

# Overview: College and Career Preparation

## November 2015

### Introduction

Some economists estimate that by 2020, 65 percent of the workforce will need a postsecondary degree or credential.<sup>i</sup> In recent years, Delaware has made progress in preparing students for postsecondary success—the graduation rate is at an all-time high, at 84 percent graduating in four years.<sup>ii</sup> In addition, a greater percentage of high school students are taking and passing one or more Advanced Placement exams, increasing from 8 percent of the class of 2000 to 17 percent of the class of 2013.<sup>iii</sup> Despite these improvements, there are opportunities for greater improvement—less than 20 percent of the class of 2013-14 met the SAT college readiness benchmark and 44 percent of Delaware students attending Delaware colleges and universities require remediation before they can take credit-bearing coursework.<sup>iv,v</sup>

### Current Landscape

Although an increasing number of jobs of the future will require a four-year degree, there are many middle and high wage jobs that do not. There are jobs in sectors such as health care and manufacturing that only require a one-year certification or an associate degree—and employers have indicated they can't find applicants to fill the positions.<sup>vi,vii</sup>

Over the past several years, with the support of Race to the Top funding, Delaware has invested in initiatives to track and increase college access and readiness, with the aim of providing all students the option of attaining a professional certificate, associate, or bachelor's degree. The state is also increasing college readiness by implementing more rigorous Common Core State Standards, which will better prepare students to engage in college-level coursework. Since 2005, the percentage of Delawareans ages 18-24 attaining an education greater than a high school diploma has increased from 46 percent to 56 percent in 2013.<sup>viii</sup>

There are a number of programs and initiatives already underway aimed at supporting students as they prepare to enter college and the workforce.

### *Connecting Education and the Workforce*

- In 2015, Delaware joined the **Pathways to Prosperity Network**, a group of 12 states focused on scaling grades nine through 14 integrated academic and career pathways. Representatives from the Departments of Education, Labor, and Economic Development, the Delaware Workforce Development Board, the Business Roundtable Education Committee, and local non-profits have worked together to begin to strategically align and bolster existing initiatives to improve education, workforce, and economic outcomes.<sup>ix</sup>
- As part of this initiative, **during the fall of 2015 the state launched five state-developed career pathways**. Traditionally, school or district level pathways have been developed at the local level. The state-developed pathways are aligned to state labor market demands, provide a common curriculum and professional development for teachers, and give students the opportunity to gain work-based learning experience, and earn industry credentials and early college credits in this field.<sup>x</sup>

#### **The state-developed career pathways launched in 2015 include:**

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Computer Science
- Culinary Arts and Hospitality
- Engineering
- Biomedical Sciences

#### **In the near future additional pathways will be launched in:**

- Finance
- Health Care
- Education

- **Success Pathways and Roads to Careers (SPARC)** is a program that helps students (grades seven through 12) and young adults entering the workforce become career ready. This collaborative effort of the Department of Education, Delaware Business Roundtable Education Committee, and United Way of Delaware offers tools that enable connections between local employers and students exploring their career options.<sup>xi</sup>

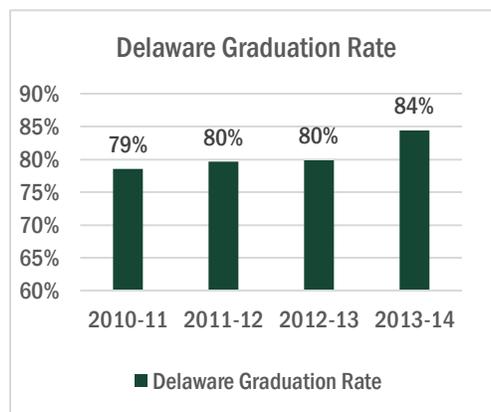
### *Preparing Students to Apply To, Get Accepted, and Enroll in College*

- **“Getting to Zero,”** a partnership between the Delaware Department of Education and College Board has helped expand college access to Delaware students by ensuring every college-ready (students who earn a 1550 or higher on the SAT) high school student completes a college application. The initiative also includes a targeted FAFSA campaign, developing a culture of celebrating college decisions, and providing additional college enrollment supports to high school seniors to ensure they successfully transition to campus in the fall.<sup>xii</sup>
- In October and November of each year, **College Application Month** is held in every high school in the state. Time is used during the school day to inform students about the application process and provide students with the opportunity to apply to college.<sup>viii</sup>
- In 2014, Delaware was the first state to launch a **statewide texting campaign** that informs students, parents, and school counselors about important information related to the college application process. Nearly 4,000 seniors signed up for the campaign in its first year. Those who sign up receive two to three text messages per month between January and August, and receive timely responses from a team informed about the college application process.<sup>viii</sup>
- In 2014, the state launched a **Foundations of College Math** pilot, a course that supports high school seniors who are likely to attend college but may otherwise need remedial courses before taking credit-bearing course loads. All of Delaware’s colleges and universities have agreed that students who successfully complete the course will not be required to take remedial math courses in college.<sup>xiii</sup>
- **The SEED Scholarship Program** provides funding for students who meet certain requirements to attend Delaware Technical and Community College tuition free. **The Inspire Scholarship** provides partial funding for students who meet certain requirements to attend Delaware State University.<sup>viii</sup>

Although there are many promising programs and initiatives already underway, a continued focus on institutionalizing and scaling the work will be critical to their continued success.

### **How Delaware Compares**

Varying types of measurement of college and career readiness indicators make it difficult to accurately compare Delaware to other states. In recent years, Delaware has made great strides in preparing students for success in college and the workforce after high school. In 2013, Delaware’s graduation rate was on par with the national average. In 2014, that rate increased by over four percent to 84.4 percent.<sup>xiv</sup>



In the spring of their junior year, every public high school student takes the SAT during the school day. Delaware is one of three states administering the SAT to more than 90 percent of students.<sup>xv</sup>

As of 2012, 55 percent of Delaware public high school enrolled in either a two- or four-year college program immediately after high school. This number is below the national college enrollment rate of 66 percent.<sup>xvi</sup>

## Potential Action Steps

Delaware has many programs and initiatives in place to support students as they begin to pursue higher education and the workforce. In order to best serve our students, Delaware can strategically align this work to help assure that all students are supported as they pursue higher education and careers.

Category	Potential Action Steps	Progress Underway	Supporters
<b>Connecting Education and the Workforce</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable all students to take courses which give them meaningful experience in a field that is in high-demand in Delaware</li> <li>• Facilitate the connection between education and business so that interested students can receive meaningful workplace experience starting as early as middle school</li> <li>• Incorporate career awareness, exploration, and immersion into the typical high school experience</li> <li>• Increase funding and capacity to expand initial Pathways pilots and institutionalize the work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delaware Pathways</li> <li>• SPARC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delaware Business Roundtable Education Committee</li> <li>• Delaware Department of Education (DDOE)</li> <li>• Department of Labor (DDOL)</li> <li>• United Way of Delaware</li> <li>• Vision Coalition of Delaware</li> </ul>
<b>Supporting teachers and counselors in facilitating learning for careers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create teacher and school counselor externship opportunities that will allow them to learn more about potential careers in a variety of fields</li> <li>• Provide course-specific professional learning opportunities for teachers</li> </ul>	Delaware Pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DDOE</li> <li>• Vision Coalition of Delaware</li> </ul>
<b>Enhancing Student Access</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase alignment among K-12, higher education, and the workforce</li> <li>• Increase access to AP and dual enrollment courses so students can receive college credits before graduating from high school</li> <li>• Increase access to existing Delaware college scholarship programs in order to provide more students with the financial means to take courses toward a professional certificate, associate or bachelor's degree</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting to Zero Campaign</li> <li>• College Application Month</li> <li>• Foundations of College Math Pilot</li> <li>• SEED and Inspire Scholarship programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DDOE</li> <li>• DDOL</li> <li>• Vision Coalition of Delaware</li> </ul>

## Additional Resources

- Delaware Goes to College: [www.delawaregoestocollege.org](http://www.delawaregoestocollege.org)
- SPARC Delaware: [www.sparcdelaware.org](http://www.sparcdelaware.org)
- Strategic Data Project College-Going Diagnostic: <http://sdp.cepr.harvard.edu/files/cepr-sdp/files/sdp-de-cg.pdf>

- Pathways to Prosperity Network: <http://www.jff.org/initiatives/pathways-prosperity-network>
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**Sources:**

- <sup>i</sup> Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce. (2012). Recovery 2020. <https://cew.georgetown.edu/report/recovery-job-growth-and-education-requirements-through-2020/>
- <sup>ii</sup> Delaware Department of Education (2014). School Profiles. <http://profiles.doe.k12.de.us/SchoolProfiles/State/Account.aspx>
- <sup>iii</sup> Delaware Department of Education. (2014). 2014 Delaware SAT Results. Presentation to State Board of Education on November 14, 2014. <https://eboard.eboardsolutions.com/Meetings/Attachment.aspx?S=190001&AID=7851&MID=352>
- <sup>iv</sup> See citation ii.
- <sup>v</sup> Delaware Department of Education. (2016). College Success Report. <http://www.doe.k12.de.us/cms/lib09/DE01922744/Centricity/Domain/161/State%20of%20Delaware.pdf>. This statistic represents the remediation rate for the Class of 2012. A previous version of the College Success Report (released September 2014), reported a lower statewide college enrollment rate and a higher remediation rate. The rate utilized in the 2016 report has been updated to reflect the correct college enrollment rate and remediation rate.
- <sup>vi</sup> See citation i.
- <sup>vii</sup> Accenture. (2013). Accenture 2013 Skills and Employment Trends Survey: Perspectives on Training. <https://www.accenture.com/ae-en/insight-accenture-2013-skills-employment-trends-survey-perspectives-on-training.aspx> The Survey found that nearly half of businesses surveyed (46%) reported a skills gap—meaning they did not have the employee skills needed to compete effectively in the coming years.
- <sup>viii</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2015). Educational Attainment, 2014 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; U.S. Census Bureau. (2015). Educational Attainment, 2005 American Community Survey. <http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk>
- <sup>ix</sup> Office of the Governor. (2015). *Governor Launches Pathways to Prosperity Initiative for Delaware Students*. <http://news.delaware.gov/2015/02/12/governor-launches-pathways-to-prosperity-initiative-for-delaware-students/>
- <sup>x</sup> Delaware Department of Education. (2015). CTE State-Model Programs of Study. <http://www.doe.k12.de.us/Page/2016>
- <sup>xi</sup> SPARC Delaware. (2015). [www.sparcdelaware.org](http://www.sparcdelaware.org)
- <sup>xii</sup> Delaware Goes to College. (2015). [www.delawaregoestocollege.org](http://www.delawaregoestocollege.org)
- <sup>xiii</sup> See citation iii.
- <sup>xiv</sup> Delaware Department of Education. (2015). Delaware Summary of 2013-14 Graduation and Dropout data. Presentation to the State Board of Education on February 19, 2015. <https://eboard.eboardsolutions.com/Meetings/Attachment.aspx?S=190001&AID=8213&MID=364>.
- <sup>xv</sup> See citation iii.
- <sup>xvi</sup> See citation v.