

# Delaware Future Education Leaders Program

**... a guide to summer fellowship opportunities at the DDOE for current undergraduate students, graduate students, and recent graduates**

Delaware's Department of Education will be hosting a summer program – the Delaware Future Education Leaders Program (DFELP) – for promising future leaders who have a passion for education and want to gain hands-on exposure to policy work. The program has been developed specifically for current students and recent graduates as they explore career paths in education and seek exposure to careers in state government. Individuals from all programs of study are welcome to apply.

The program begins on Monday, June 3 and ends on Thursday, August 8. There is a \$3,000 stipend paid to participants of this fellowship. Program fellows will work full days Monday-Thursday.

## What does it mean to be a DFELP fellow?

You will own a tightly-defined piece of work critical to our policy agenda for the duration of your time with us. At the same time, you will participate in a program of discussion sessions with Delaware leaders in state government, district and school leadership, the business community, and non-profit organizations intended to develop you as a leader and push your thinking on education issues of national importance. Your 10 weeks will culminate in a presentation of your work and policy recommendations to department staff and leadership.

By the end of your 10 weeks you will be more informed about education policy, formed friendships with other DFELP fellows and be able to speak cogently to many of the most pressing education issues facing Delaware and our nation as a whole. You will have absorbed some of the tried-and-true lessons in leadership practices of Delaware's leaders. Moreover, you will have the ongoing support and guidance of a department mentor who is eager to help you identify and navigate career opportunities.

*"I look forward to welcoming these top students and recent graduates to our department. Their experiences and ideas will contribute to a broader perspective as we tackle important policy issues together. As a result of their summer experience, these future leaders will have gained new insights from their personal involvement in Department work and from being mentored by senior DOE leaders."*

- Secretary Susan Bunting, Ed.D.  
Delaware Secretary of Education



## Program Details at a Glance

**Program length:** The program runs for 10 weeks, from Monday, June 3 to Thursday, August 8. The workweek is Monday-Thursday. Fellows will not be required to work Wednesday July 3 or Thursday, July 4.

**Compensation:** The payment for the fellowship is \$3,000. You will be paid upon completion of the program and deliverables. You will be responsible for costs associated with participating in the program, such as travel to the department's Dover office. To receive compensation for the fellowship, you will be required to register for a Delaware business license and complete a W9. Do not complete these until you have been notified that you have been accepted into the fellowship.

**Location:** DFELP fellows will have access to our Dover offices and will determine the appropriate working arrangement with their summer sponsors.

**Who can apply?** Current undergraduate and graduate students and recent graduates (within the last five years) of any program of study. Preference will be given to those currently living or studying in Delaware.

**Application deadline:** Applications must be submitted by Monday, April 1.

**Notification date:** All participants will be notified by Friday, May 3.

## How do I apply?

Please complete the form located [HERE](#) and send a copy of your resume to [DOEHR@doe.k12.de.us](mailto:DOEHR@doe.k12.de.us) by **Monday, April 1**.

**Note:** You will be prompted to provide the following:

- Personal statement (no more than 500 words) that speaks to the following:
  - What drives you to want a career in education?
  - How have you shown true leadership?
  - What do you hope to gain from the program?
- Contact details for three references
  - At least one must be a current or former supervisor
  - Cannot be members of your immediate family

Once we have reviewed your application, we will reach out to schedule an initial conversation to discuss your interests and preview potential projects. You will then be asked to interview with representatives from our team of summer sponsors who will assess whether your skills and interests are a match for a particular project. Interviews will take place in person in our Dover office or via Skype.

All participants will be notified by Friday, May 3 as to whether they have been accepted into the program.



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## Frequently Asked Questions

### What can I expect from the experience?

- Ownership of a well-defined piece of work tied to a priority department project that will directly influence the direction of state policy
- Weekly discussions with education leaders from state government, district leadership, and community organizations as you explore career paths in education
- A program of weekly readings and discussion materials intended to develop you as a leader and push your thinking on education issues of national importance
- Mentorship from a senior department staff member (your summer sponsor) who is eager to help you explore career opportunities after the fellowship ends

### How many program participants are there?

This is a competitive fellowship opportunity. Submission of an application does not guarantee you will be accepted into the fellowship. The number of program positions will be dependent on the number of available projects identified by summer sponsors. We want to ensure that each project closely matches the skills and interests of each program participant. The project matching process during the interviews will ultimately determine how many applicants we accept.

### The description says that this is a paid fellowship, but that I am responsible for costs associated with participating in the program. What costs do I need to consider?

You will not receive your \$3,000 payment until the end of your fellowship and after the completion of all associated deliverables. For you to receive a stipend, you will need to be an independent contractor with the department – meaning you will need to have a Delaware business license (\$75), and a W9. You will not be reimbursed for these expenses. Should you be accepted into the fellowship, we will provide additional guidance on how to complete these. Do not complete any of these until you have been accepted into the program and are directed to do so.

We cannot reimburse you for travel expenses associated with getting to and from our offices and mandatory guest speaker discussions. However, you and your sponsor will determine the best working arrangement for your project (Wilmington office, Dover office, remotely, or combination of all three options). To gain the most from the experience, it is recommended that you agree on a working arrangement that will allow you to spend time immersed in the work with your sponsor and other department staff. We cannot offer housing stipends for those moving to Delaware from out of state to participate.



The program indicates that guest speaker discussions are mandatory. What if I need to miss for any reason?

The weekly speaker discussions are mandatory because they are an integral part of the summer experience and a regular opportunity for you and your fellow DFELP participants to engage with one another on the materials designed to develop you as future leaders. If you need to miss a session for any reason you must notify the program coordinators in advance. The session dates and times will be announced prior to the start of the program. If you miss more than two guest speaker sessions for any reason you may be removed from the program.

### What projects have fellows worked on in the past?

Fellows have worked on a wide variety of projects in workgroups across the department. Some of the past project topics have included:

- Educator compensation reform
- School accountability
- Rethinking Delaware's teacher licensure revocation and suspension process
- Building a statewide tool for Delaware Content Standard resources
- Designing information systems of the future
- Promoting professional learning standards
- Designing the state education agency of the future
- Identifying Delaware's "Beating the Odds" schools

See the next page for a sample past project description.

### What is the profile of past fellows?

In the past, fellows have been current students or recent graduates of institutions both inside and outside of Delaware. We are looking for top scholars and leaders who have a demonstrated ability to perform, a desire to grow and learn, and a passion for education. Fellows have come from a variety of degree programs including political science, education, public policy, mathematics, and economics.

See the last page of this document for a spotlight on a past fellow.

### Who can I contact if I have additional questions?

Contact the DDOE Human Resource Office at 302-735-4030 or [DOEHR@doe.k12.de.us](mailto:DOEHR@doe.k12.de.us).



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## **Sample Past Project: Innovative Approaches to Early Learning Workforce Compensation & Retention**

A growing body of scientific evidence that shows early experiences literally shape the brain's architecture and set the foundation for a child's lifelong health and success in school and career. When children get a great start in life, we all benefit: economists estimate a 10% return on investments in high quality early education – in reduced health care, special education, incarceration costs, and increased productivity and tax revenues. Children who enter school with the skills they need to be successful are more likely to graduate from high school, go to college, and have successful careers.

Research shows that teacher qualifications and skills are the single biggest predictor of quality and better child outcomes.

### **You will lead the work that helps us understand:**

Although 90% of a child's brain develops by age 5, early childhood teachers are among the lowest paid workers in the nation - earning less than animal caretakers, and barely more than most fast food cooks. Early educators earn an average of \$11 per hour in Delaware, and the often leave the field for better paying jobs. Nationally, preschool teachers with similar education earn about 60 percent of what kindergarten teachers earn, and nearly one-half of early childhood teachers in the United States live in families using at least one public assistance program.

You will research national best practices and innovative programs targeted at increasing the compensation, education, and retention of early childhood teachers. You will compare features and benefits of national models to Delaware's current initiatives, "Compensation, Retention, and Education Awards" (CORE.) and T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Scholarships. You will make recommendations to expand, improve or replace CORE within a policy brief that includes:

- 1) A brief review of the case for high-quality early childhood teachers
- 2) A brief overview of current working conditions for the early childhood workforce
- 3) A synopsis of best practices and innovations
- 4) A key considerations and recommendations for redesigning Delaware's CORE/T.E.A.C.H. initiatives.

### **Measurable outcomes and deliverables associated with this project:**

- 1) Delivery of a formal policy brief (outlined above)
- 2) Preparation of a presentation for key stakeholders (Professional Development Advisory Council or the Delaware Early Childhood Council)

**Summer sponsor:** *Education Associate, Office of Early Learning*



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## Past DFELP Fellow Spotlight: Lars Jensen

**Project:** Education Funding Research & Analysis

**Sponsor:** Associate Secretary, Financial Management and Operations

**Education:** BS in Chemistry and a minor in Urban Education from the University of Delaware

**Work Experience Prior to DFELP:** University of Delaware Chemistry Workshop Coordinator

**How DFELP Impacted Lars:** *"This program has given me such a deeper understanding of public education. In education it is always easy to identify the problem, but finding the root of the problem and why it is not changing is much harder. This experience has helped me to see a lot of the roots of problems, and that there are people working to solve them. This will greatly help me to find change agents, and advocate for policies that are better suited for my school."*



**Lars' Relationship with His Summer Sponsor:** *"My sponsor was great. They were always very responsive whenever I needed assistance, and always gave me more information than the minimum that was needed to complete my task. They really valued me learning as much as possible, not just me completing this project for them."*

## Past DFELP Fellow Spotlight: Jalisha Braxton

**Project:** Teacher & Leader Effectiveness Data Analytics

**Sponsor:** Education Associate, Educator Data & Analytics

**Education:** BA in Psychology from Princeton University

**Work Experience Prior to DFELP:** Princeton University Psychology Lab Research Assistant

**How DFELP Impacted Jalisha:** *"This program has helped me gain knowledge of the Delaware education system, including our teacher evaluation process, relationship with local educator preparation programs, etc. I can now think critically about educational issues from multiple perspectives, a skill that was difficult to do before without an adequate knowledge base."*



**Jalisha's Relationship with Her Summer Sponsor:** *"I really enjoyed working with (my sponsor), and felt like a true employee while working with her. I was included in many different projects and invited to meetings so that I had a great understanding of how everything in the department worked and fit together."*



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