

# DELAWARE'S RACE TO DELIVER



A first-year report on Delaware's commitment to improve its public schools, on the anniversary of winning Race to the Top

**VISION  
2015**

One year after the state's first-place win in the federal Race to the Top grant competition, Delaware remains a national leader in education reform, with \$119 million in new federal money to spend on schools and a responsibility to meaningfully change public education for our children.

The state has taken important first steps in what will be a four-year process. In its foundational planning year, Delaware educators and leaders focused on identifying systems that weren't working and redesigning them to make student learning the top priority.

This update explains our progress so far, the work still needed to meet Delaware's Race to the Top commitments, and other steps we feel are necessary to truly elevate public education. The need is more urgent than ever: On the 2009 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), which measures students in 34 developed countries, U.S. students ranked 14th in reading, 17th in science, and 25th in math. Regaining our global competitiveness begins by transforming learning, classroom by classroom. We intend to track the state's progress every year in accomplishing this work.

Real reform takes time. The work is hard, and the road is long. But we must do this right — for the sake of Delaware's children.

**"This race is a marathon, not a sprint ... complex and challenging, requiring levels of collaboration rarely experienced in public education reform."**

Delaware Governor Jack Markell

This report was produced by Vision 2015, a coalition of education, government, business, and community leaders committed to **creating the best schools in the world for every Delaware student — no exceptions, no excuses**. Vision 2015's priorities align directly with Race to the Top's core goals. This document reports on these shared goals, along with two other issues — early childhood education and school funding — which we deem essential to excellent public education.



*The apple: the iconic image of education for generations of American students. We use it in this report to symbolize the enduring values of the U.S. education system and also as an indicator of progress. The fuller the apple, the closer we have come to fulfilling our commitments.*

## Set high standards for college and career readiness, and measure progress with quality assessments and excellent data systems.

**Why?** Because only 35 percent of Delaware's students are proficient in reading and math, according to the internationally benchmarked National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) standards.



### What's Been Done: Delaware *Has* ...

- ✓ **Adopted the internationally competitive Common Core Standards** to better prepare Delaware's students for real-world demands, and began training teachers in these higher standards.
- ✓ **Launched the Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS)** to better measure student progress and provide timely information to 9,000 teachers, parents, and students.
- ✓ **Offered the SAT** for free to all 11th-grade public school students, whether college or career bound.

### The Work Ahead: Delaware *Must* ...

- **Continue phasing in the Common Core Standards** and associated curriculum, assessments, and teacher supports to reach 2014 goals.
- **Increase preschool-to-college coordination** and tracking by sharing student data among state agencies and higher education institutions.
- **Develop a statewide education dashboard** with information on pre-K programs, schools, and higher education institutions to help families make informed choices.
- **Provide meaningful additional time** for academics, enrichment, and teacher collaboration and planning.\*
- **Provide online learning opportunities** with challenging coursework that allow students to work at their own pace.\*

## Accelerate improvement in Delaware's highest-need schools to help the children who need it most.

**Why?** Because of the 192 Delaware public schools evaluated by the state in 2010, 24 were deemed persistently low performing.



### What's Been Done: Delaware *Has* ...

- ✓ Established the Partnership Zone to **focus resources and best practices** on Delaware's persistently lowest-achieving schools, with the goal of improving student achievement within two years.
- ✓ Approved the first four Partnership Zone schools to **implement turnaround plans** around changes such as expanded learning time, family and community engagement, performance-based pay for teachers, and merit-driven teacher recruitment.
- ✓ Provided support to low-performing schools to **attract and retain highly effective educators** to teach hard-to-staff subjects.

### The Work Ahead: Delaware *Must* ...

- **Expand the Partnership Zone school turnaround model** to 10 schools in two years; implement each school plan; and clarify consequences for schools that do not improve performance by the deadline.
- Expand access to **nationally recognized teacher and leader preparation programs** to recruit outstanding candidates.
- **Share lessons learned** from the first four Partnership Zone schools with all struggling schools.
- Create a policy environment that **encourages growth or replication of high-performing charter and district school models** to help students in chronically low-performing schools.

# Recruit, support, retain, and reward great teachers and leaders who can help all students meet high standards.

**Why?** Because teacher quality is the most important school-related factor influencing student achievement.



## What's Been Done: Delaware *Has* ...

- ✓ **Passed new regulations linking teacher effectiveness, as measured by the Delaware Performance Appraisal System (DPAS II), to student growth**, requiring teachers to be deemed effective before earning tenure-like protections.
- ✓ Trained educators in the Vision Network's 26 schools to **improve school leadership and accelerate student achievement**.
- ✓ Worked toward establishing the Delaware Leadership Project (DLP) and established the Delaware Teaching Fellows (DTF) program to **prepare talented leaders and attract and retain highly effective teachers** to work in high-need schools.
- ✓ **Expanded alternative certification paths** for teachers of hard-to-staff subjects such as math in high-need schools.
- ✓ **Recruited and trained new science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) teachers** for placement in critical-need subject areas in traditionally hard-to-staff schools.
- ✓ Enlisted more than 300 educators to help **develop student growth measures** in 30 content areas.
- ✓ Instituted a professional development program to **help districts implement Race to the Top goals**.

## The Work Ahead: Delaware *Must* ...

- **Define reliable, comparable measures of student achievement** to use in teacher evaluations, starting in 2011–12.
- **Use these evaluations to make decisions** on teachers' professional development, promotion, retention, and removal.
- Fully roll out the Development and Data Coach programs in schools to **support fair teacher evaluations** and help teachers **use student performance data to improve instruction**.
- Adopt policies to **amend the state's approved alternative routes to certification** to include nationally proven teacher preparation programs.
- **Hire teachers earlier** to ensure a competitive applicant pool.\*
- Fully roll out DLP and DTF and **begin placing talented, effective teachers and leaders** in high-need schools.
- **Give principals more hiring and budgeting freedom**.\*
- **Require greater accountability** from teacher college programs for graduates' performance.

**"This state is going to take education to an entirely different level."**

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan

## Invest in early childhood education to help young children from underserved communities get a strong start in school.

**Why?** Because only 34 percent of Delaware children begin kindergarten at grade level.



### What's Been Done: Delaware *Has* ...

- ✓ **Improved the quality of early childhood education** in more than 184 programs serving more than 10,500 children statewide through the Delaware Stars for Early Success program.\*
- ✓ **Released a pilot study on kindergarten readiness**, finding that while 80 percent of children attend preschool, just 34 percent leave prepared for kindergarten.\*
- ✓ **Provided early childhood professionals funds** to obtain AA and BA degrees through the TEACH scholarship program.\*
- ✓ **Presented early education reform recommendations** to the governor and general assembly, and analyzed school funding sources.\*

### The Work Ahead: Delaware *Must* ...

- Expand state support for **quality early childhood education**, especially for children from low-income families.\*
- **Enhance professional development** for early childhood educators.\*
- Enable data systems to **share students' information** from "cradle to career" to track progress and tailor instruction and investments accordingly.
- Improve and implement a **statewide kindergarten-readiness assessment**.\*
- **Strengthen coordination** among child services agencies, early childhood providers, and schools.\*

## Establish a simple and equitable funding system to more effectively spend taxpayers' education dollars.

**Why?** Because Delaware's inflexible, 60-year-old education funding system does not meet the actual needs of all public school students.



### What's Been Done: Delaware *Has* ...

- ✓ **Enacted only a small fraction** of the \$158 million in cost efficiency recommendations made by the governor-appointed Leadership for Education Achievement in Delaware (LEAD) Committee in 2008.\*
- ✓ **Posted district-level financial reports online**, providing information about per-pupil costs and expenses by category.\*

### The Work Ahead: Delaware *Must* ...

- **Remedy additional budget inefficiencies** as recommended by the LEAD Committee, and redirect those savings to the classroom.\*
- **Implement a voluntary program** to give districts and school leaders **flexibility to use funds** to best meet students' needs.\*
- **Create a "weighted student funding" formula** so schools serving English language learners, students with disabilities, and other high-need populations have the resources they need.\*
- Report more education financials online to **increase transparency**.\*

# We still have far to go to meet our Race to the Top and Vision 2015 commitments:

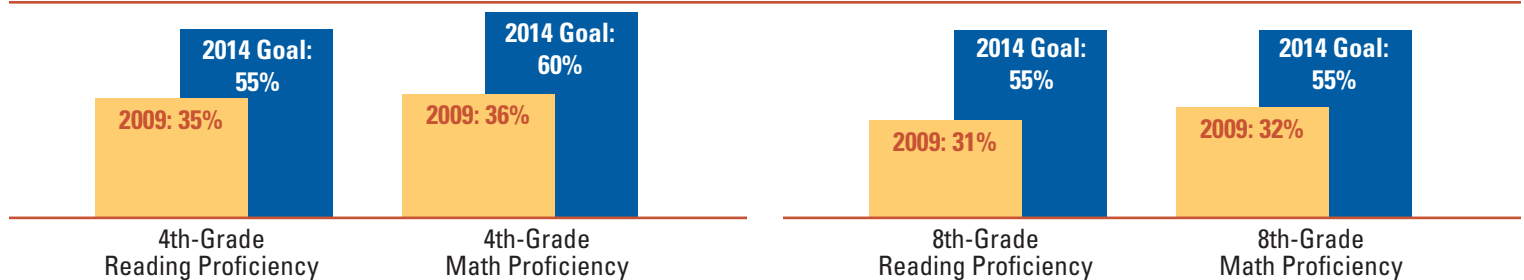
## Meeting State Standards

2009/2010 Delaware Student Testing Program average (grades 3, 5, 8, 10) and 2014 performance goals under the new Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System

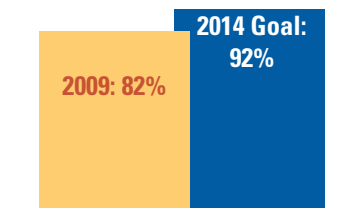


## Meeting National Standards

Delaware students' performance according to internationally benchmarked National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) standards

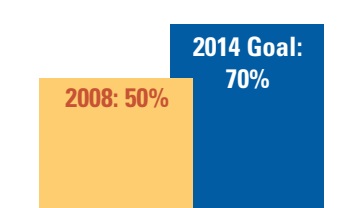


## Delaware Students Graduating High School\*

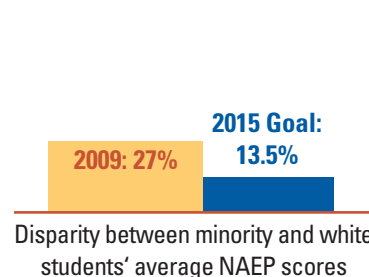


\*As measured by the National Governors Association

## Delaware Students Enrolling in College



## Closing Delaware's Achievement Gap



## Using Race to the Top Funds: Year 1 of 4



We will continue to report progress toward these goals during the coming years, and we invite you to join us in this campaign to create outstanding Delaware schools.

Here's how to stay up-to-date:

- Request our twice-monthly e-newsletter: [www.vision2015delaware.org](http://www.vision2015delaware.org)
- Attend your local school board meetings (visit your school district website)
- Get Race to the Top updates at: [www.doe.k12.de.us](http://www.doe.k12.de.us)
- Contact your local legislators: <http://legis.delaware.gov>

## THE VISION 2015 IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

Marvin N. Schoenhals, Chairman, WSFS Bank, *Chair*  
H. Raye Jones Avery, Executive Director, Christina Cultural Arts Center  
Susan Bunting, Superintendent, Indian River School District  
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Marcia Lyles, Superintendent, Christina School District  
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# VISION 2015

For more information:  
[www.vision2015delaware.org](http://www.vision2015delaware.org)