-need schools.



Setting or Raising Standards for Existing Programs

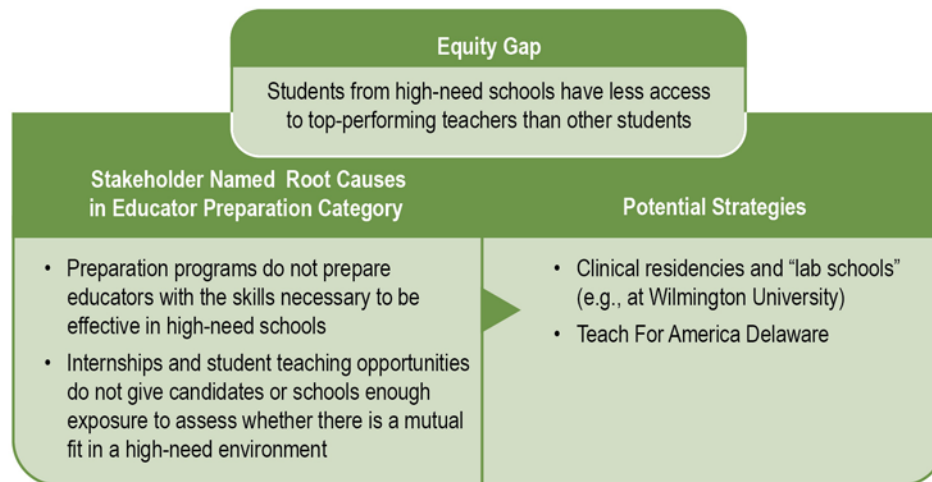
Delaware also is supporting the improvement of teacher preparation by setting or raising the standards for all programs. DDOE has set baseline standards around content, including literacy pedagogy, residency length, standards alignment and high-quality cooperating and supervising teachers. The state has provided competitive grant funding to innovations at the IHE level in these areas. One recipient of state funding for innovation is Wilmington University's clinical residency program, detailed later.

Clinical Residencies and “Lab Schools” (launched by Wilmington University)

As part of the state's use of funding innovations to improve teacher preparation, Wilmington University launched the clinical residency initiative in February 2015 with support from a RTTT teacher preparation grant. The yearlong residency gives aspiring teachers the chance to spend an entire school year co-teaching with an experienced educator. According to Governor Jack Markell:

This initiative directly answers a need identified by our teachers who told us just how challenging their first year in the classroom was and how they would have benefited from having a longer clinical residency.

Three schools, representing all three counties in Delaware, joined the program as “lab schools” this year. Wilmington University selected and placed a dozen of its senior education majors in these schools, pairing them with host teachers who agreed to embark upon the yearlong co-teaching model.



The University plans to expand the program during the next 18 months by adding teachers in the current partner schools as well creating additional school partnerships.

One participating principal described the program as giving future teachers a chance to understand a school's culture:

It allows them to learn what it looks like to begin a school year, and provides a window through which to see the growth that students make by the end of the school year. It is a hands-on experience that lets the intern learn and grow in a nurturing environment with the support of both the teachers and administrators.

These kinds of deeper clinical residencies fulfill the vision of teacher preparation reforms in Delaware which was envisioned by the Governor, legislators and partners.

This type of training should continue to be supported to institutionalize practices in preparation that can directly affect teacher retention and effectiveness. To further focus this effective practice on equity, this work should be piloted in partnership with high-need schools and its curriculum modified accordingly. This could directly address concerns regarding insufficient exposure to high-need schools and could work to increase teacher retention and effectiveness by better preparing aspiring educators for a high-need classroom.

Continued Focus on Setting or Raising Standards for Teacher Preparation for High-Need Schools

To ensure equitable access to excellent teachers, Delaware should research and set standards for course content relevant to high-need school training. In addition, this work would include setting standards for high-need school exposure in residency and practicum—including continued funding of innovative and experimental models.

Strategy 3: Enhanced Recruitment, Selection, and Staff Management of Excellent Educators

Another significant overlap between existing DDOE priorities and stakeholder feedback is in Delaware's efforts to continually improve the recruitment, selection, and hiring of excellent educators to work in all public schools, with an emphasis on those schools whose students are most in need of the most effective educators. Improving educator recruitment and selection was also one of the areas for development identified in the GTL Center policy

inventory. One significant project to date is the design and launch of a statewide recruitment portal (www.joindelawareschools.org) not only to post job openings and collect and distribute applications but also to showcase the many innovations and opportunities for educators throughout the state. The TLEU has also developed, in partnership with the Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center (MACC) a 200-page “resource binder” for districts and charters seeking to improve their internal practices around recruitment, selection, and hiring—core to this work is each LEA developing core competencies that they look for when bringing an educator into a high-need school. Some of Delaware’s districts have already taking the lead in addressing this part of the continuum.

The initiatives discussed herein are designed to improve equitable access to high-quality educators by ensuring that large and small as well as rural and urban districts are on a level playing field in terms of recruitment and hiring. Consistent with the following strategies, below we discuss state-developed initiatives as well as partnerships that combine to reduce equity gaps that pertain to attracting the best teachers to teach in Delaware.

Improving the Recruitment and Selection of Excellent Educators by Marketing Opportunities

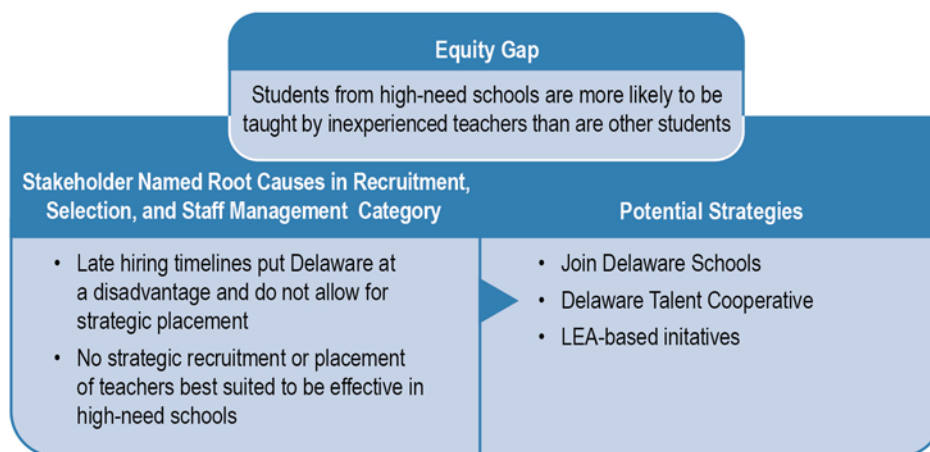
Join Delaware Schools

Join Delaware Schools (www.joindelawareschools.org) is a statewide educator recruitment portal that went live in May 2013 and was one of the first of its kind in the country (notably due to the high-level of district and charter participation). The purpose of this initiative is to provide education professionals seeking employment an easy and effective way to search for available jobs throughout the state; job seekers also can apply for multiple available positions with one application. Through the *Join Delaware Schools* online portal, potential candidates can search openings, learn about districts and individual schools, and post their résumés to one centralized site to be accessed by districts or charter schools looking for talented teachers and leaders. According to Governor Jack Markell who spoke at the site’s unveiling, “This site’s resources are an important tool to highlight the benefits of teaching in Delaware, to help us attract and retain the best teachers, and to make it easier for high-quality applicants to apply for teaching jobs in our state.”

Although the portal enables applicants to apply for several jobs with a single online application, hiring decisions remain at the LEA level. Currently, each of our 19 districts and 21 charter schools is signed on to the portal although there is a significant variance in how individual LEAs are using it in their recruiting efforts. To date, the site has received more than 4,900 teacher applications and more than 1,400 leader applications.

According to Eugene Mayo, former director of human resources for Colonial School District:

The Colonial School District strongly endorses www.joindelawareschools.org because it creates a competitive edge for school districts in its talent acquisition process. Specifically, I am pleased by the portal’s capabilities and features; including data collection, filtering, and communication with applicants. Although our district has recently joined the portal, I am already seeing an increase in applications, which will ultimately lead to new hires.



Plans for the site include posting additional information, such as professional development opportunities, state- and districtwide education news and events, as well as survey results and blogs. The site has the ability to highlight certain recruitment priorities (such as mathematics or science positions) and will ultimately be able to track statewide hiring data to better inform LEA recruitment strategy and future improvements to the site so that it can become the go-to recruitment platform for every LEA in Delaware. It is also a platform by which the state can showcase its commitment to educator equity in terms of messaging, data, culture, and incentives.

An early adopter of the program, and a rural district with large numbers of students living below the poverty line, Seaford School District reports that it had three times the normal applicant pool, which allowed it to hire three times as many teachers before the beginning of the school year. Human Resources Director Stephanie Smith reported that in its first year, *Join Delaware Schools* enabled her to find a number of qualified applicants for traditionally hard-to-fill jobs. "For example, a physics teacher, it's traditionally hard to find applicants for that subject, but I had nine. That may not sound like a lot, but that's huge." Dr. Smith also reported receiving out-of-state applications from Rhode Island and California.

The implications for equity are many. *Join Delaware Schools* allows districts to cast a much wider net than they would be able to do on their own. This is especially true for some of the state's smaller and more rural districts that simply do not have the budgets or internal capacity available to aggressively recruit. The site builds a deeper, more diverse applicant pool for all available positions. All LEAs, despite their size or demographics, have access to the same talent and also can reach out to candidates based on their specific needs or wants. Just as applicants can search for specific jobs by school and district characteristics, schools also are able to search a large database of applicants to find the exact qualities that they are looking for to fill an open position. They can search applicant characteristics such as subject area, expertise, years of experience, and even whether an applicant is a minority, bilingual, and so on.

DDOE is working on ways to make the portal more attractive to every LEA in Delaware. Future plans include linking the portal to the state financial system, which will allow LEA human resources users to cross-reference and link a variety of information on applicants without the need to input the same information more than once. DDOE also is exploring ways to strengthen the site's ability to capture and display recruitment and hiring data, which inform districts of trends in hiring, identify gaps in recruitment related to hiring needs, and have the ability to inform statewide policy.

To help districts strengthen their teacher and principal selection processes, the state, in partnership with a group of researchers from West Ed (the MACC), has produced a technical assistance toolkit on candidate selection. The state also meets monthly with human resources directors from across the state, offering professional growth opportunities, sharing research in regard to human capital, and reporting data to encourage districts to consider other dimensions affecting recruitment efforts, such as evaluation systems, leadership, and professional growth opportunities. The TLEU must continue to communicate about the availability of these resources, how they can be tailored to meet local needs, and what additional resources and technical assistance the state can make available for districts and charters taking the lead on this important work.

Delaware Talent Cooperative

The Delaware Talent Cooperative (Co-Op) was created by TLEU in 2012 with significant funding from RTTT to address Delaware's need to recruit and retain top talent in its highest needs schools. The Co-Op offers several financial incentives to educators who agree to teach or remain in these schools for a minimum of two years; this effort aims to put the most effective educators in front of the students who need them most and to support schools that have high populations of traditionally underserved students. Co-Op members include some of the state's most accomplished educators (teachers, specialists, and school leaders) who transfer to the highest needs schools or agree to continue working in those schools and are eligible to receive the following benefits:

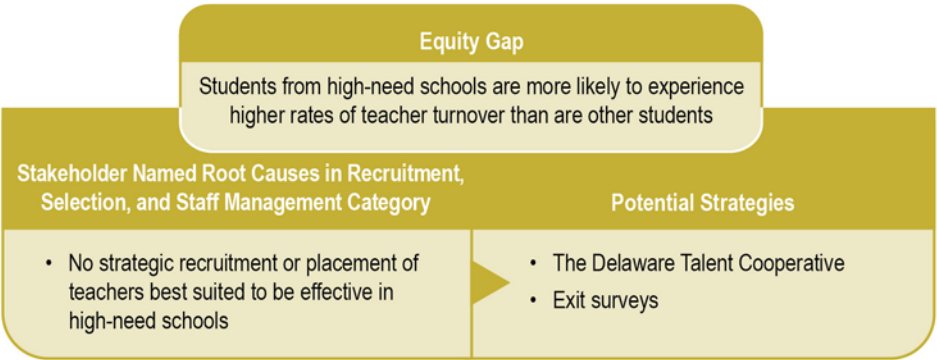
- ▶ Retention award between \$2,500 and \$10,000 during a two-year period for eligible educators already working in participating schools. Educators can earn this award annually, for a total of up to \$20,000.
- ▶ Transfer awards up to \$20,000 during a two-year period for eligible educators who transfer to participating schools.
- ▶ Formal recognition by DDOE for their commitment and practice, including an annual convening of Co-Op educators with the Delaware Secretary of Education.
- ▶ Initial training (transfer award educators) and ongoing professional development (all educators) at no cost to the educator. All Co-Op educators become part of a professional learning community (PLC) that spans all districts and schools throughout the state. This training is focused on teacher leadership.
- ▶ Leadership opportunities as well as opportunities to learn from others in the Co-Op and participate in multiple state initiatives.
- ▶ Participating schools also are eligible to receive grants of up to \$10,000 for school improvement efforts that address the equity gaps through targeted approaches to recruitment, selection, and retention.

Decisions about how to use school grants are made at the building level. Participating schools submit a one-page proposal to apply for their grants and provide periodic updates about how grant funds are used. The only requirement is that the money be used in the same spirit as the Co-Op in order to retain and recruit highly effective and excellent educators.

Co-Op participants agree to serve in a participating school for at least two years, participate in Co-Op professional development sessions, and be involved in Co-Op activities. For teachers and specialists, this involvement may include participating in a Teacher Advisory Council (TAC), attending or presenting at information sessions about the Co-Op, being a new teacher mentor, and being a teacher leader in their building or district. For school leaders, it may include serving as a leader of leaders or mentoring new administrators.

Cohort 1 of the Co-Op was made up of 28 educators. Cohort 2 saw an expansion of the program to 18 schools and was made up of approximately 160 educators. Cohort 3 was made up of approximately 140 educators.²³

The Co-Op complements other state initiatives to support and strengthen teaching, including state-led TACs that meet regularly with DDOE to weigh in on the most pressing educational issues for our students and schools, statewide PLCs, and the annual TELL Delaware survey.



To design the Co-Op, DDOE worked with an advisory council that included representatives of DDOE, the Delaware State Education Association, the Delaware Charter Schools Network, community organizations, districts, and schools. The advisory council participated in developing the initiative by providing input and advice at key points in the process. *DDOE also held focus groups with teachers across the state, and their input helped shape the program. For example, feedback from the advisory council and focus groups promoted the idea of recognizing teachers in nontested subjects and grades and including grants to schools.*²⁴

The Co-Op is directly aligned to the overall theory of action outlined at the beginning of this equity plan. *The most notable measure of success is that Co-Op schools are retaining highly effective educators in reading and mathematics at a 10 percent higher rate than other high-need schools in the state of Delaware.* Future success would further increase this rate and eventually match the retention rate of non-high-need schools across the state, thus directly closing one of Delaware’s three priority equity gaps.

Teach For America—Delaware (Recruitment Efforts)

TFA Delaware (DE) also is engaged in the recruitment, hiring, and selection of educators for high-need schools in all three Delaware counties. The organization has invested significant resources in the past six years to recruit teachers, especially teachers from diverse backgrounds, for our state’s most challenging, highest need schools.

TFA-DE corps members and staff are deeply invested in working with the community to ensure that one day, every child in Delaware will be college ready. TFA-DE has recruited nationally and specifically selected teachers who lead with a clear and inspiring vision, drive dramatic academic and personal growth, and partner with their students, families, and colleagues. Retention is highly valued by TFA-DE, and the organization is working toward

²³ Profiles of some Co-Op educators are available in Appendix L.

²⁴ See Appendix M for a summary of the Co-Op study.

honoring and developing the profession of teaching through effective professional development that focuses on practice, cultural competency, and leadership.

TFA-DE corps members and alumni have championed a college access program with the College Board and fellow teachers, started and led a debate team, composed a school newspaper, organized school assemblies, rethought the delivery of early childhood education with the Office of Early Learning at the Latin American Community Center, a birth-to-age-5 community-based organization. After school and during the summer, TFA-DE corps members engage with students at community centers through internships that focus on college access and opportunity through increased rigor of existing programs.

TFA-DE recently expanded to all three counties in the state. Continued expansion could mean opportunities not just for children in one school, but for thousands of children in districts and charters throughout the state. However, TFA-Delaware's retention rates must also be collaboratively addressed so that the reduction of one priority equity gap is not offset by the continuation of another (effectiveness vs. experience). That said, TFA's contributions (as noted above) focus on the whole child, wraparound services being offered, a greater focus on diversity and inclusiveness, and the development of school leaders—all of which were noted by stakeholders as important to address over the next decade.

Early Hiring

During the past decade, Delaware has studied hiring trends through its annual Supply & Demand Report (conducted annually until 2013 with the University of Delaware). Each year, for many years, the State Board of Education would receive a report noting that the majority of Delaware's new hires occurred in July and August, long after these candidates became interested, eligible, or available post-graduation. Greater awareness was generated, but, generally, limited action was taken by state and local leaders.

Delaware stakeholders have long acknowledged the missed opportunities associated with hiring late in the season—the TLEU has noted to LEAs that the strongest schools and LEAs begin to make offers as early as January of a given year. However, these same stakeholders (notably the state's local human resources directors) have long described the structural roadblocks associated with collective bargaining agreements, internal capacity, and, perhaps most notably, the state's financial system (in Delaware, the state funds approximately two thirds of each educator's salary, and the full "unit count" is not completed for the state until late September of a given year, causing uncertainty in the marketplace). These obstacles put many of the state's LEAs into situations where the risk/reward calculation was often dominated by the fiscal implications as opposed to the equally pressing issue of educator efficacy/equity and the potential for improved student achievement outcomes.

More recently, however, state policymakers have acknowledged these roadblocks and attempted to curtail their negative effect on LEA staffing decisions, notably around early hiring. Mounting evidence supported the importance of early hiring in terms of selecting top talent, placing educators in "best-fit" roles, and longer runways for meaningful mentoring and induction programs (including stronger new staff orientations) as well as the impacts such decisions can have on climate and culture, leadership efficacy, and educator retention. However, policymakers consistently heard that state financial guarantees were the impediment.

Former Lieutenant Governor Matt Denn responded by working with the legislature to pass "98 percent guarantee" legislation, to conduct deeper studies and analysis of the issue, and to make such financial reassurances permanent when passing Senate Bill 16 in spring 2014. Pilot efforts and deeper LEA focus on this issue have led to some small increases in the number of educators being hired earlier. Much of the previous August activity now

takes place in June or July. And DDOE has developed a more sophisticated tool/report for gathering this information (the Talent Practices Survey, which is distributed annually to human resources directors and triangulated with data systems and queries developed by SDP). The launch of Delaware's first statewide recruitment portal, www.joindelawareschools.org, also has stimulated earlier interest from "college seniors" and the teacher preparation programs they attend. Thus, momentum around the issue of early hiring has grown during the RTTT period in Delaware, within individual districts and charters taking advantage of the financial security legislation has provided, and leveraging their focus on talent recruitment to make earlier and stronger hiring decisions.

Progress, however, has been too slow for our students, particularly those in high-need schools. The pipelines for our highest need schools have fewer candidates in them and are not always the highest priority work locations for the districts. Also, the structural roadblocks associated with collective bargaining agreements and internal capacity have not been eliminated. A dedicated effort to improve in this arena, matched by tackling these two barriers, is the next frontier for the state in this critical educator equity strategy. Stakeholders have echoed the importance of addressing this throughout the equity plan engagement sessions and over the past several years as Delaware's leaders have attempted to tackle the root causes of the state's equity gaps.

Statewide Longitudinal Data System Grant Program

Research has shown repeatedly that educators are the single most important school-related factor in student success (Desimone & Long, 2010; Grubb, 2008; Hanushek, 2010; Hanushek & Rivkin, 2006; Jennings & DiPrete, 2010; Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges, 2004; Rowan, Correnti, & Miller, 2002). In the last five years (coinciding with, but not as a result of their first-place award in RTTT), Delaware has made strides in strengthening the supports provided to, and the accountability of, these educators across the human capital continuum from preparation and recruitment to retention, compensation, and advancement.

A crucial component of this improvement has been collecting and examining the data available about teachers in Delaware. Delaware has invested heavily in revising its educator evaluation system—the DPAS-II—as an essential component of the state's efforts to offer all of its students a quality education. Through numerous partnerships in the past three years, specifically with the Data Quality Campaign, Harvard University's SDP, and closer cooperation with Delaware's IHEs, DDOE has made great strides in collecting and housing more and richer data. It also has made great advancements in its own capacity to analyze, leverage, and strategically react to the data. This work has dovetailed well with the revised DPAS-II evaluation system and its new Student Improvement Component. As shown in the past two years of the DDOE's analysis of the system, despite a relative dearth of meaningful differentiation occurring from the four observational components of an educator's evaluation, the revised Student Improvement Component offers a level of nuance that has long been missing.

These educator effectiveness data allow the state to increase support to preparation programs and alternate routes that consistently provide effective teachers and principals, to equitably distribute effective teachers and principals, and to identify and certify the most impactful forms of professional development. At the LEA level, data on performance should drive decisive action on developing all teachers, rewarding highly effective teachers with increased responsibilities and compensation, providing appropriate supports to all teachers, especially those needing improvement, and removing ineffective teachers.

Concurrent to the submission of this plan, DDOE is applying for a grant under the Statewide Longitudinal Data System Grant program under the Talent Management strand. Although this work is not necessarily driven by a desire to carry out this equitable access plan, it is certainly a driver of it. USED's focus on equitable access has

allowed Delaware leaders to open new lines of dialogue about how to best adjust the specifications of this and other grant proposals.

This year's grant is unique in that it places unprecedented emphasis on data *use* rather than structures, collection, or federal reporting. The DDOE's grant discusses how it will use these funds (if awarded) to create publically facing dashboards and automated internal reporting collectively called the Talent Insight Dashboard. This work will create sustainable tools to perpetuate the immense analytic work that DDOE has undertaken in the past three years to seek to more fully understand how educators and school leaders, which are the largest school-based factor in student achievement are prepared, placed, performing, retained, compensated, and promoted. Use cases for these planned dashboards and reports include principals considering which teacher to put with their most challenging students or personnel directors deciding which experienced educator to hire. However, by automating this research, the state will better be able to understand its progress over time and will have increased capacity in delving deeper into the root causes of some of these gaps.

Statewide Approach to Exit Surveys

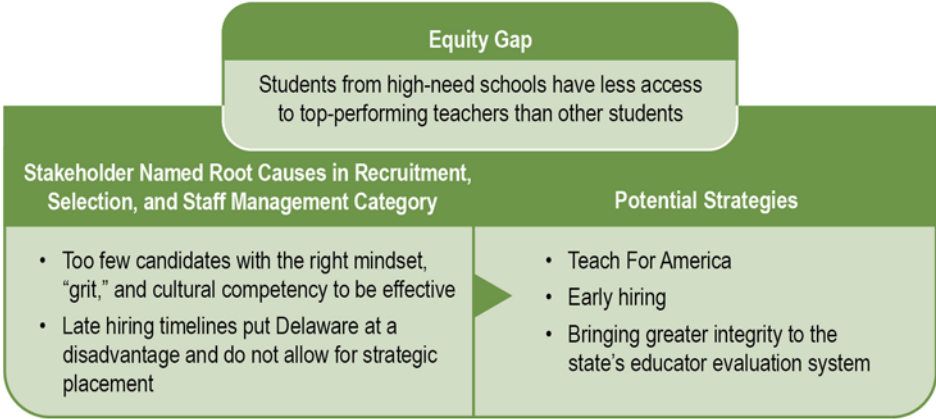
With teacher turnover being identified as one of Delaware's priority equity gaps to address over the next decade, state leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders alike have consistently requested additional information as to why teachers are leaving their classrooms, their schools, their districts, or the state. Thus, Delaware will again commit to creating a statewide approach to conducting exit surveys. A similar pledge was made in 2011, but the Department was unable to clarify roles and responsibilities with its LEA partners in this effort, and DDOE hesitated to be the entity ultimately responsible for something so directly linked to the local employer. Recent feedback from stakeholders indicates that many are comfortable with the Department identifying resources, developing a survey instrument, and contracting external partners and capacity to deliver a teacher exit survey statewide. While Delaware must consider which items are most valuable, which approach is most cost-effective, and what resources are available to identify the hundreds of teachers that leave their classrooms statewide each year, the identification of teacher turnover as a priority equity gap makes this effort near-imperative. By 2016, Delaware, in collaboration with interested parties, will establish a statewide approach to exit surveys and build the data collected into the broader suite of educator effectiveness data that has been used to inform this plan, and that will be utilized to deepen the state's understanding and address priority equity gaps in the years ahead (see Appendix N for an example Exit Survey for Delaware).

Bringing Greater Integrity to the State's Educator Evaluation System(s)

Delaware's commitment to meaningful educator evaluation is both well-established *and* amongst the most discussed and debated educator effectiveness initiatives statewide. As noted herein, the recent revision of the state's Student Improvement Component has provided opportunities for richer dialogue about the state's priority equity gaps and has positioned Delaware to measure educator effectiveness in multiple ways. The overall system (DPAS-II, which was utilized by all but four Charter LEAs over the past two years), however, has not always yielded differential observation data at-scale or consistent educator sentiment about the importance of accountability. (*Notably, there are schools that are implementing with greater fidelity across the state, using both DPAS-II and the Teaching Excellence Framework [TEF].*) Several LEAs, numerous education leaders, and Department officials have consistently noted that all parties must work together to bring greater integrity to educator evaluation—that it must provide the individualized feedback/coaching, the accurate ratings, and the overall integration of multiple measures of student growth and teacher effectiveness it promised. In the longer arc of educational improvements, robust educator evaluation systems are in their relative infancy and should be given

time to administer, evolve, and become a trusted source for making important decisions about educator equity and student achievement.

As a result of early learnings from educator evaluation implementation in Delaware, several LEAs have deepened their student goal-setting work, others have partnered more deeply with their Development Coaches, and others yet have decided to develop their own local educator evaluation system and seek state approval. Meanwhile, the Department remains committed to revising the state system based on educator feedback, continuing to provide regular training opportunities, producing more resources to aid principals in their goal-setting, and bringing-in national best practices and external facilitation to regularly review system progress and challenges. Although the best approach is certainly at the cross-section of policy, resources, and implementation, Delaware must collectively and collaboratively determine how to bring greater integrity to its educator evaluation systems. Without it, the development of meaningful educator prep, educator career pathways, school leadership systems, and reformed professional learning opportunities become conspicuous at-best. To review the statewide analysis/reports developed in the last two years (*Continuous Improvement* and *Performance Matters*), visit <http://www.doe.k12.de.us/domain/355>.



Strategy 4: Improved Induction and Mentoring

Research suggests that high-quality induction programs can increase retention and teacher effectiveness and improve student learning; for example, first-year teachers receiving induction and mentoring support show student performance gains equivalent to those of fourth-year teachers who did not have this support (Strong, 2006). DDOE has focused resources on induction and mentoring since 1994, yet despite considerable attention to this issue, it emerged as an area for development in the GTL Center policy inventory because of the need for greater state technical assistance and monitoring to assess implementation and consistent quality of induction and mentoring programs. Moreover, it continues to be a focus area from stakeholders offering strategies to address educator equity. Thus, induction and mentoring remain among DDOE's proposed equitable access strategies.

Although initial work focused on new educators only, programs now differentiate between new educators holding an initial license and experienced educators holding continuing licenses but who are new to the state. In a recent survey, National and State Teachers of the Year ranked *access to an assigned or informal mentor* more influential than any other support received as beginning teachers in terms of its impact on their effectiveness (Behrstock-Sherratt, Bassett, Olson, & Jacques, 2014). Delaware's induction and mentoring programs respond to research that highlights the need to provide even greater support for our new educators to ensure all of Delaware's students receive quality instruction and are college and career ready.

Continuing to Support New Teachers With Expanded Induction and Mentoring Programs

Statewide and Regulatory Approach

Much of Delaware's approach to induction and mentoring resulted from the passage of Regulation 1503 in 2004. This regulation requires that DDOE develop and approve educator induction programs aligned to the Delaware State Teaching Standards and the Danielson Framework for Teaching and must include training and support for *all* educators whether they be new to the profession, new to the state, or teaching in a new category, for example, a school nurse who changes positions to a school counselor or a teacher who becomes a principal or assistant principal. This requirement relates to equity in that all schools and districts are treated equally, with all educators having access to differentiated supports that challenge their personalized needs. LEAs have the option to follow the state-developed program or submit a plan for a locally designed mentoring and induction program through the comprehensive induction program competitive grant opportunity. Plans for locally designed programs must be reviewed and approved by DDOE. Educators must complete a comprehensive induction program to meet the requirements to have their licenses renewed. The regulation also required that DDOE develop programs for lead mentors and administrative lead mentors.

Another SEA-initiated approach is the establishment of the New Teacher Academy and the Mentor Academy to provide direct professional learning opportunities from DDOE to novice educators and mentors.

For the 2014–15 school year, DDOE offered three sessions topics as part of the New Teacher Academy:

- ▶ Taking a learning-centered approach to classroom management
- ▶ Questioning in the classroom
- ▶ Designing project-based activities

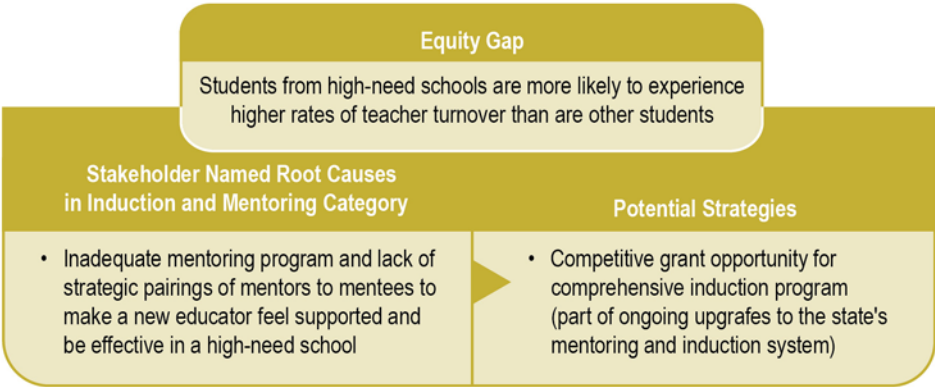
The Mentor Academy also offered professional learning opportunities during the 2014–15 school year. Topics included the following:

- ▶ A new approach to providing effective feedback
- ▶ Transformative teacher coaching practices
- ▶ Leadership and mentoring based on John Maxwell's Laws of Leadership

Comprehensive/Competitive Induction Grants (for Delaware Districts/Charters)

Delaware's mentoring and induction strategies also include local approaches through partnerships between the state and LEAs. Comprehensive Induction Program (CIP) grants support LEAs in developing innovative induction programs that provide new educators with the tools necessary to become familiar with school and district policies and procedures, hone their professional skills, and help them evaluate and reflect upon their own professional performance. Through these programs, educators develop individualized growth plans to improve their effectiveness; improvements in teacher effectiveness result in a reduction in teacher turnover. During the past three years that CIP grants have been made available to LEAs, the state has seen an increase in LEAs looking to provide targeted and specific supports to educators who work in high-need schools. One such example comes from the Brandywine School District. As part of its proposed program, the LEA intends to offer additional professional learning sessions to educators in its highest need school. These teachers will receive training

focused on “culturally responsive teaching.” In addition, the LEA will be partnering with Teach For America, an organization committed to ensuring students in high-need schools have the highest quality teachers.



Proposals must meet several requirements, including alignment to Charlotte Danielson’s *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching* or the most current DPAS-II frameworks; a minimum of 30 hours of direct, one-on-one mentoring within the first year of the CIP grant; a minimum of 30 hours of research-based professional learning activities during each year of the CIP grant based on a needs assessment of new educators (taking into account each educator’s preparation programs); strategies for the recruitment and selection of high-quality mentors and ongoing mentor training; an orientation program for all new educators; observation and feedback; individual educator growth plans; and an annual evaluation.

LEAs are eligible for grants up to \$50,000, depending on the size and scope of their induction programs. Current plans and resources ensure that we will continue to offer these grants as long as funds are available. During the 2014–15 school year, DDOE awarded approximately \$204,000 to seven LEAs, including six districts and one charter school.²⁵

Looking forward, success in the induction and mentoring program would be defined by the following principles.

- ▶ **Value:** Program participants will see both personal and professional value in the program, including the development of personalized professional learning opportunities that meet their specific needs and, most importantly, the needs of their students—particularly low-income students and students of color.
- ▶ **Learning:** Program participation has led to enhanced personal or professional attitudes, perceptions, or knowledge. Specifically, educators will learn real-world strategies that can be applied immediately upon returning to their classroom for addressing the most pressing needs of their students.
- ▶ **Change in Skills:** Program participants have applied what is learned to enhance their professional behaviors and can point to evidence that supports their claims of having changed their approach to better meet the needs of their students.
- ▶ **Effectiveness:** Program participants demonstrate an improved performance level as a result of their enhanced professional behaviors, ultimately leading to a reduction in the achievement gap between students in high-need and non-high-need schools.

²⁵ CIP grant proposals for Colonial School District and Brandywine School District are available in Appendices O and P.

Ultimately, if Delaware is successful in addressing these program evaluation categories, then DDOE believes there will be an increase in retention rates for our newest educators because they will feel more supported and will have gained the differentiated skills necessary to be successful in the most demanding profession and highest need schools.

Strategy 5: Enhanced Professional Learning Opportunities for All Delaware Educators

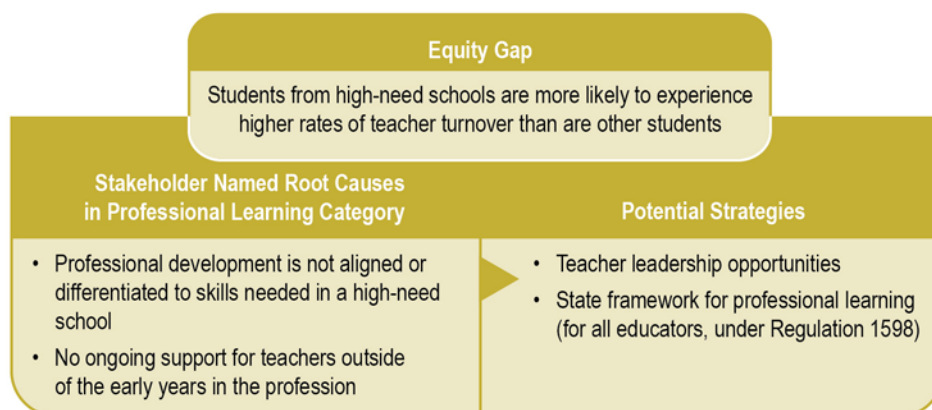
Enhanced or expanded teacher knowledge followed by explicit change in teaching practice leads to improvement in student learning (McCutchen et al., 2002). Delaware's commitment to educator equity and our continued enhancements to our human capital management system include programs designed to create continuous and effective professional learning opportunities for educators at all stages of the profession because professional learning activities, such as those that enhance or expand teacher knowledge, are more likely to be effective if they are part of a coherent program of ongoing professional development (Cohen & Hill, 2000; Grant, Peterson, & Shojgreen-Downer, 1996).

We recognize that not all professional learning has the desired outcome of changes in practice toward improved student outcomes. Garet et al. (2001) found that teachers reported greater change in their knowledge and skills when professional learning activities matched the following parameters:

- ▶ Built on what the teachers had already learned in related professional learning activities.
- ▶ Emphasized content and pedagogy aligned with national, state, and local standards, frameworks, and assessments.
- ▶ Supported teachers in developing sustained ongoing professional communication with other teachers who were trying to change their teaching in similar ways.

With this research in mind, Delaware aims to reaffirm its commitment to excellent job-embedded professional learning for its teachers. Through RTT, Delaware has invested heavily in professional learning, resulting in a number of initiatives and programs at schools and districts throughout the state. However, stakeholders named inadequate professional development for high-need schools and "one-size-fits-all" learning initiatives as root causes of Delaware's educator equity gaps. DDOE is currently drafting a new framework for professional learning, with the goal of increasing the quality of professional learning opportunities for teachers in Delaware to increase student achievement. This approach is grounded in the following beliefs:

- ▶ Teachers and leaders are the most important factor for student success, and, therefore, Delaware must support their continuous improvement.
- ▶ LEAs are best positioned to impact teacher professional learning and will be the primary drivers of the activities that lead to instructional improvements.
- ▶ The DDOE's role is to incentivize, support, and monitor the quality of professional learning.
- ▶ Delaware will be most successful if professional learning is designed from the user perspective; articulating what the teacher experience looks like when professional learning is successful.
- ▶ Delaware must recognize and build upon the best practices found among its great teacher and leaders.
- ▶ As partners in this work, Delaware needs to better articulate the state, LEA, school leader, teacher leader, teacher, student, and parent roles in the ongoing process of continuous improvement.



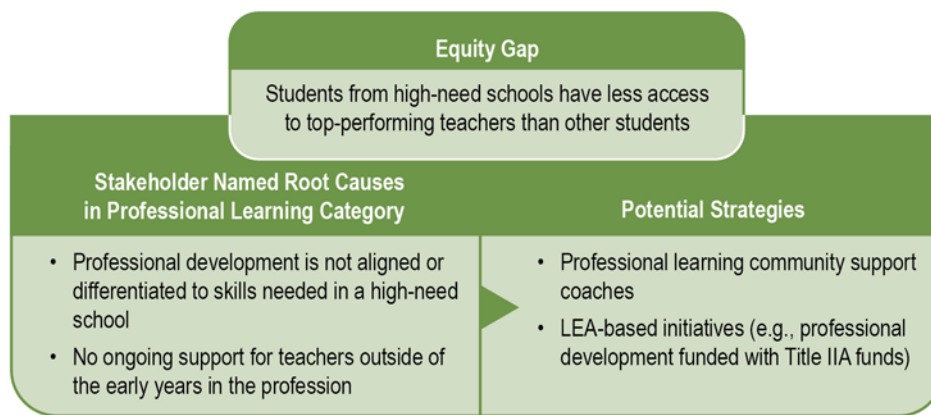
With these in mind, Delaware’s professional learning vision is to ensure that all educators have the mind-sets, skills, and content expertise needed so all of Delaware’s students can meet the expectations of college- and career-ready standards. To accomplish this task, Delaware believes that every teacher’s professional experience will meet the expectations laid out in the vision for a new professional learning framework (currently in development). Although details are still being established, Delaware’s vision for professional learning lays out the belief that all teachers in Delaware schools deserve to continuously improve their practice through their own initiative and through investments made by their schools and districts. They also deserve to have state and local leaders incentivize, support, and monitor this work to ensure it is happening with quality. Teachers in Delaware deserve each of the following, aligned with the state’s standards for professional learning (14 Del. Admin. Code 1591–1595, 2013):

1. **Individualized Learning:** Understanding that educators learn in different ways and at different rates, teachers’ learning is personalized to their identified needs and occurs through individualized feedback and coaching from a skilled leader and through continuous self-learning. Opportunity exists in this area to differentiate for high-need schools and tailor learning to the skills needed to increase teacher effectiveness, improve student achievement, and decrease teacher turnover.
2. **Learning Communities:** Teachers participate in multiple professional learning communities that convene regularly and frequently during and outside the workday to strengthen their practice and increase student results. The community is committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and alignment of individual, team, school, and school system goals.
3. **Leadership:** Teachers have skillful leaders at their school who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning.
4. **Teacher Leadership:** Teachers recognize and advance shared leadership as a way to promote leaders from all levels of the organization.
5. **Resources:** Teachers have the human, fiscal, material, technology, and time resources they need to achieve student-learning goals and advance their learning.
6. **Data:** Teachers’ professional learning is based on multiple sources of current quantitative and qualitative data, such as common formative and summative assessments, performance assessments, observations, work samples, performance metrics, portfolios, and self-reports.
7. **Monitoring and Continuous Improvement of Learning Designs:** The design of teachers’ professional learning integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes. It is influenced by the goals of the learning, characteristics of the learners, their comfort with the learning

process and one another, their familiarity with the content, the magnitude of the expected change, educators' work environment, and resources available to support learning.

As mentioned earlier, Delaware currently has several professional learning offerings and teacher leadership opportunities underway. Delaware feels the following initiatives support teachers in their professional learning and can be tailored to address the needs of educators in high-need schools. This differentiated learning and teacher-leadership initiatives would be aimed at increasing retention and effectiveness, as educators would be more supported and armed with additional knowledge and skills to increase their student success and achievement.

Supporting Teacher Growth Through Professional Learning Opportunities



LearnZillion's Delaware Dream Team

In 2013, DDOE partnered with LearnZillion to establish the Delaware Dream Team, made up of 34 educators from across Delaware who were charged with helping to develop high-quality Common Core formative assessment items to share with their peers across the state. According to Secretary of Education Mark Murphy:

The 2014 Delaware Dream Team is both an opportunity to recognize some of the state's most accomplished teachers and a challenge to those individuals to continue to grow, to make collaboration an integral part of their practice and to create high-quality materials that will help teachers and students across our state—and around the country—be successful.

Dream Team members, made up of mathematics and ELA teachers, were selected through a competitive application process evaluating both their understanding of the Common Core State Standards and their desire to "scale their impact" beyond the walls of their own classrooms. Members receive a \$500 stipend for their leadership. These educators bring their knowledge back to their schools—sharing with colleagues who can use it as a springboard to increase effectiveness within their own classrooms.

Delaware Teachers Institute

The Delaware Teachers Institute (DTI) is a partnership between the University of Delaware and four New Castle County districts: Christina, Colonial, New Castle County Vocational-Technical, and Red Clay Consolidated. Situated in the University of Delaware's College of Arts and Sciences, DTI is designed to strengthen teaching and learning in many of the participating districts' highest need schools. The institute includes seminars led by a

University faculty group and a committee of teacher leaders on subjects that school teachers request in the humanities and sciences, which best fit contemporary needs among the student population.

A primary goal of DTI is that by developing teacher leaders in individual schools serving high-need student populations, DTI strengthens the schools' learning environments. After a rigorous application process, Grades K–12 teachers are admitted into small seminar groups organized by the content topics led by faculty experts, with teachers applying their knowledge of elementary and secondary pedagogy, their understanding of the students they teach, and their grasp of what really works in the classroom.

Participating teachers write a curriculum unit to be used in their own classrooms and to be shared with others in their home schools as well as other teachers through both print and electronic publication.

Common Ground for the Common Core/PLC Supports

RTTT enabled Delaware to invest in PLC support coaches who facilitate weekly PLC discussions in every Delaware school. Coaches help teachers use data to drive discussions concerning student learning and focus instruction on the concepts and skills that the data suggest their students need support in mastering. Many schools and districts throughout the state have credited the PLC support coaches in driving student achievement gains. Districts and schools have some autonomy in how they use their coaches. In Year 2 of Delaware's RTTT implementation, every LEA implemented weekly 90-minute PLCs focused on data-informed instruction and reached every core content public school teacher in the state.

Building from this, the Common Ground for the Common Core project launched in 2013 and is designed to support educators implementing Common Core standards by providing intense support to a team of teachers that can take that knowledge and work with educators in their buildings. The project will help bring Delaware educators up to speed on what the standards are, their implications for their day-to-day classroom instruction, and changes that are necessary to ensure they successfully roll out and benefit students.

Another Path Forward: Analysis of Current Initiatives at the LEA Level

Given the heavy investment in professional learning initiatives—at the SEA and LEA levels—it is important to conduct a review of current initiatives in Delaware's high-need schools. To drive meaningful change, this analysis needs to be conducted at the LEA level to determine which initiatives have been successful at curbing educator equity gaps and improving student achievement. This analysis also would highlight professional development gaps that the state and LEA should address to combat the educator equity gaps.

Strategy 6: Rethinking Compensation and Creating Career Pathways Designed to Keep Effective Educators in the Classroom

Retention rates among high-performing employees are increased when opportunities for advancement are available (Ableidinger & Kowal, 2010). Research also shows that high-performing employees are more attracted to promotion opportunities compared with low-performing employees, and they also are more likely to leave a position because of a lack of opportunity for advancement (Steel, Griffeth, Hom, & Lyons, 2002). These opportunities for educators too often lead out of the classroom. This research was confirmed by our stakeholders, who mentioned the importance of opportunities for educator professional growth while keeping strong teachers in

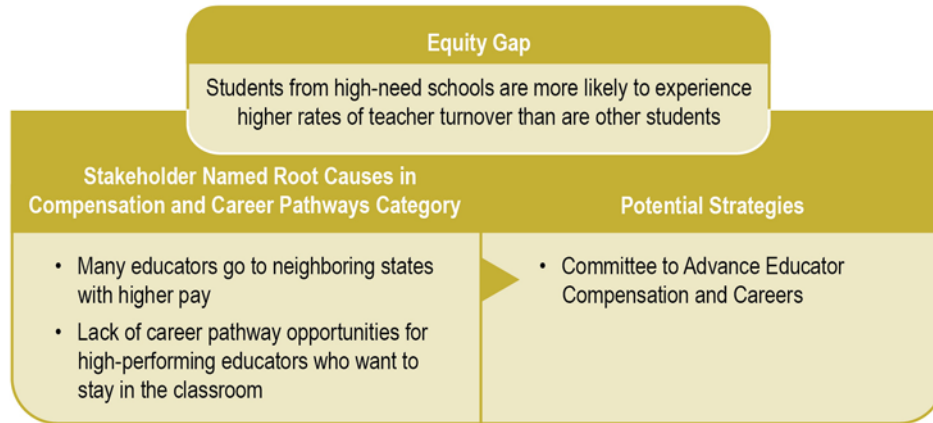
the classroom where they can positively impact students. It was further confirmed by the GTL Center policy inventory, which identified both compensation and career ladders as areas for development.

Delaware is approaching this issue legislatively and programmatically. Several studies have shown that salary increases or bonuses can increase teacher retention and attract new, high-quality talent to the field (Clotfelter, Glennie, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2008; Teach Plus, 2012), but there is not enough research available at this time to be conclusive (Allen, 2005; Hough, 2012). The Committee to Advance Educator Compensation and Careers (CAECC) task force has been charged with advising the governor on the issue of differentiated compensation as a result of Senate Bill 254 passing. This bill “establishes parameters for an improved educator compensation system.” The committee has been working to consider alternative compensation structures and career pathways for educators aligned with the parameters set forth in the bill, such as providing educators with a meaningful career pathway, including higher starting salaries and recognition for working with high-need students, and significant leadership opportunities for career advancement that keep talented educators in the classroom (S. 254, 2014).

The bill set an end date of November 2014, but, as of the writing of this plan, this time frame was extended as the committee is still working to develop a set of recommendations. The task force, which includes members of the House and Senate and includes representation from the Delaware State Education Association (DSEA), has created transparency through its website, which reports all of the meeting minutes and information about the committee’s work.

The state’s website lays out a justification for the work:

- ▶ Delaware’s current steps and lanes compensation system ties educator compensation exclusively to years of experience and attainment of academic credits and degrees, with no other state-level opportunities to earn additional compensation or advance career-wise while staying in the classroom. Educators earn additional pay in small, incremental steps and often have few opportunities to take on additional responsibility or lead their peers unless they pursue administrative positions.
- ▶ Many of our best and most experienced educators are forced to leave the classroom if they want to advance their career, earn more money, and participate in schoolwide decision making. Simultaneously, the state’s salaries for our newest educators are not on par with surrounding states. About 40 percent of our educators leave within the first five years, at least in part because of low early career salaries.
- ▶ Any proposal by the committee will involve more state funding for educator salaries to better recognize the invaluable role educators play in the lives of our children. Current educators will have the option of remaining in the current system or switching to the new system designed by the committee.



The alternative compensation system introduces meaningful incentives for teachers to serve our highest need students and in our highest need schools:

- ▶ Teacher leadership roles, which provide teachers with a \$5,000 annual supplement to their base salary, for teachers who accept meaningful adult leadership responsibilities beyond their core classroom roles in the areas of curriculum, instruction, assessment, evaluation (including, but not limited to, peer observation, feedback, and coaching), or professional development. These roles are available to educators through competitive application, with the total number of roles available statewide not to exceed 15 percent of the total teaching population.
- ▶ Designated high-need schools and districts with large high-need populations will receive a significantly larger proportion of these roles and the accompanying salary stipends. Moreover, teacher leadership roles in designated high-need schools will provide a \$6,000 annual stipend as opposed to the \$5,000 available in non-high-need settings.
- ▶ Senior teacher leadership roles, which provide teachers with a \$17,000 annual supplement to their base salary, will be created for teachers who have previously and successfully served in teacher leadership roles, have demonstrated a track record of performance in driving student learning, and have the desire to play a greater role in school-level and district decision making while retaining a foot in the classroom. These roles are available to educators through competitive application, with the total number of roles available statewide not to exceed 2 percent of the total teaching population.
- ▶ Senior teacher leaders must, in the course of their responsibilities, serve high-need students, either directly or indirectly through their work at a school or district level. Moreover, to encourage more of Delaware's teachers to work in a high-need setting or with a high-need population, the Committee to Advance Educator Compensation and Careers (CAECC) has proposed that eligibility for senior teacher leadership requires a minimum of six years of service in a high-need school or with a significant high-need student population.
- ▶ CAECC also reviewed national examples of salary stipends that support more National Board–certified educators serving in high-need school settings and recommended introducing a \$3,000 annual stipend to teachers' base salary while they served in a high-need school or a school with a significant high-need student population.

The goal of these incentives, which would be embedded in an alternate state pay scale for Delaware's future educators, is to introduce a professional career pathway that aligns compensation, certification, and professional designation in more clearly recognizing an educator's progression through career milestones, while also offering significant incentives for experienced and high-performing educators to serve in high-need schools or in schools with significant high-need populations to access professional opportunities and the highest salaries achievable on the alternative state scale.

CAECC believes that by introducing an alternative state pay scale that offers higher entry-level salaries (particularly for bachelor-degree-holding educators), emphasizes progression toward teacher leader and senior teacher leadership roles—with more opportunities to do so in high-need schools and while serving high-need student populations—that the state will reorient a significant portion of compensation toward teacher-led responsibilities that meaningfully impact a school's ability to drive student learning.

Although the CAECC has not identified specific success metrics given discussions and policy recommendations continue to evolve, the following have been noted in numerous public discussions as high-level aspirations:

- ▶ A significant reduction in the number of teachers in their first five years of teaching who leave the profession
- ▶ A significant reduction in the turnover rate of teachers serving in high-need schools or with high-need student populations
- ▶ Evidence that Delaware is better able to attract high-performing undergraduates to the teaching profession who otherwise would have sought entry-level roles in other careers
- ▶ Evidence that Delaware's districts are able to employ teacher leader and senior teacher leader roles in supporting a coordinated talent and recruitment strategy among their highest need schools

The Delaware Talent Cooperative

In addition to the work being undertaken by the CAECC, Delaware believes that the Delaware Talent Cooperative also works to address the root cause of a lack of financial incentives to go or stay in a more challenging, high-need school. Details on the Cooperative were described earlier in Strategy 3: Enhanced Recruitment, Selection, and Staff Management of Excellent Educators. Still, to-date, the initiative has been implemented in only a small (but significant) number of high-need schools, with some early success shown in retaining outstanding educators.

Strategy 7: Consider School Climate and Conditions, As Well As Resources

Finally, Delaware's seventh proposed strategy relates to improving school climate and the resources available for fostering effective teaching and learning conditions. Research consistently finds that working conditions and the feeling of being supported are chief factors affecting teacher retention. In their national survey of more than 10,000 teachers, Scholastic and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2012) found that the following school conditions were most often cited as "absolutely essential" or "very important" for retaining top-performing teachers: help for students with behavioral or other problems that interfere with learning, access to high-quality teaching resources, time for collaboration, safe and clean buildings, a collegial work environment, and providing greater decision-making roles for teachers in regard to school policies and practices.

These research findings were reiterated by stakeholders in Delaware, who offered similar explanations for the teacher experience inequities and teacher turnover equity gaps during the state's root cause analysis discussions. There were particular concerns shared by Delaware's stakeholders regarding inadequate funding for "wraparound services" and other resources many believe are needed to meet the needs of students and thus create better conditions for teaching and learning. These findings also were supported by existing state data from a nationally normed survey, which showed that teachers in high-need schools in Delaware perceive their working conditions to be of lesser quality than do teachers in other Delaware schools (see Exhibit 8).

DDOE has been working for a number of years to improve school climate and conditions, first by better understanding the challenges through tools like the TELL Delaware survey and the state's culture and climate survey. Delaware also has created supports for school leaders such as a community of practice for principals' managers, and supports for teachers through RTTT expectations for LEAs to ensure manageable teacher workloads, promote teacher collaboration, and decrease paperwork. Notable among these efforts has been the state's commitment to PLCs, which Governor Jack Markell championed in 2010–11 and which resulted in every core content teacher have 90 minutes weekly of collaborative planning time. DDOE will continue to promote such efforts by providing resources for PLCs, encouraging local collective bargaining units and school boards to address schoolwide culture and conditions, and promoting collegial workplaces, particularly through expanded teacher leadership opportunities.

DDOE's primary strategy in the next decade to more directly address the school conditions and resources root causes named by stakeholders will be two-pronged: (1) continue to collect TELL Delaware survey data (and other survey data) biannually to assess challenges and progress; and (2) support flexible funding proposals that deliver weighted resources based on students' need. The former, TELL, provides a vital source of data that will inform future root cause analyses and will drive LEA actions to address their specific local challenges and differentiate approaches based on the issues at hand. At the policy and monitoring level, TELL will help the state assess whether progress is being made toward addressing the root causes and will help policy decision makers at all levels create targeted and systemic interventions based on data, an aim that may be further strengthened as flexible funding opportunities become available.

TELL Delaware

The teaching environment includes many complex variables (i.e., demands on scheduling and teacher time, autonomy, professional development opportunities) that together can be predictive of student learning gains and student perceptions of support and rigor. Teachers' effectiveness can be directly influenced by their working conditions in a given context (Boyd et al., 2011; Ferguson & Hirsch, 2014; Johnson, 2006; Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2012; Ladd, 2011). The Delaware State Education Association's (DSEA) 2009 white paper reiterated the importance of teaching conditions and urged "DOE to partner with Dr. Eric Hirsch and the New Teacher Center to conduct an ongoing teaching and learning conditions survey statewide" as part of its RTTT plan. In response, DDOE worked with a coalition of partners (including DSEA, the Delaware Association of School Administrators, the State Board of Education, the Governor's office, etc.) to launch the TELL Delaware survey (www.telldelaware.org) in January 2013. TELL Delaware is an anonymous, statewide survey of licensed school-based educators designed to assess teaching conditions at the school, district, and state levels, with emphasis on the following topics:

- ▶ Community engagement and support
- ▶ Teacher leadership

- ▶ School leadership
- ▶ Managing student conduct
- ▶ Use of time
- ▶ Professional development
- ▶ Facilities and resources
- ▶ Instructional practices and support
- ▶ New teacher support

School-based licensed educators completed the survey during a five-week period through an anonymous online access code. This was Delaware’s first statewide survey about teaching conditions and the first statewide survey where results were reported publicly at school, district, and state levels online.

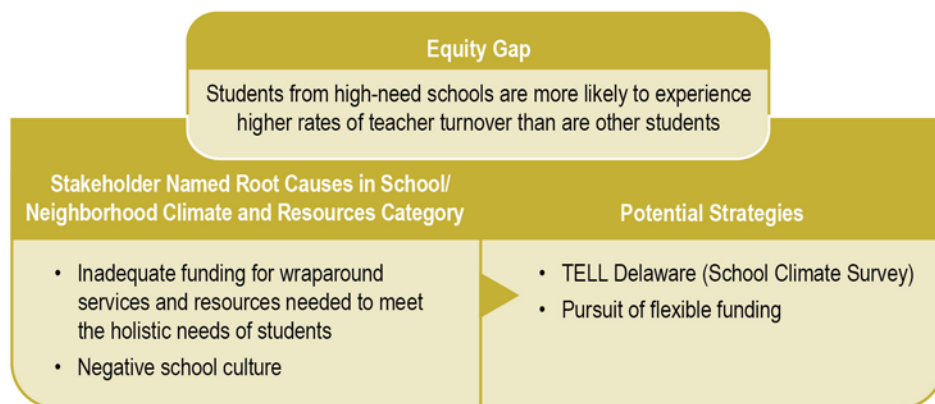
Fifty-nine percent of Delaware educators responded to the survey representing 6,153 out of a reported 10,392 school-based licensed educators in Delaware. Nearly 80 percent of schools (175 out of 225, 78 percent) met the 50 percent and minimum five respondents response rate threshold required to receive an individual school-level data report. Results were published and made available online through the *TELL Delaware* website.

After the results of the TELL Delaware survey were published, the DDOE conducted a workshop for district leaders on “taking action with TELL DE data” for district leaders. The workshop demonstrated how resources provided by the New Teacher Center could be used to reflect upon the data at the school and district-level and make any needed changes. In addition to any actions taken at the district and school levels in response to TELL Delaware data, the state considered policy efforts in response to the key gaps identified by the survey, including the following:

- ▶ Improving teacher leadership opportunities
- ▶ Differentiating professional development to individual educator needs
- ▶ Reducing the amount of routine paperwork
- ▶ Improving educator induction and mentoring across the state

In response, DDOE expanded statewide teacher-leader networks (Delaware Teachers’ Institute, Delaware Talent Cooperative, LearnZillion “Dream Team” teachers, Vision Network/Schools that Lead, more support for Lead Mentors, etc.), created competitive grants to help LEAs improve educator induction and mentoring, and sought ways to streamline the educator evaluation process (through technology upgrades and regulatory changes). DDOE also conducted additional analyses to identify the equity gaps in teaching conditions and any exemplary districts.

To build on the lessons learned from TELL Delaware 2013, DDOE intends to conduct a second administration of TELL Delaware in early 2016 and future administrations of the survey biannually.



The Pursuit of Statewide Flexible, Weighted Student Funding

The state's funding flexibility proposal²⁶ is included in the governor's fiscal year 2016 recommended budget currently being reviewed by the General Assembly. Delaware will continue to pursue this course of action in 2015 and in the years ahead. The current proposal seeks to grant Delaware's districts and charters (LEAs) greater flexibility in how they use staff and financial resources provided by the state. As Delaware continues to shift toward an outcomes-based accountability system, DDOE is attempting to provide differentiated resources that empower local school communities to strategically address their unique challenges and goals while creating the space and incentives for innovation that drives student learning in its schools.

Based on unit counts, the current system (which is already 70 years old) does not allow for needs-based decisions to be made by the schools because of the rigidity of how the units can be used. Few states have funding systems as prescriptive or inflexible as Delaware's. In fact, Delaware is one of 13 states that does not use the pervasive foundational student funding models that more closely tie funding to individual student needs. Moreover, the highest performing systems in the world often provide considerable (up to 80 percent) funding flexibility at the school level while placing much more emphasis on holding principals accountable for outcomes.

Delaware's stakeholders have stated a root cause of educator equity gaps is the need for funding for "wraparound services" to meet the holistic needs of students in high-need schools. By giving LEAs greater flexibility with funding, they may be able to repurpose some of those funds to meet their stated needs. Even in a fiscal environment with constraints, Delaware remains committed to bringing together stakeholders in the spirit of equitable funding to support the closing of equity gaps.

The public education system is being forced to rethink long-held practices and policies as the global knowledge economy places new and increasingly complex demands on our graduates. As a result, Delaware's districts and schools are already having to develop new strategies for adapting the way they use standards and assessments, train and develop educators, and apply their limited resources to support student learning. This means empowering leaders closest to the work—those in districts and schools—to tackle these challenges proactively. Granting districts greater freedom to deploy their state resources in support of their unique needs and performance goals is a critical step in sustaining this transition.

²⁶ See Appendix Q for the funding flexibility workgroup report.

The result of the current education finance system is a series of constraints that incentivize districts to focus on managing unit counts (to maximize revenues), rather than on understanding whether a different allocation mechanism would increase student achievement. Allowing schools the flexibility to make funding decisions based on weighted student needs is critical if Delaware is going to enact programmatic decisions that better serve their unique student populations.

The goals of the proposal are to do the following:

- ▶ Allow local schools and districts great resource allocation flexibility at the local level.
- ▶ Permit local districts more discretion with respect to the expenditure of state funds.
- ▶ Require increased transparency and community involvement in local financial decisions.
- ▶ Allow districts to make earlier job offers to recruit and retain the best teachers.
- ▶ Allocate funding based upon students' needs in the spirit of "equitable funding."

Section 6. Ongoing Monitoring of Strategies and Results, and Reporting Progress to Stakeholders and the Public

Delaware is committed to ensuring the long-term attainment of equitable access to excellent educator for all students. This plan provides a roadmap for current and future administrations and staff to ensure that the work of educator effectiveness is supported by data, resources, and progress monitoring. Over the past five years the Markell administration has been deeply committed to improving educational outcomes for all students, with supporting great teachers and school leaders being one of the state's pillars on which that success is built.

As an SEA, DDOE is committed to providing ongoing resources and technical support to every district and charter school, with an emphasis on those districts and charters where the state's priority educator equity gaps are most prevalent. Continuing to allocate Title I, Part A and Title II, Part A²⁷ funds to schools with the largest percentages of students from low-income families, students of color, or students with disabilities is an ongoing state role. And, moving forward, Delaware will have additional oversight for the districts with the largest equity gaps for the three priority metrics for any of the student subgroups described in Section 2, Equity Gaps. DDOE is also committed to the use of formal evaluations to monitor districts' implementation of the strategies laid out in this plan. This approach will include asking districts to voluntarily submit data to the state for analysis in order to ensure accurate public reporting. Delaware will also continue reviewing applicable research and forward relevant studies to state working groups and to districts/charters. DDOE will formally monitor LEA progress on an annual basis and more often if a district fails to make progress toward its performance objectives in a timely manner.

As detailed in Section 5, for each strategy, Delaware has begun to chart a plan to assess implementation success. DDOE has already have identified the following areas where it will begin collecting information, and is prepared to build on these efforts with further data collection and reviews as they emerge:

- ▶ Updated climate survey with an emphases on teaching & learning working conditions
- ▶ Ongoing educator evaluation data for all educators
- ▶ Fiscal auditing and management
- ▶ New licensure and educator preparation standards implementation
- ▶ Ongoing surveys of stakeholder groups

The table within this Section (Exhibit 10) outlines the major components of the state's draft timeline to guide the short-term and long-term implementation of our plan. This timeline and the activities contained within Section 6 will be reviewed by DDOE stakeholder engagement groups, and the state's Educator Equity working group over the next six months to ensure that it is both comprehensive and understandable. Delaware commits to some form of annual public reporting on progress toward addressing root causes to eliminate equity gaps that will include

²⁷ Documents are available at <http://www.doe.k12.de.us/domain/314>. See Appendix R for 2015 program highlights.

posting a progress report on the DDOE website, sending the link to all LEAs and stakeholders, and informing the public through statewide media. Delaware will formally update this plan a least every three years based on new data, new analyses of root causes, and new strategies.

The major activities within the scope of Section 6, several of which are explained in greater detail below and are noted within Exhibit 10, include:

- ▶ Ongoing stakeholder engagement to refine, improve, and update the state’s plan, both in the immediate short-term and over the next decade
- ▶ Deep state/LEA partnerships with 5-10 districts/charters both in the immediate short-term in generating local plans and over the next decade in providing resources and technical assistance
- ▶ Continued identification of best practices and schools/LEAs that are “beating the odds” in closing educator equity gaps
- ▶ Statewide data reporting/public transparency around the state’s priority equity metrics, including regular updates to the state’s equity data gaps (and subsequent revisions to the state’s plan)
- ▶ New statewide data public reporting on a proposed “Educator Equity Quotient”
- ▶ Ongoing competitive grant funding for LEAs (with a deeper focus on Educator Equity)
- ▶ Ongoing performance management routines (semi-annually) already embedded into state structures, to include ongoing technical assistance on the state’s consolidated grant application
- ▶ Regular convening of the state’s educator equity working group, which includes stakeholders that have participated in the root cause analysis and strategies/solutions protocols

Identifying Select Partner LEAs (Districts & Charters)

DDOE will partner with approximately six districts and several charter schools (5-10 in total) across the state to provide support in addressing their educator equity-related issues. To help examine trends across the state, six choropleth maps were generated using the same data set from prior analyses.²⁸ These maps highlight the considerable variability found across the state and suggest that districts are confronted with varying degrees of challenges in ensuring access to excellent educators for all students. Over the next few months, DDOE work to identify the partner LEAs by taking a number of criteria into consideration (giving roughly equal consideration to the rates of novice and early career teachers, staff turnover and principal tenure, Measure A ratings of teachers, and perceptions of school working conditions in each district). Further data analysis and stakeholder engagement will be considered in finalizing this list of LEAs for potential technical assistance, resource provision, and ongoing accountability. Selected educator equity metrics across partner districts and charters will be presented in the second version of the plan later in 2015.

²⁸ See Appendix S.

Examining Schools That “Beat the Odds” (Best Practices in Educator Equity)

DDOE will continuously identify schools that, while having similar demographics and challenges as other historically underperforming schools, exhibit relatively encouraging trends in terms of access to excellent educators. Although this work is ongoing, as it requires careful consideration and additional analyses, DDOE has selected a number of potential “beating the odds” schools that will be scrutinized further to examine strong aspects of practice and policy implementation. Potential example schools include H.O. Brittingham Elementary School in Cape Henlopen School District, South Dover Elementary School in Capital School District, and Banneker Elementary School in Milford School District—all schools with a relatively large share of low-income students.²⁹ Despite facing greater challenges than most schools in the state, these schools exhibit trends better than the average Delaware school in teacher perceptions of working conditions, annual teacher turnover rate across five years, and the most recent year’s Measure A results. In identifying these schools, Delaware will continue to highlight best practices in supporting educator effectiveness and provide further public transparency around the idea that socioeconomic status and race need not be deterministic in our students’ lives.

Statewide data public reporting on a proposed “Educator Equity Quotient” (EEQ)

Beginning in summer 2016, the Delaware Department of Education plans to publicly release bi-annual Educator Equity Quotient (EEQ) reports that track state, district, and school-level progress in relation to educator equity gaps and other educator effectiveness metrics noted in the state’s equity plan. DDOE intends to release a version of this data for local education agency review and feedback in January 2016, several months before it goes public. Feedback received may be used to refine the EEQ structure before public release in summer 2016.

The EEQ has the potential to track key leading and lagging indicators pertaining to critical areas of educator effectiveness (pre-service, recruitment, induction and mentoring, evaluation, professional learning opportunities, compensation and career pathways, retention, etc.). The compilation of metrics could result in a score/tier for the state and for each LEA to capture progress on eradicating equity gaps over time. DDOE also plans to utilize such data to support district and school strategic planning for upcoming years, and to have on-site conversations with LEAs about their overall educator effectiveness efforts, notably those LEAs that have significant equity gaps.

Relatedly, Delaware will seek to utilize such data collection, analysis and reporting to modernize its approach “highly-qualified”. Delaware acknowledges that any shift in approach would require a direct request made of USED, and that such a request has not been made at this time. As currently proposed, the EEQ would live side-by-side with traditional data collection pertaining to federal “highly-qualified” requirements.

As proposed, the included metrics (*based upon priority equity gaps and stakeholder input*) could be as follows:

Student Access to Experienced Educators

- ▶ Percentage of students in the bottom quartile of state assessment performance taught by inexperienced educators (compared with students in other quartiles)
- ▶ Percentage of novice teachers in district’s high-need schools compared with non-high-need schools

²⁹These schools are located in the fourth (poorest) quartile of proportion of low-income students.

Student Access to Excellent Educators

- ▶ Percentage of educators in tested subjects earning an *Exceeds* rating on the state test-based student growth measure in high-need versus non-high-need schools
- ▶ Average educator evaluation criterion-level ratings for educators in high-need versus non-high-need schools
- ▶ Percentage of educators earning *highly effective* summative ratings in high-need versus non-high-need schools

Student Exposure to Exiting Educators

- ▶ Total rate of turnover of educators (pooled over five years) in high-need versus non-high-need schools
- ▶ Rate of turnover of highly effective educators in high-need versus non-high-need schools
- ▶ Total rate of turnover of school leaders in high-need versus non-high-need schools

Student & Educator Access to “Positive” Environment

- ▶ Percentage of educators reporting their school is a “good place to work and learn” in high-need versus non-high-need schools
- ▶ Gap between average compensation in high-need versus non-high-need schools
- ▶ *Other school climate or educator working conditions metric (to be determined)*

The aforementioned metrics will be vetted, refined, and further defined through conversations with stakeholders engaged as part of the state’s educator equity planning process and corresponding component weights will be developed. The following metrics, for example, could also be included as part of the EEQ:

- ▶ Percentage of all educators who are new to a district who are hired by June 15 (recruitment)
- ▶ Increase in number of applications for positions in high-need schools (recruitment)
- ▶ Percentage of first-year mathematics and English teachers rated *exceeds* on Measure A (recruitment/induction)
- ▶ Increase in the percentage of educators agreeing with the following statement: “Provided supports (i.e., instructional coaching, professional learning communities) translate to improvements in instructional practices by teachers” (professional development)
- ▶ Percentage of district’s schools in the top quartile for teacher ratings and the lowest quartile for student achievement (evaluation)
- ▶ Percentage of district’s schools with less than 50 percent of students proficient and more than 90 percent of educators rated *satisfactory* on all observational components (evaluation)
- ▶ Percentage of district’s experienced educators with a Measure A score lower than the district’s average novice teacher score (evaluation)

Statewide Equitable Access Working Group

Delaware has noted in several sections of its plan that additional stakeholder engagement is an immediate need. Over the past six months, Delaware has been able to convene several conversations about the state's equity gaps and root causes, but far fewer about the potential strategies/solutions and ongoing monitoring efforts. Still, initial conversations and a review of current practices has allowed Delaware to begin to build a longer-term strategy for executing towards improved educator equity and student outcomes. Beyond the intensive short-term educator engagement, Delaware is committed to creating a 15-20 person Educator Equity Working Group to serve as the primary advisors on overall progress and ongoing challenges. This working group will include elected officials from multiple levels of government, parents, educators, district superintendents, human resource directors, community/civic organization leaders, and other select partners such as teacher preparation organizations, outside researchers, and content experts. It will continue to be critical to involve all communities in this effort, and to ensure that diverse perspectives are being heard—across socioeconomic, racial, geographic, and other lines of differences. The beginning of this group was formulated at the January Equitable Access Support Network (EASN) convening supported by USED, and Delaware invited several stakeholders from multiple local meetings to the first ad hoc version of this working group on May 8, 2015. As noted in Exhibit 10 below, the formation of such a group will be a critical component of the state's ongoing review efforts. Deep LEA partnerships, public reporting of data, and other accountability and support structures will continue to be employed, but this working group has the potential to serve as the soul of the state's plan.

Exhibit 10. Educator Equity Plan Implementation Timeline

Major Activities	Parties Involved	Organizer	Time Frame	
			Start	Frequency
Identification of select LEAs for technical assistance and creation of equitable access implementation plans for 2016-2020 (with final approval of LEA strategy every four years)	Select LEAs, DDOE	Teacher & Leader Effectiveness Unit	Fall 2015	Every four years
Ongoing collection of educator effectiveness data, including, but not limited to, the following: Talent Practices Survey (Supply/Demand) Early Hiring Data Educator Preparation Program Metrics Educator Evaluation Data (into Online Platforms) Consolidated Grant Application Auditing Exit Survey Data	Non-profits, Higher-Education Institutions, All LEAs, DDOE	Teacher & Leader Effectiveness Unit	Seasonal	Annually
Official roll-out of Educator Preparation Scorecards	Non-profits, Higher-Education Institutions, All LEAs, DDOE	Teacher & Leader Effectiveness Unit	Summer 2016	Bi-Annually
Ongoing LEA performance management routines	Participating LEAs	Accountability & Performance	Summer 2015	Twice a year

Major Activities	Parties Involved	Organizer	Time Frame	
			Start	Frequency
		Management Workgroup		
Teaching & Learning Cadre meetings	Participating LEAs	Teaching & Learning Branch	Fall 2015	Monthly
Stakeholder implementation feedback submitted through feedback loops	Stakeholders	Teacher & Leader Effectiveness Unit	September 2015	Ongoing
Professional Standards Board meetings	PSB Members	Professional Standards Board	Fall 2015	Monthly
Community stakeholder Committee for the Advancement of Educator Compensation & Career (CAECC) meetings	Community stakeholders	Delaware Department of Education	Fall 2015	TBD
Equitable Access Plan—Statewide Working Group	Stakeholders	Teacher & Leader Effectiveness Unit	Winter 2015	Twice a year
Potential release of new Educator Equity Quotient Report (to include new form of HQT collection)	DDOE, LEAs	Teacher & Leader Effectiveness Unit	Summer 2016	Annually
Publicly report Equitable Access Plan Year 1 Progress Report, solicit input from stakeholders	Internal DDOE team, stakeholders, and the public	Teacher & Leader Effectiveness Unit	Summer 2017	Bi-Annually
Compile a progress report of strategy performance metrics and present to stakeholders	DDOE, LEAs	Teacher & Leader Effectiveness Unit	Winter 2018	Bi-Annually
Publicly report Equitable Access Plan Year 3 Progress Report, solicit input from stakeholders	Internal DDOE team, stakeholders, and the public	Teacher & Leader Effectiveness Unit	Summer 2019	Bi-Annually
Publicly report Equitable Access Plan Year 5 Progress Report, solicit input from stakeholders	Internal DDOE team, stakeholders, and the public	Teacher & Leader Effectiveness Unit	Summer 2021	Bi-Annually

Section 7. Conclusion

DDOE strongly supports the U.S. Department of Education's goal of ensuring that every student has equitable access to excellent educators. The state welcomes this opportunity to present its plan for advancing this mission in Delaware. Delaware has invested in this work for many years and significantly increased its efforts to address educator equity as a result of the 2010 RTTT grant and previous federal, state and local efforts to improve educator effectiveness overall. Although Delaware has a strong and long-standing commitment to engaging stakeholders in work to advance educational opportunities for all Delaware students, this plan enabled stakeholders to come together around a common vision and common definitions of educator equity, and to be more deliberate about the commitment to broad, statewide outreach to include parents, families, and civic organizations. Delaware's multifaceted plan reflects extensive discussion about what actions state and local education leaders are expected to take that will enable schools and districts to attain this important objective.

As noted, Delaware's plan is grounded in a strong understanding of statewide educator effectiveness data that has been developed over the past decade. The state's ongoing partnership with the Harvard Strategic Data Project has enabled a richer understanding and relevance of the experience, turnover, and effectiveness gaps. These three educator equity gaps have now been named priority gaps for the state to address both in the short-term and over the next decade. Such data has informed a statewide dialogue about "the why", as addressed in the state's root cause analysis section. While stakeholders named many common root causes such as school leadership, differentiated professional learning opportunities, and working conditions (climate/culture), the emergence of wraparounds services, compensation/career pathways, and recruitment/staffing/staff management are ideas that have long been discussed but on which many states have not yet taken collective action. The formulation of this plan allows Delaware to consider the equity gaps, consider the root causes, and to turn a set of potential strategies and solutions into a series of initiatives that can be implemented and tracked. Delaware's plan builds on progress made in several of those initiative areas, as detailed herein, and has allowed the state to complete an inventory of educator effectiveness initiatives that should be continued, strengthened or refined in the spirit of equitable access for all students. As this state's plan crystalizes over the next six months via additional stakeholder engagement based on the draft submitted herein, Delaware must also consider how it will provide technical assistance, monitor progress, and public reporting data and outcomes on its priority equity metrics. To close the educator equity gaps presented, stakeholders and educational leaders should have a constant awareness of their current status and a firm commitment to forging ahead in solving to complex challenges. While DDOE has provided some general commitments within, this final section of the plan will be refined and communicated to ensure broader understanding,

Ultimately, Delaware sees the submission of this plan as a step along a continuum of commitment and progress toward student achievement goals. As noted, at the point of this submission, DDOE is continuing its stakeholder engagement work and soliciting feedback on current strategies that stakeholders deem high-potential, on strategies that we might consider discontinuing, and on several that are being named as suggestions from a diverse set of stakeholders. Several of these sessions have been scheduled during the summer months, and there is anticipated to be some updated materials (both within the plan and the appendices) as this work continues. Although Delaware's plan will continue to evolve, DDOE believes that the theory of action and the targeted potential strategies included here embody a solid foundation to improving educator effectiveness, particularly for those students most in need. Delaware looks forward to continuing to engage with stakeholders as the state progresses towards achieving equitable access to excellent teachers and leaders for all students.

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