



# FY19 ANNUAL REPORT July 2019

## Delaware State Board of Education

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# INTRODUCTION

The Delaware State Board of Education is pleased to present its 2018-19 Annual Report. This report highlights the Board's role in supporting and improving education in Delaware. While much of the Board's monthly meeting time is spent performing its statutory responsibilities such as reviewing and approving rules and regulations, and reviewing applications and modifications for charter schools, the Board also deals with a wide range of policy issues. The Board's vision and mission statements along with the four FY19 priorities are contained within this report.

## **State Board of Education Meetings**

The Board's regular monthly meetings are open to the public and are usually scheduled for the third Thursday of the month, beginning at 5:00 p.m. The Board rotates locations of regular meetings among Delaware's three counties. The schedule for State Board of Education meetings can be [found here](#).

## **State Board of Education Documents**

Minutes and recordings from the State Board of Education's meetings may be accessed through the [Department of Education's website](#). You may also access the State Board's Procedures Manual, membership information, and past reports on the website. Hard copies of these documents may be obtained by contacting the State Board of Education office. Meeting agendas and materials may be accessed on the [State Board of Education's eboard site](#).

## **Contact Information**

You may contact the Delaware State Board of Education through Ms. Whitney Sweeney, President of the State Board of Education or through Ms. Jenna Ahner, Executive Director of the State Board of Education at (302) 735-4010 or [jenna.ahner@sbe.k12.de.us](mailto:jenna.ahner@sbe.k12.de.us).

The FY19 Annual Report can be found on the State Board of Education's website at <https://www.doe.k12.de.us/domain/170>.

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

In June 2018, I had the distinct honor of being appointed by Governor John Carney to serve as the President of the Delaware State Board of Education. The last 12 months have been a year of transition for the Board as it emerged from the Joint Legislative Oversight and Sunset Review Committee in June and welcomed a majority of new Board members and a new Executive Director over the year. We embraced the resulting legislation, House Bill 455, and the feedback of not only the Sunset Committee, but many other voices as we actively set to work to advance the Board's mission serving as the primary voice for Delaware citizens on education policy.

In the last twelve months, the Board has welcomed four of seven new voting members, including me, and saw the retirement of long-term Board member Dr. Terry Whittaker who served with us for over ten years. While we will miss his expertise and guidance, we welcome the voices of our newest members, Vince Lofink, Candice Fifer, and Reverend Provey Powell and the unique perspective they each bring to the Board. Additionally, as set forth by House Bill 455, the Governor appointed two non-voting members to the Board in May 2019 for one-year terms, a former Delaware State Teacher of the Year, Lea Wainwright, and a current Delaware student, Dorcas Olatunji. We look forward to their input as well. Our members represent a diverse set of skills with expertise in the areas of mental health, finance, law, policy, research, and education, among others. We also are geographically diverse representing the City of Wilmington and each of the three counties. It is this depth of perspective, experience, and individual networks that we seek to leverage in support of Delaware's students.

This has been a year of growth for the Board as we initially focused on fulfilling our statutory responsibilities, establishing relationships with our partners, stakeholders, and communities, and revisiting the goals and our priorities as a Board. Through our active engagement with stakeholders, we recognize that the Board has an important role in policies and regulations ranging from those impacting our youngest learners to those at the other end of the spectrum who are beginning their path to financial independence whether it be through college or career. We have appreciated the strong working relationship that we have developed with the Department of Education and Secretary Bunting. Collaboration is key to advancement and success.

One of our first endeavors as a Board was to establish priorities for the year. These include:

- Developing and communicating a clear vision for the Board's roles, responsibilities, and strategic priorities
- Leveraging partnerships and engagement with the community in order to identify gaps and advance opportunities for all Delaware students
- Building and strengthening state policy and practice to support students in gaining the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary to pursue careers and continuing education
- Engaging education and community partners to support success in early literacy.

You will find additional detail on our progress in the following pages.

After a break of approximately 10 years, we have re-initiated the publishing of an annual report for the Board of Education. We view this annual report as our report card at the end of the year and seek to have advanced our objectives. Some of the highlights include leading a committee to develop the state Perkins Transition Plan through consultation with key stakeholders and initiating a longer term strategic planning process in order to ensure that our work clearly aligns with the roles and responsibilities of the Board as well as addresses current issues in education and our state. We look forward to completing the Strategic Plan in early FY20. The planning process will incorporate some of the challenges and lessons learned in this report. Our board members lead or serve on a wide range of education committees, councils and task forces and are active participants in the ongoing

discussion and development of education policy. This engagement is critical in helping us to understand and inform the issues that we want to address.

In the Fall of 2018, the Board began rotating our meeting locations to schools throughout the state. This rotation of meetings has allowed us a unique opportunity to partner with schools and highlight innovative work underway. Rotating through the state brings us closer to the citizens that we serve and provides greater interaction with schools and districts. As a citizens board, however, we recognize that serving on committees and connecting with schools, districts, and education partners is not enough. As we look into the next twelve months, we will continue to consider ways to meaningfully connect with our communities.

I encourage you to take the opportunity to read this annual report and get a more detailed look at the actions and activities of the State Board in the past year.

As we move forward, we welcome the opportunity to work with educators and citizens throughout our state to provide a strong public education system for all Delaware students.

Whitney Sweeney  
President, State Board of Education

## DELAWARE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERSHIP



**Whitney Sweeney**  
President



**Audrey J. Noble**  
Vice President



**Nina Lou Bunting**  
Member



**Candice Fifer**  
Member



**Vincent Lofink**  
Member



**Provey Powell, Jr.**  
Member  
Appointed May 2019



**Wali Rushdan, II**  
Member



**Terry Whittaker**  
Member  
Resigned December 2018



**Dorcas Olatunji**  
Member  
Student, Appointed May 2019

The State Board of Education consists of nine members. Seven voting members who are appointed by the Governor, approved by the Senate. Two non-voting members appointed by the Governor.

Background information on each member can be [found here.](#)



**Lea Wainwright**  
Member  
Teacher of the Year,  
Appointed May 2019



**Susan Bunting**  
Secretary of Education  
SBE Executive Secretary

## BOARD COMPOSITION AND ACTIVITIES

### **Whitney Sweeney, President, serves at the pleasure of the Governor**

P-20 Council, co-chair

University of Delaware Board of Trustees, member (ex-officio)

### **Audrey J. Noble, Vice President, term expires 2021**

DPAS II Advisory Committee, member

Charter School Accountability Committee, member (non-voting)

NGA Early Care and Education Workforce 2.0, member

Get Delaware Reading, Board representative

P-20 Council Early Literacy Subcommittee, member

H. Fletcher Brown Scholarship Selection Committee, member

### **Nina Lou Bunting, term expires 2021**

Teacher of the Year Selection Committee, member

Teachers' Advisory Committee, member

### **Candice Fifer, term expires 2024**

ESSA Advisory Committee, member

Drug and Substance Abuse Advisory Group, co-chair

### **Vincent Lofink, term expires 2023**

CTE Committee, member (State Board Committee)

DSBA Board of Directors, member

DSBA Legislative Committee, member

SBE Student Representative Selection Process (State Board Committee, September 2018-November 2018)

### **Provey Powell, Jr., term expires 2025**

(Appointed in May to fill the seat vacated by Terry Whittaker)

### **Wali W. Rushdan II, term expires 2024**

Equalization Committee, member

P-20 Council Early Literacy Subcommittee, member

### **Terry Whittaker (resigned December 2019)**

### **Dorcas Olatunji, term expires 2020**

(Appointed in May to serve as the student representative)

### **Lea Wainwright, term expires 2020**

(Appointed in May to serve as the Teacher of the Year representative)

## FY19 HIGHLIGHTS

This report outlines the work accomplished by the State Board of Education in FY19. Highlights include:

- The State Board of Education **welcomed four new voting members, two non-voting members**, including a former State Teacher of the Year and a student, and a new Executive Director;
- **Approved 10 regulations**, relating to graduation requirements, DIAA, administrator appraisal, initial licenses, issuance and renewal of continuing licenses, among others;
- **Contributed to 15+ committees** focused on a variety of topics from early learning through higher education;
- **Facilitated the Career and Technical Education subcommittee**, which included 25+ members and approved the Perkins V Transition Plan in April 2019;
- **Approved seven charter school renewals and one major modification**;
- **Began rotating meetings throughout the state**, with meetings held in Appoquinimink, Seaford, Colonial, Brandywine, and Milford;
- **Improved communication and engagements routines**, including improving online communications, updating the Board's procedures manual, and initiating a strategic planning process.

The Board identified the following as areas of opportunity for FY20:

- **Expand communications and engagement with members of the public** regarding education issues aligned with the Board's statutory responsibilities;
- **Develop stronger partnerships** with local and national partners to inform work and decision-making;
- **Utilize Board-commissioned data and research** to help inform Board decision-making;
- **Adopt a new strategic plan**, including an updated vision, mission, guiding principles, and priorities and align Board actions to the plan.



# VISION, MISSION, GUIDING PRINCIPLES, AND PRIORITIES OF THE DELAWARE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

## **Vision Statement**

All Delaware students are prepared to lead full and productive lives and be successful in the 21st century global society.

## **Mission Statement**

In collaboration with community and stakeholders, the Delaware State Board of Education serves as the primary voice for Delaware citizens on education policy to create a world class education system for every student.

## **Guiding Principles**

- Further our thriving democratic society with opportunities for an excellent and equitable education for all students.
- Enrich education policymaking with the inclusion of diverse perspectives that represent the breadth and depth of Delaware's citizens.
- Utilize research-based viewpoints to inform decisions in the best interest of all students.
- Advocate for the development of the whole child through learning, teaching, and community engagement.

## **FY19 Priorities**

- Develop and communicate a clear vision for the Board's roles, responsibilities, and strategic priorities.
- Leverage partnerships and engagement with the community in order to identify gaps and advance opportunities for all Delaware students.
- Build and strengthen state policy and practice to support students in gaining the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary to pursue careers and continuing education.
- Engage education and community partners to support success in early literacy.

## DELAWARE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION: A YEAR IN REVIEW (JULY 2018- JUNE 2019)

### Goal 1: Develop and communicate a clear vision for the Board's roles, responsibilities, and strategic priorities.

- Beginning in September 2018, the Board began rotating its regular monthly meetings throughout the state. Board meetings were held in the following school districts: Appoquinimink, Seaford, Colonial, Brandywine, and Milford. School districts hosting the meetings were invited to provide a presentation regarding innovative work underway in the district. The following were provided:
  - **Seaford School District:** Superintendent David Perrington provided a presentation on “Equity and A Celebration of Diversity”. He discussed the district’s key priorities and the reorganization of schools to best meet student needs.
  - **Colonial School District:** Superintendent Dusty Blakey provided information on the reorganization of the district’s middle schools. Students from the George Read Culinary program and the Gunning Bedford Steel Band were highlighted and participated in the presentation.
  - **Brandywine School District:** Superintendent Mark Holodick presented on “Creating Conditions for Safety and Success”. He highlighted the district’s work related to physical safety and security and healthy learning environments.
  - **Milford School District:** Sara Croce, Chief Financial Officer and Jason Peel, Director of Human Resources and School Climate presented on partnerships in the Milford School District.



*Figure 1: Members of the Gunning Bedford Steel Drum Band perform at the February State Board of Education meeting.*

- The State Board of Education’s Procedures Manual was updated to reflect recent statutory changes. The Procedures Manual can be [found here](#).
- The State Board of Education established and convened the “SBE Student Representative Selection Process Committee” to review application and selection processes in other states and recommend a path forward for Delaware’s new student Board member. The Committee included representatives from the Governor’s office, State Board of Education, Department of Education (DDOE), Delaware Association of School Administrators and the Delaware State Education Association.
- State Board of Education members and staff worked closely with the Governor’s office to develop the process to appoint two new Board members, an 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade student and a former State Teacher of the Year. New members were [announced in May 2019](#).
- The State Board of Education website and eboard site were updated to be more clear and user-friendly. The Board seeks opportunities for more in-depth engagement via social media, email, and events. This strategy will continue to develop in the next fiscal year.
- The Board initiated a strategic planning process to update the Board’s vision, mission, guiding principles, and goals. The Board will finalize and promote the new strategic plan in the upcoming fiscal year.

## Goal 2: Leverage partnerships and engagement with the community in order to identify gaps and advance opportunities for all Delaware students.

- One of the primary functions of the State Board includes providing advice to the Secretary of Education on policies, rules, and regulations through the DDOE, the Professional Standards Board (PSB), and the Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association (DIAA). Policy actions taken by the State Board include:
  - Approval of amendments to the following DIAA regulations:
    - Regulation 1007: DIAA Sportsmanship (July 2018);
    - Regulation 1008: DIAA Junior High and Middle School Interscholastic Athletics (October 2018, February 2019);
    - Regulation 1009: DIAA High School Interscholastic Athletics (October 2018, February 2019).
  - Approval of amendments to the following PSB regulations:
    - Regulation 1510: Issuance of Initial License (August 2018, June 2019);
    - Regulation 1517: Paraeducator Permit (December 2018);
    - Regulation 1511: Issuance and Renewal of Continuing License (June 2019).
  - Approval of amendments to the following DDOE regulations:
    - Regulation 915: James H. Groves High School (December 2018);
    - Regulation 505: High School Graduation Requirements and Diplomas (January 2019);
    - Regulation 910: Delaware Requirements for Issuance of the Secondary Credential (April 2019);
    - Regulation 108A: Administrator Appraisal Process Delaware Performance Appraisal System (DPAS II) Revised (May 2019).
- The State Board of Education partners with the Secretary of Education on actions related to charter schools. The Board received regular updates from the DDOE's Charter School Office. One Board member sits on the Charter School Accountability Committee in an ex-officio capacity. Throughout the year, the following actions were taken:
  - Renewal of First State Military Academy. The Board concurred with the recommendation of the Secretary and voted to renew the charter for First State Military Academy for five years. The Board recommended additional and careful monitoring in regards to the school's financial viability affected by its enrollment limitations and incurred debt.
  - Renewal of Freire Charter School. The Board concurred with the recommendation of the Secretary and voted to renew the charter for Freire Charter School for five years.
  - Renewal of Great Oaks Charter School. The Board concurred with the recommendation of the Secretary and voted to renew the charter for Great Oaks Charter School for five years. The Board recommended additional and careful monitoring in regards to the school's enrollment and recruitment efforts.
  - Renewal of Kuumba Academy. The Board concurred with the recommendation of the Secretary and voted to renew the charter for Kuumba Academy for five years.
  - Renewal of Newark Charter School. The Board concurred with the recommendation of the Secretary and voted to renew the charter for Newark Charter School for ten years.
  - Renewal of Positive Outcomes Charter School. The Board concurred with the recommendation of the Secretary and voted to renew the charter for Positive Outcomes Charter School for five years.
  - Renewal of Design Thinking Academy. The Board concurred with the recommendation of the Secretary and voted to renew the charter for Design Thinking Academy for five years. The Board recommended additional and careful monitoring in regards to their staffing, student enrollment, and financial practices.

- Major Modification of Las Americas ASPIRA Academy Charter School: The Board concurred with the Secretary's decision and approved the major modification request of ASPIRA Academy with the following condition: The final lease agreement will include a contingency that allows Las Americas ASPIRA Academy and the property owner to re-negotiate the lease in good faith should the school's enrollment not materialize at the projected rate.
- Through participation on the Charter School Accountability Committee and full Board conversations regarding renewals and major modifications of charter schools, the Board has worked with the Department of Education to begin conversations to update the Charter School Financial Framework.
- The Board recognized the following groups or individuals:
  - School Bus Poster Winners. A statewide school bus safety poster contest was held in September to promote National School Bus Safety Week, October 22-26, 2018. The three winning posters at the State level were submitted to the National School Bus Safety Week Committee for final judging at the National Association of Pupil Transportation Conference. The winners were as follows:
    - Nicole Chee, Grade 4, North Star Elementary, Red Clay School District
    - Lydia Poore, Grade 7, Stanton Middle School, Red Clay School District
    - Madelyn Degnars, Grade 9, Cab Calloway School of the Arts, Red Clay School District
  - Delaware 2019 State Teacher of the Year. Ms. Dana Bowe, Seaford School District, was recognized for her accomplishments and dedication to her students.
  - Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching Award Finalists. Ms. Christa Ferdig, Indian River School District and Ms. Wendy Turner, Brandywine School District were recognized for their accomplishments.
- State Board of Education members were involved in a variety of committees on education, including the University of Delaware Board of Trustees, Teachers Advisory Committee, Equalization Committee, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Advisory Committee, Delaware School Boards Association (DSBA) Board of Directors, among others. Information regarding committee membership and Board member participation can be found on page 7.
- The P-20 Council, co-chaired by the President of the State Board of Education and the Secretary of Education, met three times during the 2018-19 school year to hear reports and receive updates on committee activities. The summary of those committee activities are noted below:
  - Committee to reduce Math Remediation: The Committee discussed next steps for addressing the recommendations put forward in early 2018. Progress related to these recommendations include: continued implementation of the



*Figure 2: School Bus Poster Winners with the State Board of Education.*



*Figure 3: 2019 State Teacher of the Year, Dana Bowe, with State Board of Education members.*

Foundations of College Math course, development of co-remediation models by individual higher education institutions, and expanded communication and training to share findings and support implementation of these recommendations.

- Committee to reduce English Remediation: The Committee discussed next steps for addressing the recommendations put forward in early 2018. The Committee established subcommittees to help address the recommendations. Progress related to these recommendations include: the establishment and implementation of multiple measures for student course placement, remediation course reform, implementation of the Foundations of College English Course, and the development of common language across systems.
- Committee on Early Literacy: The Committee was established in early 2019 with the following objectives: review current industry-recognized credentials, certifications, and undergraduate curriculum aligned with the five essential components of reading instruction; review current graduate coursework and continuing education pathways to support early reading proficiency; make recommendations related to the improvement of existing programs, policies, or the creation of new professional development opportunities for teacher and leaders related to increasing literacy knowledge and skills. The Committee is co-chaired by representatives from University of Delaware (UD) and Delaware State University (DSU), and includes representatives from every higher education institution with a teacher preparation program, districts, charters, early childhood education, DDOE, and the State Board. The Committee will continue its work in FY20.



*Figure 4: Committee to review Regulation 851: K to 12 Comprehensive Health Education Program.*

- As a follow-up to the State Board's participation on the SCR69 Youth Drug Prevention Curriculum Task Force established by the 149<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, the State Board and the DDOE co-chaired a committee to review Regulation 851: K to 12 Comprehensive Health Education Program. Board members were able to leverage their community connections to invite additional members, such as Christiana Care to contribute to the committee. The group made recommendations regarding updates to the regulation, the identification and adoption of promising practices and resources, and the development of professional learning to support health and physical education teachers.
- The Board received presentations on the following items related to this strategic priority:
  - DDOE's FY20 Budget Request;
  - Delaware School Report Cards;
  - Delaware Autism Program Update;
  - Delaware's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant;
  - Delaware Professional Standards for Educational Leadership;
  - Charter School Annual Report.



*Figure 5: Ms. Sweeney participated in the Education Forum hosted by Representative Williams, Senator Delcollo and Senator Walsh, alongside Secretary Bunting and state legislators.*

- The Board has made efforts to expand community engagement and partnerships through attendance at events, such as Ms. Sweeney's participation in the Education Forum hosted by Representative Williams, Senator Delcollo, and Senator Walsh and the annual Teacher of the Year dinner.
- The Board received regular updates on the partnership between the DDOE and the Christina School District regarding the Delaware Autism Program. The Board approved the job description for the Director of the Statewide Autism Program, which was developed by the DDOE, Christina School District, and an extensive group of stakeholders.
- The Board continues to build partnerships with the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) and members attended the Annual Conference and the New Member Institute in an effort to learn from State Boards nationally.



*Figure 6: State leaders with 2019 Teacher of the Year, Dana Bowe.*

### **Goal 3: Build and strengthen state policy and practice to support students in gaining the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary to pursue careers and continuing education.**

- Mr. Luke Rhine, Director of Career and Technical Education (CTE), DDOE, provided regular updates on the implementation of Delaware's Federal Perkins Plan.
- The Board convened two meetings of the CTE Committee. The Committee is comprised of approximately 25 individuals across many stakeholder groups including state agencies, school districts, higher education institutions, the legislature, employers, and others to develop the Perkins V Transition Plan and to develop a recommended engagement process for FY20.
- The Board approved the Perkins V Transition Plan in April 2019 and coordinated with the DDOE and the Office of the Governor to submit the plan to the U.S. Department of Education. The Board is preparing for the development of the full State Perkins Plan in FY20.
- The Board invited Dr. Jeff Menzer, Assistant Superintendent, Colonial School District to provide an overview of the Colonial School District Graduation Advisory Board. Dr. Menzer provided information regarding the background, timeline, and purpose, and impacts of the Advisory Board.



*Figure 7: Members of the State Board of Education's Career and Technical Education subcommittee.*

- Ms. Lindsay Lewis, DDOE, provided a report on Delaware's graduation and dropout rates.

## **Goal 4: Engage education and community partners to support success in early literacy.**

- Board members have participated in committees focused on early literacy, including the National Governors Association (NGA) Early Care and Education (ECE) Workforce 2.0 team. This is an effort to improve Delaware's policies related to its early care and education workforce. It included an examination of the current ECE competencies, qualifications, and compensation along with providing recommendations to improve the system to professionalize the ECE field so as to better meet the needs of children aged birth through 8. Members also participated in the Campaign for Grade Level Reading Steering Committee and the P-20 Council Early Literacy subcommittee.
- Through the P-20 Council, the Board initiated the Early Literacy subcommittee (outlined on page 11) which is focused on educator supports through institutions of higher education. Two Board members participate in the committee and the Executive Director provides staff support to the co-chairs.
- Board representatives and state partners attended NASBE's Early Childhood Education State Network meeting. The meeting provided an opportunity for Delaware's state team to discuss trends in early learning with national experts and other states and provided resources and strategies related to early childhood education.
- Ms. Theresa Bennett, DDOE, provided an overview of assessment in Delaware. She also provided information on Smarter Balanced and SAT test proficiency, including state, district, and charter school results.
- The Board took action to approve the performance levels on the alternate assessment. The Board concurred with the DDOE regarding cut scores for the alternate assessment.