

Achievement Gap Action Group
Monday, December 3, 2007

Notes

Dr. Joseph Pika, Chair, called the meeting to order. He noted that this was the last meeting for the Achievement Gap Action Group (AGAG). A new subcommittee of the P-20 Council will be created from some of the current AGAG members with the addition of representatives from higher education and Rodel.

Dr. Pika noted that AGAG began in 2001 and since its inception, has issued 5 annual "Awareness to Action" reports on tracking the achievement gap in Delaware schools. In addition, with funding from the State Board of Education, AGAG sponsored and worked with the Research and Development Center on the Correlates of Achievement data base for all middle and high schools.

Discussion:

- Awareness to Action: Tracking the Achievement Gap in Delaware Schools
This annual report shows four years of testing data. The data is displayed by district and by school for each third, fifth, eighth and tenth grade for whom 4 years of data is available using data from the Delaware Student Testing Program (DSTP) scores for reading and math. The percentages of students in each subgroup meeting or exceeding the standard are displayed in a graphic format along with school demographics and the most recent Annual Yearly Performance (AYP) rating under No Child Left Behind (NCLB). From that data, the "gap" is calculated using the reference group against the subgroup. The report has been web-based but was not connected to school profiles until this past year. Moving forward, the Department of Education will sustain this work, calculating the achievement gap for each school and making it a part of the school report card, making the annual report conducted by the R&D Center unnecessary.

- Correlates of Achievement
The Correlates of Achievement work conducted by the R&D Center has created a dynamic, web-based program to help teachers and administrators analyze data within their schools on a continuous basis. The data are disaggregated by student, teacher, and school level factors, and incorporates class size, curriculum level, teacher experience, and group demographics. The data are constantly updated as teachers and administrators enter more elements into the system.
The Correlates training is becoming increasingly imbedded in school leadership training to create a culture of continuous improvement and to determine levers that can best effect the change in school culture. As a result of this imbedding and the additional support for development, the role of AGAG has changed from one of incubation of the project to turning the work over to others for implementation at the school and district levels.

- DE-CAN Subcommittee

Over the past two years, subcommittees of the P-20 Council, the State Board of Education and the Department of Education raised requirements for high school graduation, developed strategies to expand the opportunities for high school students to access dual enrollment and dual credit offerings, better aligned high school expectations with entrance requirements for higher education institutions, recommended high school curricula, and implemented student success plans. As a result of these many changes, the P-20 Council has endorsed the DE-CAN initiative—creation and support of the Delaware College Access Network. DE-CAN will support Delaware public school families to begin planning for post high school academic and career opportunities early in each student’s school career. This initiative will also address ways that higher education support and monitor student access and success.

The primary mission of DE-CAN is to strengthen the preparation of public school students in Delaware to ensure their college readiness and ability to succeed in work readiness programs, as well as degree attainment from two- and four-year college degree programs.

- DE-CAN Objectives:

1. Develop and Strengthen Public Support for Increasing Academic Rigor

Provide scheduled opportunities to all families of 8th and 9th grade students throughout Delaware to learn about college readiness curriculum and associated school-based and campus-based programs that will prepare students for access and success in college.

2. Support Student Access to a State-wide Network of College Preparatory Activities:

A. Expand the number of students with access to on- and off-campus pre-collegiate programs; improve the effectiveness of these programs so that the percentage of participating Delaware students meeting or exceeding the college admission standards rises.

B. Annually, track participation of cohorts of college-interested students in grades 8-11 to determine whether they are meeting college admission standards; all stakeholders will learn whether students’ grades and course selections place them on target for eventual admission.

C. Expand opportunities for dual enrollment and dual credit of all students.

3. Develop a Community-wide Academic Support Infrastructure:

Provide opportunities for schools, community organizations, and university community members to meet and develop relationships that will increase the access of students to tutoring and academic support.

4. Use data to measure student access and success in higher education.

Provide data from the Higher Education Data Cube, a collaborative of the P-20 Council, to public schools and higher education institutions to evaluate their programs and supports.

5. Develop a financial plan to support DE-CAN.

- Anticipated Outcomes:

By 2012, the activities of this initiative will result in an increase in the number of Delaware high school graduates who are admitted to 2 year and 4 year degree programs and who are prepared to succeed based on completion of prerequisite rigor in high school courses, using 2007 as the baseline year.

By 2015, this effort will result in improved retention and graduation rates among Delawareans pursuing B.A. degrees, using 2011 as the baseline year (2007 freshman class). Specifically, the goal of this effort is to double the number of students from all population groups that achieve postsecondary degrees.

Dr. Jennifer Bausmith from the Mid-Atlantic Regional Educational Laboratory also attended this final AGAG meeting and noted her interest in the DE-CAN project. She will follow the work of the subcommittee and assist with research and other data as appropriate.

In order to accomplish the tasks, the DE-CAN subcommittee will be established and convene for its first meeting on Friday, January 25th at 9:00 a.m. in the Cabinet Room, Townsend Building, Dover.