

Delaware Education Plan Overview

With its Race to the Top win this year, Delaware has a unique opportunity, and responsibility, to dramatically improve student outcomes for all students in the State. Race to the Top is not just another grant program; rather, it has become the catalyst for comprehensive, statewide reform.

This document provides an overview of the State's ambitious education plan. If you would like to learn more about Delaware's plan, or about how you can support this effort, please contact Dan Cruce, Deputy Secretary/Chief of Staff at dcruce@doe.k12.de.us.

SUMMARY

Delaware's education plan was created with the input of over 150 people in the 2009. The plan aligns well with the four federal Race to the Top assurances. While the plan is described under each assurance below, it is the integration of the assurances that will allow the State to fundamentally improve education. Overall, Delaware will:

- Set high expectations for all students with rigorous standards and curriculum
- Align curriculum with cutting-edge assessments to measure student achievement
- Use longitudinal student achievement data to gauge student growth
- Make student growth the critical factor in educator evaluations
- Conduct annual evaluations to understand teacher and principal effectiveness
- Increase educator effectiveness with comprehensive professional development
- Use effectiveness data to inform professional development and advancement, as well as educator preparation and distribution to low-achieving schools
- Increase the success of the lowest-achieving schools with deep supports and accountability

STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS

Implement rigorous college and career ready standards and link with high-quality formative and summative assessments (SOW Areas 1, 2)¹:

- Major new DDOE activities:
 - Implement and provide training in rigorous new Common Core Standards, align grade-level expectations to guide curriculum
 - Transition to a best-in-class assessment system, which uses computer-adaptive assessments to measure student progress up to four times per year

¹ The Scope of Work (SOW) details the specific requirements for LEAs (Local Education Agencies, also known as districts or charters) as part of their participation in Race to the Top. It also details the activities of the Delaware Department of Education related to those requirements. A full copy of the SOW is available in Appendix A-1 of the Race to the Top application. The application can be accessed here: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/phase1-applications/index.html>

- Increase college- and career-readiness by funding a statewide assessment of college-readiness (e.g., SAT), implementing a middle-school college readiness program, and hosting AP summer institutes to train AP teachers
- Major new Local Education Agency (LEA) commitments:
 - Participate in the review of new standards and preparation of grade-level expectations
 - Ensure curriculum aligns with standards, is implemented with fidelity, is having the expected impact on student achievement, and is modified if ineffective
 - Build a culture of college- and career- readiness in schools by removing obstacles to, and actively supporting, student engagement and achievement; provide rigorous advanced coursework, target high-need or low-achieving students for enrollment in advanced coursework, and proactively support those students

DATA SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT INSTRUCTION

Improve access to, and use of, the State's robust longitudinal data system (SOW Areas 3, 4):

- Major new DDOE activities:
 - Provide “data coaches” to increase data-driven instruction, by building educators’ technical and pedagogical skills during weekly collaborative planning time
 - Build an Educational Dashboard Portal to make trend data easily accessible to different stakeholders, with differentiated “dashboards” based on stakeholder role
 - Increase P-20 and inter-agency data coordination, with MOUs and an expansion of the statewide longitudinal data system
- Major new LEA commitments:
 - Provide 90 minutes of weekly collaborative time for teachers and leaders to meet in small, relevant groups
 - Use State data coaches to facilitate collaborative time and observe instruction
 - Provide input into the development of the Educational Dashboard Portal

GREAT TEACHERS AND LEADERS

Improve teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance (SOW Areas 5, 6):

- Major new DDOE activities:
 - Follow new regulations that revise the statewide annual educator evaluation system to include four ratings - highly effective, effective, needs improvement, and ineffective - and that make student growth the determining factor for receiving effective ratings; define rigorous and comparable measures of student growth in consultation with stakeholder groups
 - Provide “development coaches” to support principals (and other assessors) in conducting evaluations and feedback sessions, and in creating development plans; provide high-quality training to assessors
 - Define a “model” career ladder and the Teacher Leader role and responsibilities, to better link educator effectiveness to advancement
 - Extend the provision of performance-based bonuses to schools

■ Major new LEA commitments:

- Conduct evaluations in accordance with new regulations, and use evaluations as a primary factor in development, promotion, advancement, retention, and removal
- Integrate development coaches into the evaluation process, and ensure assessors have a half-day available monthly to collaborate with coaches
- Define the career ladders that link evaluation to development, promotion, advancement, and compensation, and create Teacher Leader career paths in high need schools

Ensure equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals (SOW areas 7, 8):

■ Major new DDOE activities:

- Create a State “Fellows Program” to attract highly effective educators to high need schools; provide bonuses to retain highly effective educators in high need schools
- Establish and expand partnerships with alternate certification programs, and support a STEM teacher residency, to increase the pipeline of high quality educators
- Conduct teaching and learning conditions surveys to improve school environments
- Develop a statewide marketing campaign and a central hiring website to attract the best teachers and principals
- Engage families and communities by raising community awareness through a comprehensive marketing campaign

■ Major new LEA commitments:

- Increase the concentration of highly-effective teachers and leaders in high need schools
- Participate in the state recruitment campaign and use the hiring website; forecast hiring needs and use succession planning to identify high-potential candidates
- Implement strategies to engage families and communities effectively in supporting the academic success of students

Improve the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs (SOW Area 9):

■ Major new DDOE activities:

- Assess the effectiveness of preparation routes by linking educator effectiveness data to preparation and certification programs
- Expand successful programs, and improve or remove less successful programs, through grants and a stringent re-certification process

■ Major new LEA commitments:

- Target recruiting and hiring to the most effective preparation programs
- Provide input into feedback for preparation and certification programs

Provide effective support to teachers and leaders (SOW Areas 10, 11):

■ Major new DDOE activities:

- Accelerate the development of instructional leaders, with intensive training for novice and high-need principals, and distributed leadership training for all other principals
- Develop a “coherent professional development model” that links offerings to specific skill and role expectations, and to the statewide evaluation rubric
- Establish standards for professional development, and create a process for certifying and monitoring the success of all professional development
- Major new LEA commitments:
 - Adopt a coherent approach to professional development
 - Prioritize participation in high-impact professional development offerings
 - Ensure principals participate in state training; distribute leadership in schools through the integrated use of school administration managers, time studies, and coaching

TURNING AROUND THE LOWEST-ACHIEVING SCHOOLS

Turn around the low-achieving schools (SOW Area 12):

- Major new DDOE activities:
 - Follow new regulations, which provide greater support and accountability to schools in the State “Partnership Zone,” and which ensure that the State and the district collaboratively intervene in failing schools
 - Select a total of ten schools for entry into the Partnership Zone in the summer of 2010 and in the summer of 2011
 - Develop a turnaround unit to support Partnership Zone schools with financial and expert resources, and to provide support to at-risk schools
- Major new LEA commitments:
 - Follow the process for turning around schools selected for the Partnership Zone, in accordance with State regulations
 - Provide support to schools in the Partnership Zone; integrate lessons from Partnership Zone schools to build district capacity to improve low-achieving schools

For a more detailed overview of Delaware’s Education Plan and progress to-date, please visit: www.doe.k12.de.us/rttt/files/DEEducationPlanOverview.pdf.