

Vision 2015

Transforming Delaware's Education System

THE STATE WE'RE IN

Vision 2015 is a private/public/civic effort dedicated to developing a world-class public education system in Delaware. We intend to be the first state in the country to develop a truly innovative, world-class education system for every student in every school — not just pockets of excellence here and there. In so doing, Delaware has a golden opportunity to serve as an example to the rest of the United States and the rest of the world.

In our increasingly competitive world, each and every one of our students needs to be fully prepared for higher education, the workplace, and responsible citizenship. As other states and nations gain academic and intellectual ground, we must transform our public education system to remain competitive and ensure the well-being of Delaware citizens. Our education system needs to be strong enough to attract new employers and families.

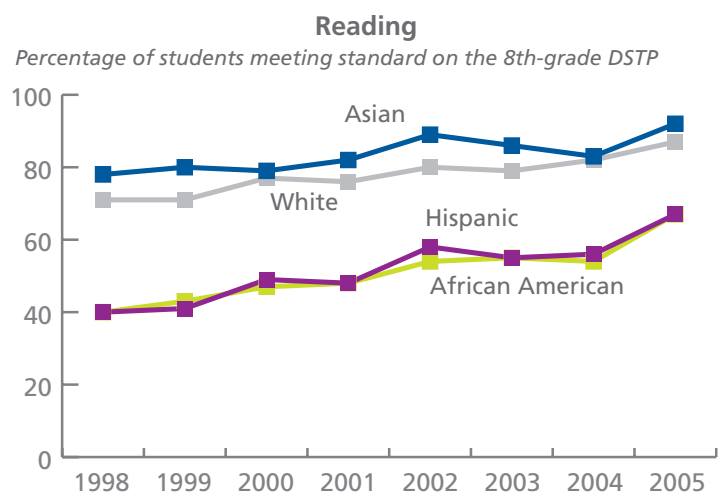
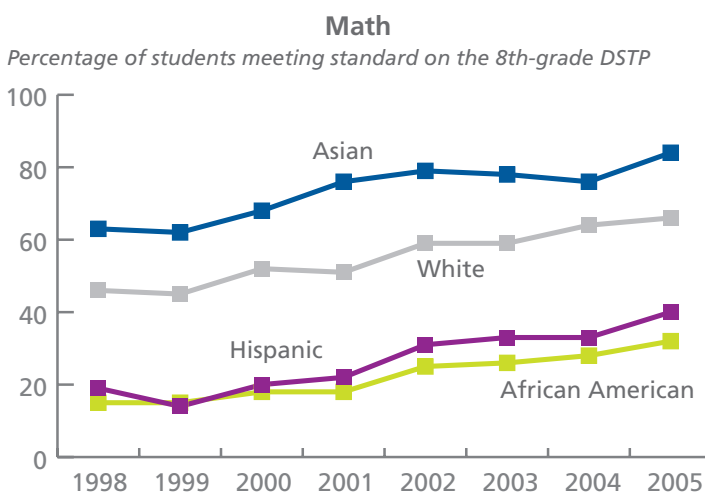
To build public understanding about the magnitude of the challenge and opportunity, the Vision 2015 Steering Committee plans to publish several issue briefs in the coming weeks. This first issue brief makes the case for change, based on significant research on educational achievement within Delaware, the United States more generally, and around the globe.

Delaware has a lot to be proud of

Student performance on the Delaware State Testing Program (DSTP) math and reading exams continues to improve. Between 1998 and 2005, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards on the state's spring math test rose an average of 22 points across all tested grades and an average of 16 points across all groups of 8th-grade students (including minority, limited English proficient, special education, and low-income students). In reading, the percentage meeting or exceeding standards rose an average of 20 points across all tested grades and an average of 22 points across all 8th-grade student groups. Delaware also ranked

among the top six states for gains on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) exam between 2003 and 2005. Furthermore, Delaware currently has many initiatives under way to sustain its progress, including the development of a recommended statewide curriculum; establishment of a better system for monitoring student progress from pre-K through college; piloting of a "next generation" of teacher evaluations and an assessment that better helps teachers adjust their instruction; roll-out of the eSchool Web-based student accounting system; and numerous other state and local programs.

DSTP Performance Trending Upward for All Student Groups



Source: DDOE DSTP online reports

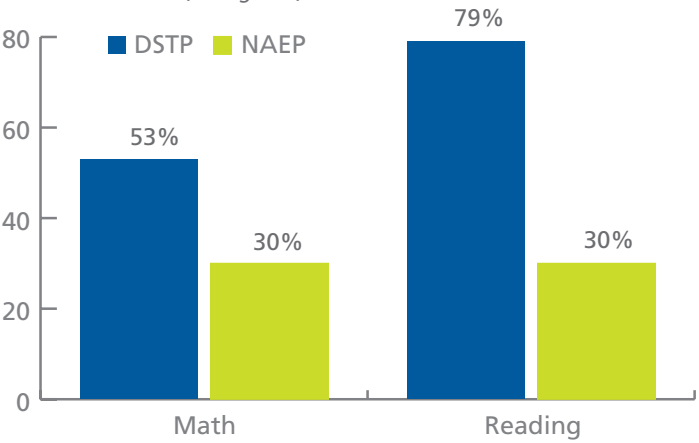
Despite real gains, Delaware's current performance relative to the rest of the U.S. is mediocre

Only 30 percent of Delaware's 8th graders score at or above "proficiency" on the math and reading NAEP exams, which places Delaware in the middle of the pack compared to other states. Moreover, 23 percent more 8th-grade Delaware students meet or exceed standard on the math DSTP than meet or exceed proficiency on the math NAEP, and 49 percent more meet or exceed standard on the reading DSTP than meet or exceed proficiency on the

reading NAEP, which illustrates a significant gap between Delaware's state standards and the more stringent NAEP expectations. In addition, Delaware's students perform worse than most other states on the SAT college admissions exam; even among the 24 states where more than 50 percent of students take the test, Delaware's mean combined score of 1005 places it 18th.

DSTP Proficiency Lower than NAEP Proficiency

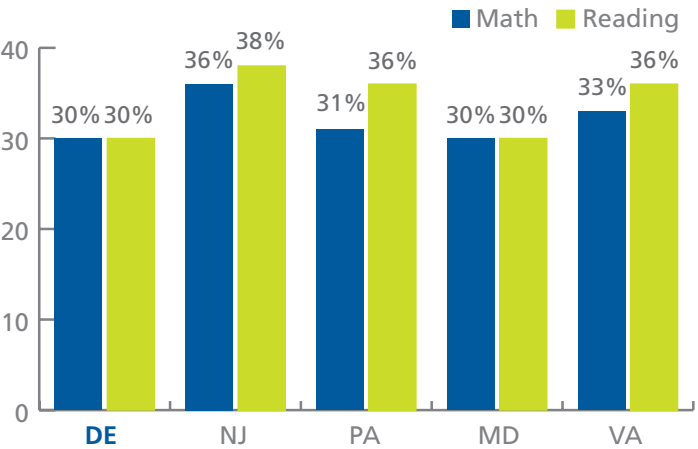
At or above standard on DSTP versus percentage proficient or advanced on NAEP, 8th grade, 2005



Source: DDOE DSTP online reports, NCES online NAEP Explorer

Delaware Is in Middle of Pack Nationally and Behind Three of Four Neighboring States on NAEP

Percentage of students proficient or advanced, 8th-grade NAEP, 2005



Source: NCES online "NAEP Explorer"

Since the United States as a whole is not competitive internationally, Delaware's students are in a weak position versus the rest of the world

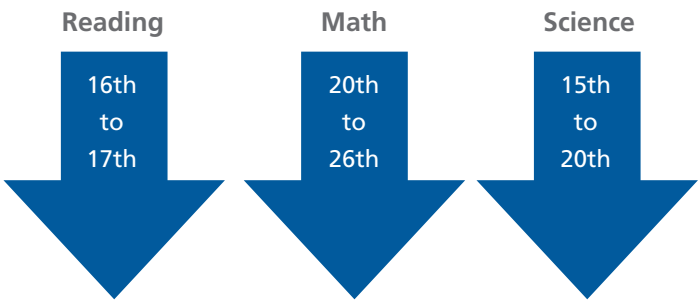
The United States lags most industrialized countries on international exams; our 15-year-olds' ranking on the reading, math, and science PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) tests was not only in the bottom half in 2005, but it also declined across those subjects between 2003 and 2005. Perhaps equally alarming is that the United States exhibits a much larger gap than most other countries between the scores of its average and lowest-performing students.

to foreign-born students. Thus, although America's superior economic position was founded on innovation and technological advancement, many multinational companies now are shifting their technical jobs to low-cost, high-talent countries such as China and India.

Furthermore, the United States is producing less science talent than in the past, losing ground to other countries — such as Singapore, China, France, and Korea — whose undergraduate students are significantly more likely to obtain natural science or engineering degrees (see next page). In addition, U.S. institutions currently award more than one third of their natural science Ph.D.s and more than half of their engineering Ph.D.s

U.S. Is Not Competitive on International Exams

Low and declining PISA performance from 2000 to 2003

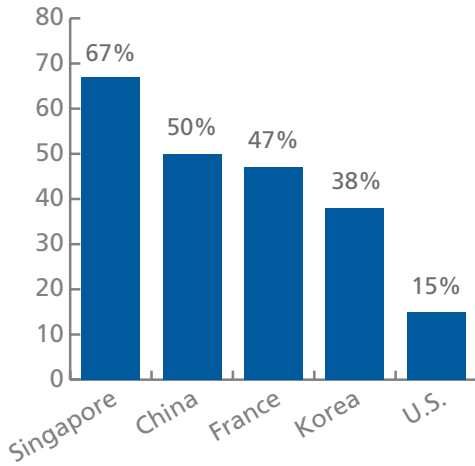


Source: NCES Digest of Educational Statistics, 2005; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), 2003

U.S. Not Producing Enough Competitive Science Talent

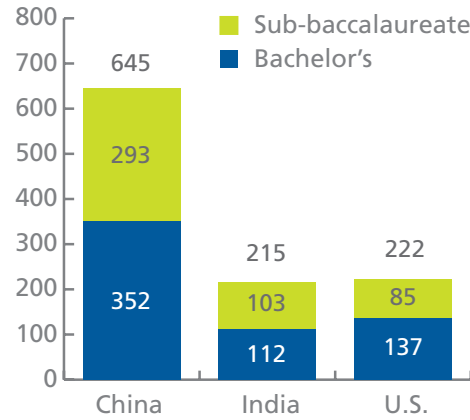
Few American students go into engineering and the sciences

Percentage of undergrad degrees in the natural sciences or engineering, 2004



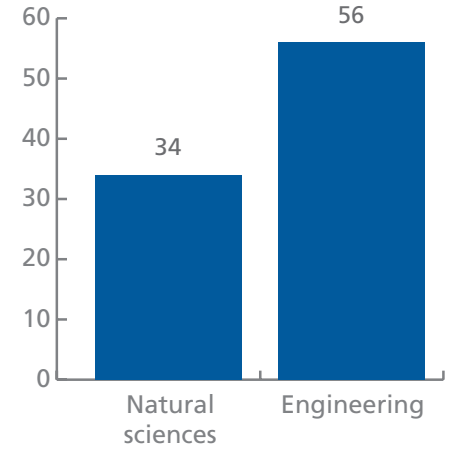
American science grads dwarfed by China's, and India is catching up

Number of engineering, computer science, and IT graduates, 2004



Foreign students fill U.S. science Ph.D. programs

Percentage of U.S. Ph.D.s awarded to foreign-born students, 2004



Twice as many U.S. physics Bachelor's degrees awarded in 1956 (the year before Sputnik) as in 2004

Source: The National Academies, "Rising Above the Gathering Storm," 2006; Duke Master of Engineering Management Program, "Framing the Engineering Outsourcing Debate", 2005

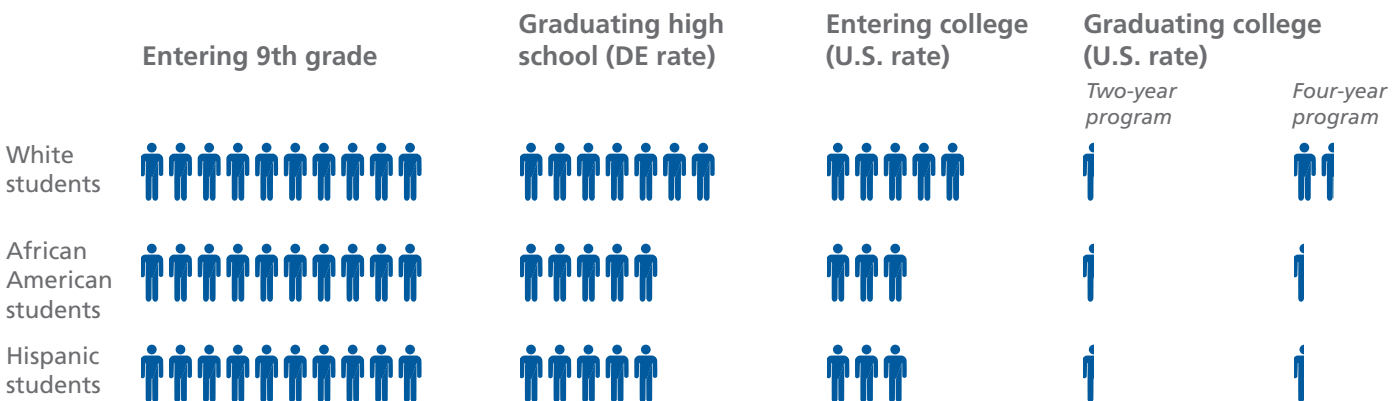
Despite significant individual and societal costs, too many Delaware students are dropping out of high school, and not enough are graduating from college

Only about two-thirds of white students and half of African American and Hispanic students in Delaware graduate from high school within four years. According to national college entrance and graduation rates, this implies that for every 10 white Delaware students entering 9th grade, only 2 will earn a postsecondary degree; and for every 10 minority Delaware students entering 9th grade, only 1 will earn a postsecondary degree.

Unfortunately, workers without a college degree face difficult futures. The real value of their expected

weekly earnings has dropped over the past 25 years, while college graduates' earnings have risen; today, the average high school dropout can expect to make about 2.5 times less than the average four-year college graduate — about \$400/week compared to \$990/week. Our failure to graduate students also carries significant societal costs. High school dropouts are 3.5 times more likely than high school graduates to be arrested during their lifetime, nearly half of drug offenders are dropouts, and the death rate for dropouts is 2.5 times that of students with more than 13 years of education.

Far Too Many Delaware Students Drop Out of High School, Not Enough Graduate from College



Source: NCES, EPE "Education Counts" online database, "Postsecondary Education Opportunity" research letters

Now is the time for Delaware to act — the environment is right for fundamental educational transformation

Given its history of education innovation, its diverse student population, the large proportion of funding that schools receive from state sources, and its small relative population and geographic size, Delaware is an ideal place to initiate bold advances in the public school system. Furthermore, with technology capabilities

expanding, technology costs falling, global competitiveness rising, and thousands of newcomers entering the workforce, now is the ideal time to begin that transformation. We have a responsibility to our students, our community, and our country to act swiftly and boldly.

Vision 2015 is being led by a 28-member Steering Committee composed of education, business, and community leaders. Four Work Groups with broader community representation — including parents, students, and community leaders — are helping us address the most important issues. And we are conducting dozens of focus groups and forums in all three counties to ensure that Vision 2015 will meet the needs of students throughout the state. Two international consulting firms are assisting in the effort: The Boston Consulting Group, which is providing research, analysis, and recommendations based on priorities established by the Steering Committee, and Cambridge Leadership Associates, which is facilitating the decision-making process. The Broad Foundation, based in Los Angeles, and the Rodel Foundation of Delaware are underwriting the development of the Vision 2015 blueprint.

Steering Committee

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**Member of Executive Committee*

Italic denotes ex officio member