



March 24, 2017

Secretary of Education Susan Bunting  
Delaware Department of Education  
401 Federal St Suite 2  
Dover, DE 19901

Secretary Bunting,

We are writing in regard to the state's recently released ESSA plan, specifically, our support for Section 5 of the plan, which outlines the state's strategies for supporting excellent educators. As parents, practitioners, institutions of higher education, leaders of the business community and non-profit sector, we have a vested interest in ensuring our community of educators is supported in their efforts to unleash the unbounding potential of our students.

Delaware has been a national leader in developing policies and practices that support excellent educators; in 2015 the state received a B- from the National Center for Teaching Quality, on overall policies to support educator effectiveness, putting Delaware in the top 10 of state rankings. Additionally, Delaware has been praised nationally for its state equity plan, Excellent Educators for All. We should maintain that momentum and build upon it as we head into the era of ESSA.

Many, if not all, of the initiatives in the state's ESSA plan related to educator support align with *Student Success 2025*, our statewide vision for improving Delaware's education system, which our organizations were deeply involved in crafting and continue to implement. We applaud this alignment and look forward to supporting the implementation of our shared priorities.

Specifically, the state's ESSA plan cites several strategies which we support, including

- the continued improvement of the state's educator preparation program reports and competitive innovation grants, which support the connectivity and alignment across Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and teacher preparation programs;
- new supports for induction and mentoring mentioned in the plan;
- the expansion of the teacher leadership pilot and initiatives;
- ongoing improvements to the state's educator feedback cycles and evaluation processes;
- the process by which the state is rolling out its educator equity dashboards – to provide both technical assistance to LEAs in addressing its equity gaps, and in providing transparency to the public on the distribution of educators across the state – including educator effectiveness, experience, retention, and those that are teaching out of field;
- the support being provided to LEAs to build strong leaders through professional learning and expanding alternative educational leadership programs; and
- the support provided to LEAs for recruitment and selection of excellent educators.



We recommend the Department continue conversations with the community, including our organizations, to ensure educators receive support and training in order to be able to meet students' social and emotional needs and teach using culturally competent approaches. Several promising practices have emerged in Delaware that may need greater attention and scale, and new approaches and supports may need to be developed.

We look forward to working with you to implement these important initiatives as we strive to support our educators and ensure that our state continues to have the best teachers and leaders in the country.

Respectfully submitted,

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