

## Overview: Education Landscape November 2015

### Introduction

Delaware public schools serve a diverse student population with complex needs, and over the past decade there have been several big shifts that are increasing educational opportunities. However, national and international measures of student achievement indicate that equity gaps persist, and global peers are getting better, faster—surpassing the United States and Delaware.

### Current Landscape

#### *Overview of Delaware Public Schools*

- **More diversity in schools.** In 2014-15, Delaware public schools served nearly 135,000 students. More than half of these students identify as minority (53 percent) and over a third are low-income (35 percent).<sup>i</sup>

Ten-year student enrollment trends show that the overall student enrollment number is increasing, the student population is becoming increasingly diverse, and that special education and English learner populations are on the rise.<sup>ii</sup>

- **Small but complex school system.** The Delaware public school system is small in size compared to most other states and comparable or smaller than many urban school districts. The Delaware public school system serves a student population (135,000) comparable in size to the Philadelphia school district population (142,000),<sup>iii</sup> and less than a seventh of the size of the Massachusetts state public school system (956,000).<sup>iv</sup>

However, the Delaware public school system remains complex. It includes more than 220 schools and nearly 9,000 educators serving urban, suburban, and rural student populations. It is comprised of 46 local governing units, including 19 districts and 27 public charter schools (*see addendum for additional information*).<sup>v</sup> While the Delaware Department of Education, State Board of Education, and state legislature make many of the decisions that drive statewide education policy, those which impact the classroom (i.e. curriculum, professional development for teachers, etc.) are made at the local level.

#### *Progress in Delaware Public Education*<sup>vi</sup>

Much has changed over the past decade (2005-2015). There have been several big shifts in education that are changing how students are learning, increasing educational opportunities, and laying the foundation for further progress:

2014-15 STUDENT ENROLLMENT	134,932	
<b>RACE</b>		
White	62,878	47%
African American	42,099	31%
Hispanic/Latino	20,645	15%
Other minority	9,310	7%
<b>OTHER CHARACTERISTICS</b>		
Low-income	47,226	35%
Special education	18,756	14%
English learner	8,096	6%



<b>Early Learning</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 73% of early learning centers participated in the Delaware Stars for Early Success, Quality Rating and Improvement System, in 2014. In 2005, Stars was just a concept.</li> <li>• 100% of children participated in the fall 2015 readiness assessment for kindergartners. In 2005, there was no readiness assessment.</li> </ul>
<b>K-12</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 84% of the class of 2014 graduated from high school, as compared to 80% of the class of 2011.*</li> <li>• 17% of the class of 2013 participated and passed an AP examination, as compared to 13% of the class of 2005.</li> </ul>
<b>Postsecondary</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 54% of the young adult population (ages 18-24) completed some college, or a college degree, as compared to 41% in 2005.</li> </ul>
<b>Personalized Learning</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delaware has nationally benchmarked academic standards. In 2005, Delaware had state-specific standards, not comparable nationally.</li> <li>• Delaware is beginning to implement a mix of in-person and online “blended” learning. In 2005, this was rare.</li> </ul>
<b>Educator Support and Development</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delaware is a national leader in terms of requirements for becoming a teacher. In 2005, Delaware was average, nationally.</li> <li>• All teachers participate in Professional Learning Communities, as compared to some teachers in 2005.</li> </ul>
<b>System Governance, Alignment, and Performance</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delaware is a national leader in terms of data systems, among the top three states. In 2005, Delaware was above average.</li> </ul>
<b>Fair and Efficient Funding</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited progress has been made on funding. It is not yet fully reflective of student needs.</li> </ul>

*\*Delaware adopted a new methodology for calculating graduation rates in 2011, not directly comparable to previous years.*

## How Delaware Compares

Delaware student achievement has grown at the third-fastest rate in the U.S. over the past two decades (1992-2011).<sup>vii</sup> However, **equity gaps persist**, and **global peers are getting better, faster**.

- **2011-2014 statewide assessment results show progress** as more students succeed on a challenging state assessment. Statewide, approximately seven out of 10 students scored proficient or advanced on the DCAS in 2013-14, compared to six out of 10 students in 2010-11.<sup>viii</sup>
- **Statewide assessment results** released fall 2015 provide a new baseline for how Delaware students are performing in English language arts and mathematics. The 2015 Smarter Assessment results are the first Delaware scores available for the test, which is aligned with the Common Core—Delaware’s higher academic standards. Statewide, **approximately five out of 10 students are proficient in English language arts**, and **fewer than four out of 10 students are proficient in math**.<sup>ix</sup> Equity gaps persist among low-income, minority, special education, and

English learner subgroups, as many of these student populations are half as proficient as their peers.

- **Nationally**, Delaware has improved significantly, but remains middle of the pack according to the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP)—considered the nation’s report card. Over the past two decades (1992-2011), Delaware ranked third nationally in terms of overall NAEP gains (growth).<sup>x</sup> Currently, **Delaware proficiency remains comparable to the national average**. Recent growth (2003-2015) has been modest, and achievement gaps persist.<sup>xi</sup>

**Internationally**, the U.S. education system has **slipped** from performing on par with other global leaders **to performing slightly below the average developed nation**.<sup>xii</sup> In 2012, 65 countries participated in the Program for International Assessment (PISA), a “global report card” of student achievement.<sup>xiii</sup> Because Delaware students performed on par with students nationally on the NAEP, it is likely that the U.S. results on PISA reflect how Delaware students would perform.

PISA Student Achievement Ranking (2012)			
PISA Rank	Reading	Math	Science
1	Shanghai, China	Shanghai, China	Shanghai, China
2	Singapore	Hong Kong, China	Hong Kong, China
3	Hong Kong, China	Singapore	Singapore
4	Taiwan	Japan	Japan
5	Korea	Finland	Korea
6	Macao, China	Estonia	Finland
7	Japan	Korea	Ireland
8	Liechtenstein	Vietnam	Chinese Taipei
9	Switzerland	Poland	Canada
10	Netherlands	Canada	Poland
	<b>#30 United States / DE</b>	<b>#23 United States / DE</b>	<b>#20 United States / DE</b>

**Sources:**

<sup>i</sup> Delaware Department of Education. (2015). Online School and District Profiles. <http://profiles.doe.k12.de.us/SchoolProfiles/State/Default.aspx>

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>iii</sup> Philadelphia School District. (2015). Snapshot of the District, District Schools (SY 2014-15). <http://www.phila.k12.pa.us/about/#schools>

<sup>iv</sup> Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2015). 2014-15 Enrollment by Grade Report (District). [http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state\\_report/enrollmentbygrade.aspx](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/enrollmentbygrade.aspx)

<sup>v</sup> See reference i

<sup>vi</sup> Vision Coalition. (2015). Student Success 2025. <http://visioncoalitionde.org/student-success-2025/>

<sup>vii</sup> Harvard University, Program on Education Policy Governance & Education Next. (2012). Achievement Growth: International and U.S. State Trends in Student Performance. [http://www.hks.harvard.edu/pepg/PDF/Papers/PEPG12-03\\_CatchingUp.pdf](http://www.hks.harvard.edu/pepg/PDF/Papers/PEPG12-03_CatchingUp.pdf)

<sup>viii</sup> Delaware Department of Education. (2015). Delaware Student Assessment Reporting & Analysis for the Public (ver. 2015). [https://pubapps.doe.k12.de.us/DSARA\\_Public/default.aspx](https://pubapps.doe.k12.de.us/DSARA_Public/default.aspx)

<sup>ix</sup> Delaware Department of Education. (2015). Delaware Student Assessment Reporting & Analysis for the Public (ver. 2015). [https://pubapps.doe.k12.de.us/DSARA\\_Public/default.aspx](https://pubapps.doe.k12.de.us/DSARA_Public/default.aspx)

<sup>x</sup> Harvard University, Program on Education Policy Governance & Education Next. (2012). Achievement Growth: International and U.S. State Trends in Student Performance. [http://www.hks.harvard.edu/pepg/PDF/Papers/PEPG12-03\\_CatchingUp.pdf](http://www.hks.harvard.edu/pepg/PDF/Papers/PEPG12-03_CatchingUp.pdf)

<sup>xi</sup> National Center for Education Statistics. (2015). NAEP Data Explorer: State Profiles. <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/states/>

<sup>xii</sup> OECD. (2013). PISA Database. <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/pisa-2012-results.htm>

<sup>xiii</sup> Ibid.