

# **Delaware's Promise Dropout Prevention Committee**

## **Meeting Highlights**

March 23, 2009

2:30- 4:30 pm

- The meeting was held in the Cabinet Room of the Townsend Building and chaired by Dr. Coffield. The meeting began with a welcome and introductions. The group was asked to consider if the right folks were sitting at the table. If they felt that there was another person in their organization whose work better fit the goal of this group, they should submit the name with contact information so that membership adjustments could be made early on. Dr. Lowery has appointed Dan Cruce, Associate Secretary/Chief of Staff and Innovation to serve on this committee. Dr. Sue Lee, JDG, asked for clarification regarding the new administrations commitment to the work around dropout prevention. Mr. Cruce assured her that this work aligns with the core mission of the Department. Suggestions were made to expand membership to include representation from the Department of Labor and the Kids' Department. Dr. Coffield then reviewed the agenda and the handouts for the meeting.
- Dr. Coffield explained that the Delaware's Promise Dropout Prevention Committee is a subcommittee of the P-20 Council. The P-20 Council is co-chaired by the Secretary of Education and the President of the State Board. Dr. Coffield is the staff to the P-20 Council. The Governor has yet to name a new President of the State Board of Education. This committee is charged with the implementation of the plan.
- Dr. Coffield shared national data regarding the dropout crisis. She also shared two tables and a bar graph that helped participants to understand the current Dropout Crisis in Delaware. The first table displayed the information by district and the second by school. The bar graph provided a quick visual of the district level data. It was noted that reasons for dropping out were not provided for 72% of the students in Delaware who dropped out. The group expressed concern that this information was not available. Dr. John McCoy, Superintendent of Laurel School District, indicated that in many cases these student begin as attendance problems and then drop out of sight and are no where to be found in order to obtain a reason.
- Dr. Coffield then led the group in a review of Delaware's America's Promise Dropout Prevention Action Plan. Mr. Cruce suggested that on the Vision & Goal page of the action plan that the goal under "Building Effective Policies" should read, "Delaware will SHARE the role...of oversight and prevention." It was noted that the items indicated to be done in the 0-3 months following the summit timeframe had been completed. After reviewing the full plan, the group felt it was overwhelming and that it was necessary to prioritize recommendations and

focus on a small number of actions. The group decided to focus efforts in the following three areas:

**1. Inventory & evaluation of current efforts-**

- 1.1. Who in Delaware is working on dropout prevention and what are they doing?
- 1.2. Evaluation of outcomes/effectiveness and/or use of best practices methodology
  - 1.2.1. Regional Education Lab (no cost)
  - 1.2.2. United Way
  - 1.2.3. Self-Assessment Tools (review those currently available and adapt or adopt one)
- 1.3. Develop & disseminate technical assistance and professional development resources grounded in research-based best practices to address gaps in current practice and to promote capacity building for teachers, building administrators, community based organizations and others.

**2. Develop a dropout risk assessment tool for district and school use by tapping into the Data Warehouse with specific queries.**

- 2.1. Develop the queries and user interface for the tool.
- 2.2. Develop and disseminate technical assistance and professional development on the use of the tool.
- 2.3. Once we are able to identify vulnerable students based upon proven indicators, take preventative action. (See a, iii above: Develop & disseminate technical assistance and professional development resources to address gaps in best practice and capacity building) for teachers, building administrators, community based organizations and others.

**3. Communication/Collaboration Across agencies (DOL, Kids Dept., etc) and with community partners and non-profits**

- 3.1. Discuss with other Cabinet Secretaries to ensure their awareness of the dropout issue and the economic impact. Establish a partnership in the effort to address the crisis.
- 3.2. Agree upon and send common key messages (call to action, economic impact, stats...)
- 3.3. Look for efficiencies by reduction in the duplication of efforts
- 3.4. Share relevant data
- 3.5. Share best practices for replication

• Next Steps:

1. Assign priority projects to subcommittees and assign membership
2. Set future meeting dates