

# Vision 2015

## Three Years of Progress: 2006-2009



Giving **children** a stronger start  
Recruiting and keeping more great **teachers**  
Helping **principals** drive achievement  
Using **data** to inform instruction  
Spending every **dollar** efficiently

**VISION  
2015** | **IMAGINE...**  
*the best schools in the  
world for every student  
in Delaware.*

[www.vision2015delaware.org](http://www.vision2015delaware.org)

# Three Years in, Vision 2015 Is Making Headlines and Headway

## We Have a Window of Opportunity

Delaware is gaining national recognition as a leader in public education. Among our state's credits, in 2009 *Business Week* recognized Delaware's educational leadership, and we were one of just six states selected to join the "Tough Choices or Tough Times" consortium. This group is committed to the same aspirations — innovation, accountability, and excellence — that are core to Vision 2015.

We hear the priorities identified in Vision 2015 echoed by President Barack Obama and Delaware Governor Jack Markell, both of whom are deeply committed to excellent public education.

We hear the call to action from our elected officials, business partners, community and foundation leaders, educators, and parents.

With the unwavering effort of all involved, we are committed to making Vision 2015 a reality for every Delaware student.

## We invite you to join us.



*"We have a window of opportunity here in Delaware to do as much as we possibly can for our children. The nation is watching, and the world is watching."*

— Delaware Secretary of Education Lillian M. Lowery

## Implementation Team

Vision 2015 was developed through the leadership of a broad-based, 28-person Steering Committee that received extensive input from hundreds of teachers, principals, parents, students, and members of the public from all across the state — including the nearly 80 members of our Work Groups, who helped identify opportunities and clarify options for action. Implementation efforts for Vision 2015 initiatives are directed by a subgroup of the Steering Committee composed of:

Marvin N. Schoenhals, *Chairman, WSFS Bank (Chair)*

H. Raye Jones Avery, *Director, Christina Cultural Arts Center*

Kevin Carson, *Superintendent, Woodbridge School District*

Paul A. Herdman, *President and CEO, Rodel Foundation of Delaware*

Lillian Lowery, *Delaware Secretary of Education*

Daniel Rich, *Professor of Public Policy, University of Delaware*

John H. Taylor, Jr., *Executive Director, Delaware Public Policy Institute*

Howard Weinberg, *Executive Director, Delaware State Education Association*



## Contact info

Join Us! Please visit our website,  
[www.vision2015delaware.org](http://www.vision2015delaware.org),  
and sign up for our electronic newsletter.  
Or call us at 302-504-5240.

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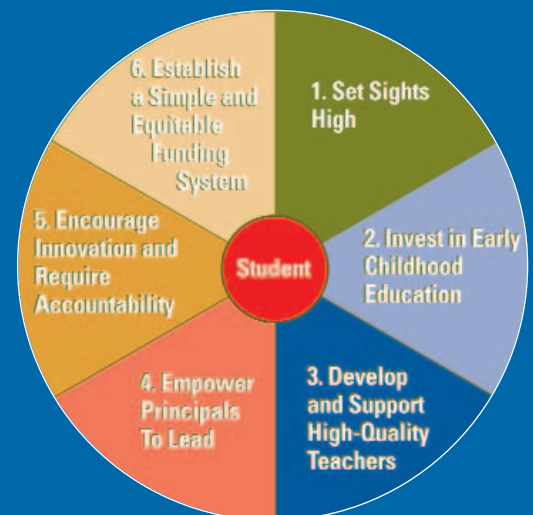


## Working together, here's what we have accomplished so far:

- The Vision Network has supported 27 public schools that serve nearly 20,000 students across the state. Network schools are **transforming school leadership practices and classroom instruction** to focus intensively on student achievement goals.
- The state has streamlined education spending by at least **\$3 million** and the LEAD Committee identified up to \$155 million more that can be reallocated to school and classroom use.
- The Department of Education is developing a **leading-edge student assessment system** that will track individual student progress over time and help teachers tailor their instruction to meet student needs.
- The General Assembly has **modernized our teacher certification rules** to benefit students in our highest-need schools. Over 20 Teach For America corps members are working this fall with school leaders and classroom teachers in six Delaware schools to help close the achievement gap.
- Several of our state agencies—including Education, Health and Human Services, and Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families — are improving and streamlining **functions to help create a world-class early childhood education system**.
- **Delaware is being cited for its leadership** — with recognition by *Business Week*, Education Trust, and other national sources — for the bold actions we are taking to give our students world-class schools.

## Vision 2015 Goals at a Glance

The Vision 2015 plan is clear and comprehensive, focusing on six major system reforms:



**Set Sights High.** Challenging expectations inspire the best in every educator, parent, and student.

**Invest in Early Childhood Education.** What children learn in their early years sets the stage for success in school and in life.

**Develop and Support High Quality Teachers.** Excellent teaching is the key to successful learning.

**Empower Principals to Lead.** Principals must have the knowledge, authority, and flexibility to get results for the students in their schools.

**Encourage Innovation and Require Accountability.** Students' diverse needs are best served through new and innovative approaches to teaching and learning. We are all accountable for their success.

**Establish a Simple and Equitable Funding System.** We must allocate taxpayers' dollars equitably and wisely so they do the most good for our students.





## Goal 1: Set Sights High

### Higher expectations inspire greater achievement

*Vision 2015 calls for setting sights high as we redesign assessments, curriculum, and standards to align with the world's best. Students, educators, and parents are rising to the challenge.*

#### Progress to date:

##### Leading-edge student assessments

A new student assessment system will be in place by 2010, as a result of legislation passed this year by the Delaware General Assembly and signed by Governor Markell. The legislation enabled the Department of Education (DOE) to design the Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System, which will **measure individual student gains over time, help educators better understand and address students' individual needs, and facilitate national comparisons.** The new system grew out of the Delaware Growth Assessment Pilot program, which received national media attention in 2008.

Through a related multi-state initiative led by Delaware Education Secretary Lillian Lowery, dozens of states are exploring **the development of a secure bank of test questions** that can be shared, enabling Delaware and other states to easily upgrade their assessments and reduce their annual operating costs.

##### High-quality standards and curriculum

The launch of the Delaware Recommended Curriculum (DRC) in October 2007 marked an important step toward **uniform, challenging standards in all of our schools.** The DRC links course content with state standards and assessments, offers classroom-ready learning resources, and features a parent-friendly website.

In 2009, Delaware joined 45 other states in what is known as the "Common Core Standards Initiative," an effort to **create common academic standards in math and English language arts.** Delaware is committed to making at least 85 percent of its state standards match those of the Common Core by 2013. This will save



Delaware money and make it easier to compare our progress with that of other states.

##### New e-learning opportunities

In 2008-09, more than 230 students from 27 public high schools took part in the Delaware Virtual School Pilot Program, which made **high-quality learning opportunities available online.** Courses included Algebra I, Pre-Calculus, Spanish I and II, Physical Fitness, and American Government.

*"States that are simply investing in the status quo will put themselves at a tremendous competitive disadvantage... I can't emphasize strongly enough how important it is for states and districts to think very creatively and to think very differently..."*

— U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan  
on his expectations of states that will compete for Race to the Top funds

## Goal 2: Invest in Early Childhood Education

### A strong start can close the “preparation gap”

*Vision 2015 is committed to helping every child enter kindergarten ready to learn by closing the “preparation gap.” In the past three years, we’ve made important progress through the combined efforts of policymakers, educators, community groups, and business and foundation leaders.*

### Progress to date:

#### New policies supporting early learning

Delaware Stars for Early Success, a quality rating and improvement system for early childhood education, was established by the Delaware General Assembly in 2007. Through Stars, childcare and education providers are receiving assistance and financial support to improve staff qualifications, facilities and programs. The Delaware Business Roundtable has been



an important contributor to this effort, which now **serves over 115 programs enrolling more than 7,550 children.**

Also in 2007, the legislature passed into law the Governor’s Early Childhood Council, which created a plan to **improve program quality and increase enrollment.**

In 2009, the state’s Child Poverty Task Force released education priorities aligned with Vision 2015. The same year, Vision 2015 supported the launch of a new “Policy Matters” process led by Sharon Lynn Kagan, Ed.D., of Columbia University, a nationally recognized leader in early childhood education. Policy Matters is a partnership between the Lt. Governor, the business community, and early childhood education advocates that will **establish a clear vision and actionable strategies for improvements to early childhood education by 2010.**



*As one of many generous supporters of Vision 2015, PNC Foundation has been a critical champion of early childhood initiatives. Here, business, foundation, and community representatives are gathered with children from the Latin American Community Center in Wilmington, a participant in Delaware Stars for Early Success.*

## Goal 3: Develop and Support High-Quality Teachers

### Initiatives help to recruit and retain talent

*The research is clear, compelling, and not surprising: students with highly effective teachers do well in school. Vision 2015 calls for recruiting and supporting excellent teachers in every classroom, and we're heading in the right direction.*

#### Progress to date:

##### New pool of teachers for highest-need schools

Thanks to the General Assembly's unanimous passage of legislation modernizing our state's teacher certification policies, Teach For America corps members are now **working in some of our highest-need schools**. The legislation also makes possible Teacher Residency Programs to **train even more great teachers for Delaware schools**.

##### Rewards for excellence

Building on an unprecedented two-day conference in 2007 that focused on new ways to recruit and retain highly effective teachers, the Markell Administration in 2009 called for **rewards to teachers who demonstrate excellence and who teach in high-need schools and teach high-need subjects**. In response, the legislature created a short-term reward program for *schools* that close the achievement gap and exceed their adequate yearly progress goals for two or more consecutive years.

##### Building educator leadership teams

Teachers throughout Delaware are working in school leadership teams through their participation in the Vision Network. The Vision Network **enables school leaders and teachers to build professional skills and learn from colleagues in other schools**. It also links participants to experienced educators from around the state for individual coaching and mentoring. For a more in-depth look, see page 9 of this report or visit [www.vision2015delaware.org](http://www.vision2015delaware.org).

*"Because of the initiatives related to the [Vision Network], our school has truly become a community of learning. ... [Students] see that we communicate, and they see that we care. Because of this, they care; they work harder because they see we are working hard for them."*

— Tristan E. Spates, Teacher,  
St. Georges Technical High School



*Aaron Bothner, Monique Watters, and Melvin Pretlow — all graduates of top universities across the country — are teaching in some of Delaware's highest-need schools through Teach For America.*

## Goal 4: Empower Principals to Lead

### Vision Network helps principals focus on instruction

*Many principals find that building operations and management issues leave them little time to spend in classrooms. We are beginning to shift the balance by giving principals the authority, resources, and know-how to make instructional leadership their top priority.*

#### Progress to date:

##### More time for instruction and collaboration

Through the Vision Network, 27 principals and other school leaders have learned how to focus more time on instruction and are using student data to refine goals and strategies for teaching and learning.

They also are significantly increasing collaboration within schools and are sharing experiences, skills, and ideas with other district and charter schools. The Network **enables each school leader to create a school culture that emphasizes a commitment to excellence for every Delaware student**.

For more information on the Vision Network, see page 9 of this report or visit [www.vision2015delaware.org](http://www.vision2015delaware.org).



## Goal 5: Encourage Innovation and Require Accountability

### Innovative solutions required to meet diverse student needs

*Vision 2015 calls for meeting individual student needs in innovative ways. It also calls on all stakeholders — educators, families, legislators, businesses, and the public — to get involved and accept responsibility for students' academic success.*

### Progress to date:

#### Better access to data informs educators and parents

Many schools and districts now share goals and standards with parents by posting information on their websites. The “Balanced Scorecard” process, launched in every Delaware school in 2007, helps educators align their strategic plans with school improvement goals and develop measurable actions to meet targets.

The DOE redesigned its school “performance dashboards” in 2008 to give parents and others **easy-to-use information about the performance of each school in the state**. These dashboards are an important step toward holding schools and districts accountable for results.

#### Families becoming advocates

A \$2 million Parental Information and Resource Center (PIRC) grant from the U.S. Department of Education is enabling **more training for parents to become effective advocates for their children's education**. A portion of the PIRC grant also supports ongoing work of the Delaware Parent Leadership Institute, which — with additional funding from the Rodel Foundation — has trained over 130 parent leaders to support student achievement in our schools.

#### Financial support seeding innovation

Support from Delaware's business and philanthropic communities has been paramount to the success of Vision 2015 initiatives. A **combined investment of more than \$10 million since 2006** has enabled more online learning, provided recommendations on how to spend our education dollars smarter, supported training for early care providers, and launched both the Vision Network and Education Voters of Delaware. Despite historic budget deficits at all levels, the federal government, our state DOE, and the Vision 2015 districts and schools also are providing critical support to keep momentum high.



#### Learning options expand, schools held accountable

The state continues to **expand the learning options available to students, while holding schools accountable for results**. Three new charter schools with a broad range of educational approaches will open in 2010: Delaware Academy of Public Safety and Security, Las Americas ASPIRA Academy, and Reach Academy for Girls. Two opened in 2009: Prestige Academy and Delaware College Preparatory Academy. However, expanded choices aren't always enough, and every new school — traditional public schools and charter schools alike — must be held accountable. In 2008, the state oversaw one school's complete restructuring and authorized the closure of another due to poor performance.

#### Citizens inspired to get involved

- In 2008, more than 500 citizens attended **Delaware's first education debate among the candidates for Governor**.
- More than 500 citizens, business leaders, educators, and policymakers attended the University of Delaware's 2008 conference, **Delaware Education for a Global Economy: Making Vision 2015 Work**. International education expert Sir Michael Barber keynoted the event.
- Education Voters launched its Delaware affiliate in early 2009 to **give citizens a greater voice in public education issues** ([www.educationvotersdelaware.org](http://www.educationvotersdelaware.org)).



**guiding the future**

# Goal 6: Establish a Simple and Equitable Funding System

Spending dollars smarter  
directly impacts student achievement

Enabling school leaders to make better decisions based on the unique needs of their students will have a direct impact on student achievement. Vision 2015 calls for finding more flexible, productive, and efficient ways to spend currently budgeted dollars, before adding new money.

## Progress to date:

**Public education dollars being used more efficiently**  
In January 2008, the Leadership for Education Achievement in Delaware (LEAD) Committee released its landmark report, **identifying up to \$158 million in our state's education budget that could be spent smarter** (see chart), with savings redirected to priorities that would yield powerful, long term benefits.

The state has acted on several recommendations from the LEAD Committee and as a result already is saving approximately \$3 million on transportation, purchasing, and energy. In 2009, Education Secretary Lillian Lowery announced that the DOE also will consolidate many of the administrative services currently provided by 19 districts and 18 charter schools; the LEAD Committee estimated that up to \$34 million in administrative efficiencies could be captured through such an initiative.

**More flexibility for schools in spending decisions**  
The LEAD Committee also released its 2008 *Report on Education Funding in Delaware*, which calls for **Delaware to update the way it raises and distributes taxpayer dollars for public education**. Recommendations include:








- Giving principals and other school leaders more flexibility and discretion over their funds.
- Adopting a "weighted" funding formula to provide appropriate funding for students with different needs, such as gifted and talented, low-income, special education, and English language learners.

In 2009, the General Assembly passed House Bill 119, which took initial steps toward providing more regulatory and financial flexibility to local school districts and holding them more accountable for student achievement results.



### In the area of:

### Delaware could save:

	Transportation . . . . .	\$9-12 million
	Purchasing . . . . .	\$15-25 million
	Energy . . . . .	\$4-7 million
	Benefits . . . . .	Up to \$29 million
	Construction . . . . .	\$31-48 million
	Administration . . . . .	\$25-34 million
	Department of Education . . .	\$2-3 million

To date, only modest savings have been captured — just \$3 million out of a possible \$158 million identified by the LEAD committee. With only a fraction of our education dollars being spent as efficiently as possible, we have a long way to go. Further action will require tough choices, but making those choices will be crucial to benefit students at the classroom level.

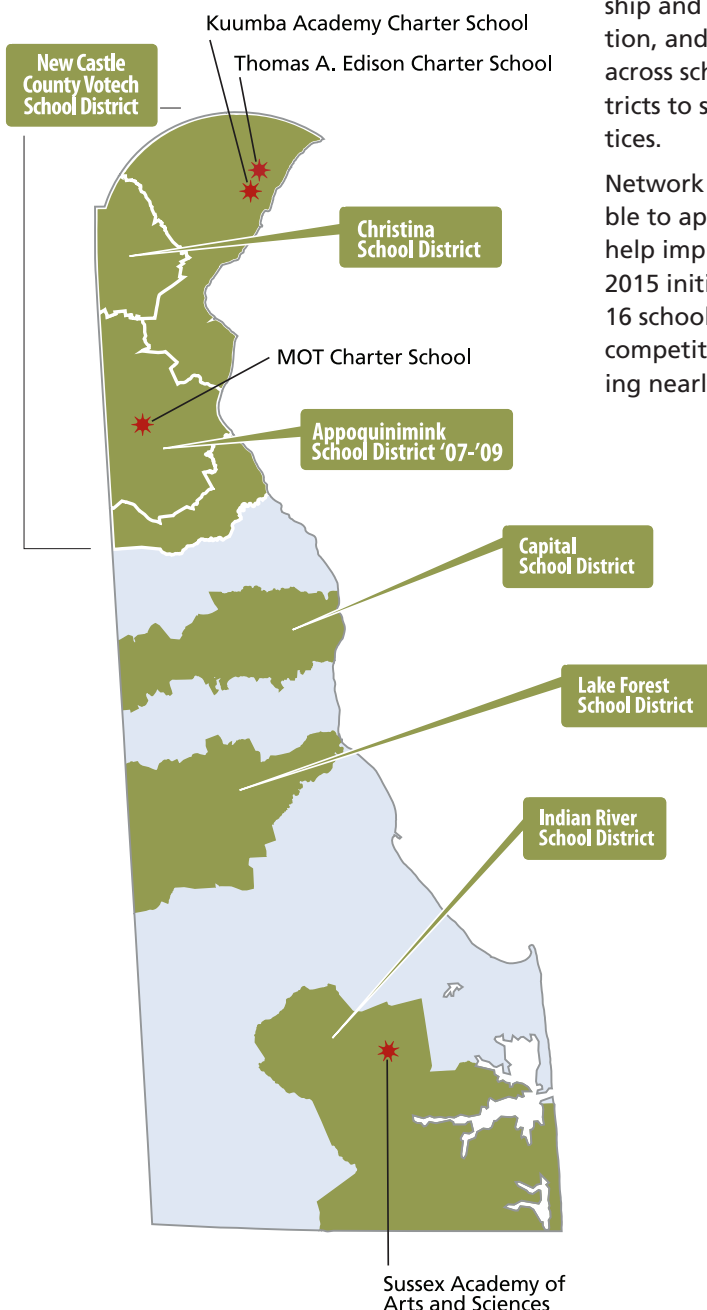


# Delaware's Vision Network: World-Class Schools Start Here

The Vision Network, launched in 2007, has supported **27 schools — representing 6 districts and 4 charter schools — that serve 20,000 students throughout Delaware.** It is the on-the-ground roll-out for many Vision 2015 recommendations. The intensive training provided to Vision Network participants is enabling school leaders, teachers, parent-advocates, and community representatives to reexamine teaching and learning, and to rebuild a system that will drive our 21st century schools.

Participants in the Vision Network are focusing on student data as a means to improve instruction, changing school culture through improved leadership and targeted instruction, and collaborating across schools and districts to share best practices.

Network schools are eligible to apply for grants to help implement Vision 2015 initiatives. To date, 16 schools have earned competitive grants totaling nearly \$340,000.



**Appoquinimink School District**  
Brick Mill Elementary School (2007-2009)  
Silver Lake Elementary School (2007-2009)

**Capital School District**  
Central Middle School  
William Henry Middle School  
Dover High School

**Christina School District**  
Bayard Middle School  
Gauger-Cobbs Middle School  
George V. Kirk Middle School  
Shue-Medill Middle School  
Christiana High School  
Glasgow High School  
Newark High School

**Indian River School District**  
Georgetown Middle School  
Millsboro Middle School  
Selbyville Middle School  
Indian River High School  
Sussex Central High School

**Lake Forest School District**  
W.T. Chipman Middle School  
Lake Forest High School

**New Castle County  
Vo-Tech School District**  
Delcastle Technical High School  
Hodgson Vocational  
Technical High School  
Howard High School of Technology  
St. Georges Technical High School

**Charter Schools**  
Kuumba Academy Charter School  
MOT Charter School  
Thomas A. Edison Charter School  
Sussex Academy of Arts and Sciences

*"Delaware's Vision Network is a pioneer in identifying and leading the work on the key levers for significant education reform, which are now recognized and promoted across the country by the U.S. Department of Education. ... [T]here is no parallel effort nationally that is as ambitious in its attempts to align state, district, school, and classroom levels in a coherent commitment to reform."*

— American Institutes for Research

# How Will We Realize the Vision by 2015?

We have made considerable progress over the last three years. Yet, there is still a long way to go to get to world-class schools by 2015 — *just five years away*. Together, we must accelerate the pace. Our children deserve it. Our future demands it. We invite you to join us.

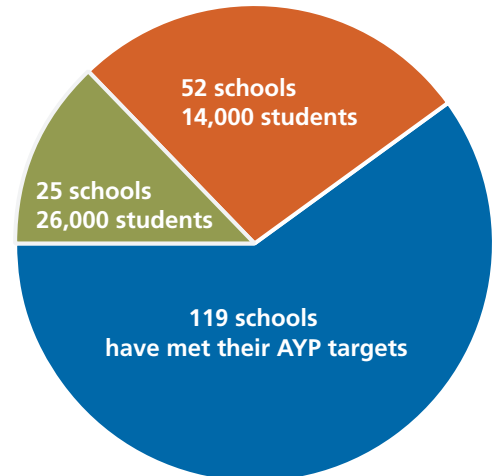
## Our Focus in 2010:

- **Implement rigorous academic standards** in math and English language arts so they are competitive with the highest in the world.
- Ensure that the new Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System — which will **measure individual student progress over time** — is implemented by 2010, with the training and support that educators need to use the system to improve instruction.
- **Recruit, support, and keep great teachers in every classroom**, through meaningful professional development and incentives for excellent performance by schools and individual educators.
- **Provide intensive support for chronically low-performing schools\*** to build a brighter future for the **26,000 students** who aren't getting the education they deserve.
- **Expand the Vision Network** so world-class leadership and instruction are available in all Delaware schools.
- **Transform our education funding system** so that every dollar is spent efficiently and so that district and school leaders have the flexibility and authority to make the right decisions for their students.
- Develop a leading-edge plan that **provides quality early childhood education to every child**.

\* Twenty-five schools have failed for 5 years or more to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets as defined by the Delaware DOE.



40,000 students are in 77 Delaware schools that did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets this year



Failed to meet AYP targets for:

■ 5 or more years

■ 1-4 years

## Delaware as a National Leader

The work we have achieved collectively over the last three years lays the groundwork for Delaware's next role — the **First State in Education**. Our goals and commitments align directly with the priorities that President Barack Obama and U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan have set for all states, which are expected to shape federal education policy for years to come.

- Rigorous college- and career-readiness standards and high-quality assessments that are based on international benchmarks.
- Pre-K to college and career data systems that track student progress and foster continuous improvement.
- Policy changes related to educators' compensation, career development, evaluation, and distribution to ensure highly effective teachers, particularly for students most in need.
- Intense support and intervention for chronically under-performing schools.

*"We will spend smarter. We will demand accountability from top to bottom. We will retain, recruit, and train the best teachers in America — and we will reward them for carrying out the most valuable job in Delaware. We will demand the performance, promote the innovation, and provide the flexibility to make every school in this state great."*

— Governor Jack Markell in his Inaugural Address, January 21, 2009