



# **FY21 ANNUAL REPORT**

## **July 2021**

### **Delaware State Board of Education**

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401 Federal Street, Suite 2  
Dover, DE 19901

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# INTRODUCTION

The Delaware State Board of Education is pleased to present its 2020-21 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 2020-2021 school year has been unprecedented as schools operated in a combination of in-person, hybrid, and remote settings throughout the year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The State Board has used meeting time to better understand the policies and supports in place for students and educators and to discuss areas of additional attention needed, based on feedback from community members.

The Board's vision and mission statements along with the five 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. From July 2020 through June 2021, the Board meetings were held electronically due to the COVID-19 pandemic. 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 FY21 Annual Report can be found on the State Board of Education's website at <http://bit.ly/SBEDelaware>

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

The 2020-2021 school year is one we could never have seen coming – students learning from a kitchen table their eyes glued to a screen as they navigate class via a Zoom call. Teachers, students, administrators, and parents scrambled to adapt to the new normal required by Covid-19 which ultimately consisted of a combination of in-person, hybrid, and remote settings throughout much of the year. The Board of Education spent considerable time working with stakeholders to better understand the impact the pandemic has had on the physical and social-emotional well-being of students, educators, and their families in addition to the academic impacts. Throughout the year we have advocated for policies and supports to continuously address these challenges. As we look ahead to the upcoming school year, we will continue to focus on policies that will best support students and educators as they return to in-person learning.

This report provides an opportunity to revisit our commitments from the previous year, celebrate our progress, and look forward to the future. It also serves as a record of our work in fulfilling statutory responsibilities.

We began the year by welcoming Mr. Wali Rushdan into the role of Vice President. The Board has appreciated the time and contributions that Dr. Audrey Noble has made via this role over the last two years. We also saw the retirement of Mrs. Nina Lou Bunting who served with us for five years, bringing a wealth of experience as an educator, former Teacher of the Year, and local school board member. While we'll miss her expertise, we welcome the voices of our newest member Mr. Shawn Brittingham in addition to our new Teacher and Student representatives, Ms. Wendy Turner (former Teacher of the Year), and Ms. Elise Sampson (student).

While much of the year was driven by Covid-related issues, we continued to successfully advance priorities outlined in the Board's strategic plan. Directly aligned with our priority on foundational skills and knowledge, the Board commissioned a project with West Ed titled: "System Alignment for Early Literacy: Review of Delaware's Prekindergarten to Grade 3 Licensure and Certification Landscape". The report explored four distinct research questions, addressing the following topics:

- the current landscape of Delaware's early childhood and elementary teacher pool,
- the evidence base for current best practices in preparing teachers and support staff for teaching literacy,
- Delaware's current pathways for preparation and the current regulatory structure related to licensure and certification and ongoing professional development, and
- how Delaware compares to states and countries that have seen increases in student achievement and growth in reading and literacy over time.

The report provides recommendations based on the analysis and we look forward to FY22 for final presentation to the Board and identifying subsequent action steps relating to the findings.

Supporting our efforts around collaboration and partnerships, we co-hosted two virtual opportunities to share information about topics aligned with our priorities of student well-being, foundational skills and knowledge, and partnerships and innovation in student learning. In November, we hosted a session with the Delaware School Boards Association (DSBA) focused on social-emotional learning and work underway in DE schools. This session was timely as many schools were transitioning from a remote to a hybrid learning model during that point in the year. In March, we facilitated a session, in partnership with the Department of Education (DDOE), featuring national expert Dr. David Steiner who provided a presentation on the research behind acceleration as a strategy to address student learning loss. The session also provided information on state-level work underway to support

accelerated learning and sought to address questions relating to the use of this strategy for the summer 2021 and in preparation for the 2021-22 school year.

Lastly, we recognize the importance of working across institutions to support our educational system. Via my role as co-chair of the P-20 Council, we have discussed major updates related to early childhood development and school readiness, college and career readiness and success, and educator preparation and success. The Council continued to track and encourage the implementation of recommendations issued by the literacy subcommittee in 2020. Additionally, throughout the year we invited a series of expert panelists to discuss issues related to educator preparation and development, a priority of both the State Board and the P-20 Council. These experts discussed opportunities and challenges from the perspective of institutions of higher education, local education agencies (LEAs), and commissions or stakeholder groups which have made recommendations on these topics. The conversations identified key themes for potential focus and next steps will be recommended and established by the P-20 Council in FY22.

I encourage you to take the opportunity to read this annual report and get a more detailed look at the actions of the State Board in the past year. In addition to the work noted above, these activities included an increased focus on regulatory policymaking, revisions to our State Perkins plan, and charter school authorizations, among many others.

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



**Wali Rushdan II**  
Vice President



**Nina Lou Bunting**  
Member  
Resigned November 2020



**Shawn Brittingham**  
Member  
Appointed January 2021



**Candice Fifer**  
Member



**Vincent Lofink**  
Member



**Provey Powell, Jr.**  
Member



**Audrey Noble**  
Member



**Elise Sampson**  
Member, Student  
Appointed September 2020



**Wendy Turner**  
Member, Teacher  
Appointed September 2020

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](#).



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

## BOARD COMPOSITION AND ACTIVITIES (FY21)

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

P-20 Council, co-chair

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

National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) Leading for Equity and Excellence Program, member

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

Equalization Committee, member

Charter School Accountability Committee, member (non-voting)

### **Nina Lou Bunting, resigned Nov. 2020**

DPAS II Advisory Committee, member

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

ESSA Advisory Committee, member

Teacher of the Year Selection Committee, member

National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) Whole Child Policy Study Group, member

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

Charter School Accountability Committee, member (non-voting)

### **Audrey J. Noble, term expires 2027**

Charter School Accountability Committee, member (non-voting)

NASBE Board of Directors, member

NASBE Government Affairs Committee, Chair

H. Fletcher Brown Scholarship Selection Committee, member

Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) K-12 Education Recovery Task Force, member

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

Vision Coalition of Delaware, member

Reopening Schools Working Group, Health and Wellness Committee, member

Delaware Postsecondary Equity Leadership Team, member

### **Shawn Brittingham, appointed January 2021, term expires 2027**

School Choice Barrier Committee, member

### **Elise Sampson, appointed September 2020, term expires Fall 2021**

### **Wendy Turner, appointed September 2020, term expires Fall 2021**

DPAS II Advisory Committee, member



## FY21 HIGHLIGHTS

This report outlines the work accomplished by the State Board of Education and key improvements from FY20 to FY21. Highlights include:

- **Approved 32 unique new or amended regulations**, representing an increased focus on policy during this fiscal year. This is a significant increase from 19 regulations in FY20 and 10 in FY19; Regulations included topics such as the establishment of a multi-tiered system of support, athletics during COVID-19, and updates to educator licensure and certification requirements.
- **Approved 3 charter school renewals, 4 major modifications**, and participated in CSAC review for one minor modification and one new school application;
- **Held discussion, public comment period, and approval of updated student performance levels for Perkins V Plan**;
- **Closely monitored and discussed state and federal education response to COVID-19**;
- **Updated State Board hearing and appeals processes**, which will facilitate more efficient and expedient timelines for appeals;
- **Increased engagement of the public** via use of virtual meeting platforms, clear opportunities for comment (i.e. DIAA Emergency Regulations), and opportunities to provide written comment to be considered by the Board;
- **Improved communications via:**
  - **Updated State Board website to clarify Board role** – including new pages on COVID-19, State Board FAQ, Process for Public Comments, Regulations information, Charter Schools, and Hearings and Appeals;
  - **Social media posting** – including regular posts about upcoming meetings and regulations available for public comment, resulting in the following increases from FY20 to FY21:
    - Increased Facebook followers by 75% and “reach” by 72%
    - Increased Twitter followers by 14% and “reach” by 48%
    - Increased website views by 29% and unique users by 3%.
- **Hosted stakeholder engagement sessions, including:**
  - **A session with the DSBA focused on social-emotional learning** and work underway in DE schools;
  - **A session with DDOE and national expert Dr. David Steiner on accelerated learning.**
- **Conducted research with West Ed to inform certification and licensure policies related to early literacy.** Report anticipated July 2021;

The Board would like to continue to focus on these areas in FY22:

- Continue to expand communications and engagement with members of the public regarding education issues aligned with the Board’s statutory responsibilities;
- Continue to develop partnerships with local and national partners to inform work and decision-making;
- Utilize education data and research to inform Board decision-making.



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

In October 2019, the State Board of Education approved a new strategic plan, including vision, mission, guiding principles, and priorities.

## Vision

All Delaware students are engaged in learning that provides a foundation for success, preparing them to transition into postsecondary education and careers, engage with their communities, and continue to learn throughout their lives.

## Mission

In collaboration with community stakeholders, the Delaware State Board of Education provides voice and leadership for Delaware citizens to ensure that the education system meets the needs of each Delaware student.

## Guiding Principles

- **Equitable Opportunities:** Support high-quality educational opportunities for all students that reduce disproportionate student outcomes by race, ethnicity, socioeconomic conditions, and residence.
- **Student-Focused Education:** Advocate for the development of the whole child, including strong academic, social-emotional, and physical health and safety practices that provide a rigorous, relevant, and relationship-based education.
- **Collaboration and Partnerships:** Engage and collaborate with the community and partners to enrich education policymaking with diverse perspectives that represent Delaware's citizens.
- **Data-informed Decision-making:** Utilize national, state, and local research and data to inform decisions.

## State Board of Education Priority Areas

The State Board of Education has identified five priorities to guide its work over the next three years. The priorities are aligned with its statutory and regulatory responsibilities. The State Board recognizes the importance of collaboration with other agencies and organizations to attain these goals. Priorities are not listed in order of importance.

- **Student Well Being:** Strengthen state policy and practice to foster learning environments that support health, safety, and well-being.
- **Foundational Skills and Knowledge:** Leverage partnerships among early learning, K-12, and higher education to provide students with foundational skills and knowledge that contribute to long term academic success.
- **College and Career Readiness and Success:** Build and strengthen state policy and practice to support students in gaining the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary to pursue careers and continuing education.
- **Educator Preparation and Development:** Strengthen state policy and practice to recruit, retain, and develop teachers and school leaders to ensure they have the knowledge, skills, and support needed to be successful.
- **Partnerships and Innovation in Student Learning:** Engage stakeholders and members of the public, including students, to inform policy and practice. Promote school structures, systems, and initiatives that are innovative and can adapt to meet the evolving needs of the student population and community.

## DELAWARE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION: A YEAR IN REVIEW (JULY 2020- JUNE 2021)

The 2020-2021 school year has been unprecedented as schools operated in a combination of in-person, hybrid, and remote settings throughout the year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The State Board has used meeting time to better understand the policies and supports in place for students and educators and to discuss areas where additional attention was needed, based on feedback from community members. We know that these events have had a tremendous impact on students and educators. The Delaware education system must anticipate and address these needs in the upcoming school year while considering lessons learned and opportunities that can be utilized to improve our system.

### **Goal 1: Student Well Being: Strengthen state policy and practice to foster learning environments that support health, safety, and well-being.**

- The Board and staff closely monitored and regularly discussed the education response to COVID-19.
  - Held discussions with staff from the DDOE from July 2020 through June 2021, including reopening guidance and status, takeaways from the survey of student/parent/teacher experiences, health, operations, and instruction updates, unit count and enrollment, student attendance and engagement, support of community organizations and learning pods, and common challenges and supports needed.
  - Held discussions with representatives from the School Superintendents Association and the Delaware School Boards Association to provide updates on the status of work underway, common challenges, and areas of support needed (August 2020). And, reflections from this school year and planning for fall 2021, plans for utilizing federal funding, and lessons learned that can be applied to the Board's or districts' work in the future. (June 2021)
  - Discussed and signed onto NASBE's response letter to the USDOE regarding the interpretation of the use of CARES Act funding. (August 2020)
  - In partnership with DDOE, collected information for a school support resources webpage listing non-profit, community and agency supports available to Delaware districts and charter schools in the 2020-21 school year. Over 200 programs providing academic support, mental health, basic needs, and many others were listed. (August 2020)
  - Hosted a public conversation regarding the Department of Education's Accelerated Learning Plan, including information on supports and resources that will be provided to schools and districts. (March 2021)
  - Co-hosted a virtual webinar on "Supporting Accelerated Learning for Delaware Students". During the session, DDOE provided an overview of their strategy to accelerate learning. This was followed by a presentation from Dr. David Steiner, Director of the Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy and Professor of Education at Johns Hopkins University, on addressing unfinished learning through acceleration. Presentations were followed by a brief Q&A session and overview of next steps. Approximately 100 people were in attendance, representing local schools and districts, community members, non-profit organizations, among others. A [recording is available online](#) and has been shared with both Delaware and national colleagues. (March 2021)
- 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 related to this priority include:
  - Approval of new policy or amendments to the following DIAA regulations:
    - Emergency Regulation 1010: Interscholastic Athletics During COVID-19 Pandemic (August, September, October 2020) This Regulation focused on the health and safety of student athletes during the State of Emergency.

- Regulation 1008: DIAA Junior High and Middle School Interscholastic Athletics (October 2020)
  - Regulation 1009: DIAA High School Interscholastic Athletics (October 2020)
  - Regulation 1011: Interscholastic Athletics During COVID-19 Pandemic (November 2020, June 2021).
- Approval of new policy or amendments to the following DDOE regulations:
  - Regulation 612: Possession, Use, or Distribution of Drugs or Alcohol (July, September 2020) This Regulation added language for alcohol-based hand sanitizers during COVID-19.
  - Regulation 508: Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (October, November 2020)
  - Regulation 922: Children with Disabilities Subpart A, Purposes and Definitions (October, November 2020)
  - Regulation 925: Children with Disabilities Subpart D, Evaluations, Eligibility Determination, Individualized Education Programs (October, November 2020)
  - Regulation 1584: School Social Worker (January 2021)
  - Regulation 1582: School Nurse (April 2021)
- Hosted discussions with content experts on the following topics:
  - An overview of multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) and the essential components of an MTSS system. The discussion outlined the relationship between upcoming proposed regulations 508, 922, and 925. The Board discussed the supports, technical assistance and professional development for districts/charters and the implementation of an MTSS system. There was discussion on the relationship between special education classifications and the MTSS model. (July 2020)
  - An overview of special education laws and regulations, background, and accountability models. The Board discussed proposed updates to regulations 922 and 925, the process and engagement for developing and recommending the proposed changes, and stakeholder feedback. (July 2020)
  - Data-based decision-making related to special education services, including the percentage of students in each disability category, and measures of disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education services and disability categories. (August 2020)
  - Social-emotional learning overview, framework, and work underway held in conjunction with the Delaware School Boards Association with the intention of providing an overview of social-emotional learning, and providing district examples of work underway to support this work. (November 2020)
- State Board of Education member Candice Fifer and Executive Director Jenna Ahner participated in NASBE's Whole Child Policy Study Group, which represented 16 states. This project helped deepen the content expertise on whole child policymaking in the wake of COVID-19, and connected members with national experts in the field.

**Goal 2: Foundational Skills and Knowledge: Leverage partnerships among early learning, K-12, and higher education to provide students with foundational skills and knowledge that contribute to long term academic success.**

- Board members participated in the following development opportunities to support policy knowledge and development related to early literacy:
  - Participation in the virtual Pennsylvania Branch of the International Dyslexia Association Annual Fall Conference on Reading, Literacy and Learning. In partnership with DDOE and the P-20 Council, Institutions of Higher Education were also invited to send participants at no-cost.
  - Debrief session with Delaware educators who attended the conference regarding lessons learned and potential next steps.

- Policy actions taken by the State Board related to this priority include:
  - Approval of amendments to the following PSB regulations:
    - Regulation 1521: Elementary Teacher (August 2020)
    - Regulation 1570: Early Childhood Exceptional Children Special Education Teacher (August 2020)
    - Regulation 1520: Early Childhood Teacher (November 2020)
- The Board hosted conversations with content experts on the following topics related to foundational skills and knowledge:
  - Overview of micro-credentials and how they fit into Delaware's professional development system. Including information on the process of developing 29 early literacy micro-credentials that will be piloted in 2021 with educators across the state. (February 2021)
  - Introduction to Yvette Sanchez Fuentes, Associate Secretary for Early Childhood Support. (March 2021)
- The Board partnered with West Ed to conduct a research project focused on the Board's priority of early literacy. The project reviewed Delaware's licensure and certification process for early childhood and elementary professionals, reviewed research and practice from other states and countries, and provided recommendations based on findings. The report will be presented to the Board in early FY22 and next steps will be established in follow-up.
- Additional work was supported in coordination with the P-20 Council, see Goal 5 for additional details.

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

- Approval of amendments to the following DDOE regulations:
  - Regulation 505: High School Graduation Requirements and Diplomas (October 2020)
  - Regulation 915: James H. Groves High School (April 2021)
- The Board hosted conversations with content experts on the following topics related to college and career readiness:
  - Mr. Luke Rhine on the status of the implementation of Delaware's Perkins V plan, external grants received or anticipated to further support the work, and the timeline expectations relating to updates to the Perkins V Performance Levels. (January 2021)
  - The Board discussed proposed updates to the Perkins V revised targets and the rationale for the proposed updates, prior to opening the targets up for a 60-day public comment period. (February 2021). No public comments were received. The Board approved the proposed performance levels. (April 2021)
- Additional work was supported in coordination with the P-20 Council, see Goal 5 for additional details.

**Goal 4: Educator Preparation and Development: Strengthen state policy and practice to recruit, retain, and develop teachers and school leaders to ensure they have the knowledge, skills, and support needed to be successful.**

- 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 and the PSB. Policy actions taken by the State Board related to this priority include:

- Approval of amendments to the following PSB regulations:
  - Regulation 1573: Teacher of Students With Autism or Students With Disabilities (August 2020)
  - Regulation 1533: Middle Level Science Teacher (August 2020)
  - Regulation 1591: School Principal and Assistant School Principal (October 2020)
  - Regulation 1592: Certified Central Office Personnel (October 2020)
  - Regulation 1593: Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent (October 2020)
  - Regulation 1594: Special Education Director (October 2020)
  - Regulation 1531: Middle Level English Language Arts Teacher (November 2020)
  - Regulation 1540: Secondary English Language Arts Teacher (November 2020)
  - Regulation 1580: School Library Media Specialist (December 2020)
  - Regulation 1501: Salary Supplements for Educators (January 2021)
  - Regulation 1510: Issuance of an Initial License (April 2021)
  - Regulation 1503: Educator Mentoring (May 2021)
  - Regulation 1543: Secondary Science Teacher (May 2021)
  - Regulation 1561: Bilingual Teacher (May 2021)
  - Regulation 1562: Teacher of English Learners (May 2021)
  - Regulation 1574: Teacher of Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (June 2021)
  - Regulation 1559: Skilled and Technical Sciences Teachers (June 2021)
- The Board hosted conversations with content experts on the following topics related to educator preparation and development:
  - Mr. Nermin Zubaca on data related to educator demographics, supply factors, and demand factors. (June 2021)
- Additional work was supported in coordination with the P-20 Council, see Goal 5 for additional details.

**Goal 5: Partnerships and Innovation in Student Learning: Promote school structures, systems, and initiatives that are innovative and can adapt to meet the evolving needs of the student population and community.**

- The Board continues to build partnerships with the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) and members attended the Annual Conference and regular webinars and “office hours” in an effort to learn from State Boards nationally. Dr. Noble sits on the NASBE Board of Directors. She is also the chair of the Government Affairs Committee which helps shape federal policy, funding, and regulations that are important to state boards throughout the country. This work was especially important during COVID-19 and the presidential transition.
- The Board hosted the following discussions to build capacity and attention on equity in policymaking:
  - Ms. Sweeney and Ms. Ahner participated in NASBE’s Leading for Equity and Excellence program, a professional development resource for State Board members and staff throughout the country with the intention of supporting and applying an equity lens to policymaking.
  - Hosted a discussion with the Office of Equity and Innovation (September 2020). The discussion provided context on anticipated focus and priorities of the office and opportunities for partnership.
  - Hosted a discussion with the Chairs of the Redding Consortium for Educational Equity (November 2020). The discussion provided context on work underway, anticipated next steps, and potential opportunities for partnership or alignment of work.
  - Recognized and hosted a discussion with the 2021 State Teacher of the Year, Kimberly Stock (January 2021). Ms Stock was recognized for her accomplishments and dedication



- to her students. Ms. Stock discussed her platform of teaching tolerance through social justice standards and work that can be done at the state, district, and school levels to support English Learners.
  - Hosted a discussion with staff from the Capital School District (May 2021). The district shared information about the development of an Equity Core Team, work to date, and the vision for this work in the future.
- The Board invited experts to provide information and engage in discussions on the following items related to this strategic priority:
  - DDOE FY22 Budget Request
- The State Board of Education partners with the Secretary of Education on actions related to charter schools. The Board invited DDOE's Charter School Office to participate in regular conversations during meetings, including discussion regarding school operations and enrollment updates. One Board member sits on the Charter School Accountability Committee in an ex-officio capacity. Throughout the year, the following actions were taken:
  - Participation in the CSAC review for Great Oaks Charter Schools' minor modification request. No action was required by the Board, however, Board members encouraged the Department of Education to carefully monitor enrollment throughout the year. (July 2020)
  - Renewal of Campus Community School: The Board concurred with the recommendation of the Secretary and voted to renew the charter for the Campus Community School for five years. (December 2020)
  - Renewal of MOT Charter School: The Board concurred with the recommendation of the Secretary and voted to renew the charter for the MOT Charter School for ten years. (December 2020)
  - Renewal of Providence Creek Academy: The Board concurred with the recommendation of the Secretary and voted to renew the charter for the Providence Creek Academy for five years. (December 2020)
  - Major Modification of Academy of Dover: The Board concurred with the Secretary's decision and approved the major modification request of the Academy of Dover. (April 2021)
  - Major Modification of Gateway Lab School: The Board concurred with the Secretary's decision and approved the major modification request of Gateway Lab School. (April 2021)
  - Major Modification of Early College High School: The Board concurred with the Secretary's decision and approved the major modification request of Early College High School. (April 2021)
  - Discussions regarding the new charter school application for the Bryan Allen Stevenson School of Excellence (BASSE): The Board discussed the new charter school application for BASSE, including proposed impact conditions related to the application. The school rescinded its application and did not seek Department of Education and State Board approval this year. (March 2021)
  - Major Modification of Great Oaks Charter School: The Board concurred with the Secretary's decision and approved the major modification request of Great Oaks Charter School, with conditions related to educator certification, recruitment for the 2021-22 school year, monthly updates on recruitment and enrollment, and a budget update demonstrating financial viability after the September 30 unit count. (June 2021)
- Approval of repeal of the following DDOE regulation:
  - Regulation 201: District and School Shared Decision Making (December 2020)

## P-20 Council:

The P-20 Council, co-chaired by the President of the State Board of Education and the Secretary of Education, met 5 times during the 2020-21 school year to hear reports, receive updates on committee

activities, and recommend next steps related to P-20 Council priorities. The summary of those activities are noted below:

- **General updates and COVID-19 Status and Reopening Supports**

- Facilitated conversation on resources to support students, communications efforts, and successful practices during COVID-19, with the goal of sharing resources across institutions; (July 2020)
- Discussed 2020 Legislative and Budget Updates; (July 2020)
- Provided updates related to COVID-19 supports, including scholarship opportunities, technology supports, and professional development for educators. Members were asked to share updates with others within their organization; (September 2020)
- Facilitated a discussion from DTI regarding technology supports and availability. Members were asked to share updates with others within their organization; (November 2020)
- Facilitated a discussion on the Education Settlement and the takeaways for Delaware education; (November 2020)
- Facilitated a discussion on the launch of the Delaware Education Research Alliance. (May 2021).

- **Early Childhood Development and School Readiness**

- Provided regular updates on the implementation of the recommendations from the early literacy subcommittee. Updates included information on the creation and launch of micro-credentials to support early literacy, DDOE's accreditation cohort, the State Board's early literacy research project, and professional development being run in conjunction with the University of Delaware. Council staff continues to track the status of implementation and encourages P-20 partners to reach out regarding partnership on recommendations that have not been addressed. Insights gained from the early literacy recommendations and subsequent implementation discussions informed the research questions explored via the State Board's research project with West Ed; (ongoing)
- In partnership with DDOE and the P-20 Council, Institutions of Higher Education were invited to send participants to the virtual Pennsylvania Branch of the International Dyslexia Association Annual Fall Conference on Reading, Literacy and Learning. Members participated in a debrief session with Delaware educators who attended the conference regarding lessons learned and potential next steps; (October 2020)
- Provided an introduction to Associate Secretary for Early Childhood Support, Yvette Sanchez Fuentes; (November 2020)
- Discussed the Early Childhood Strategic Plan release, priorities, and potential focus areas for the Council. An update will be provided in Fall 2021. (November 2020)

- **College and Career Readiness and Success**

- Discussed the data and takeaways in the Student Success Reports, use of the data to inform work of organizations/institutions, and changes that could result from sharing the data; (September 2020)
- Received regular updates on dual enrollment review, cost survey, and potential next steps.

- **Educator Preparation and Success**

- Discussed opportunities for supporting teacher recruitment and retention efforts, across institutions; (September 2020)
- Hosted a conversation with the Delaware Association of School Administrators, the Redding Consortium Educator Work Group, and Rodel regarding work underway within their organizations, the biggest challenges related to recruitment, and opportunities for communication and alignment across IHEs, LEAs, and state partners; (November 2020)
- Presented information on recruitment and retention data, with focus areas on demographics of current educators, educator demand, educator supply, and reasons for mobility; (February 2021)
- Hosted a conversation with Delaware Institutions of Higher Education regarding work underway within their organizations, challenges related to recruitment and focuses on high-



need areas, and opportunities for alignment across IHEs, LEAs, and state partners; (February 2021)

- Hosted a conversation with LEAs regarding work underway within their organizations, challenges related to recruitment and focuses on high-need areas, and opportunities for alignment across IHEs, LEAs, and state partners.
- Through these conversations, the following themes were identified:
  - Narrative- There is a need to develop a more positive narrative about Delaware schools and pursuing a profession in education.
  - Pipeline- There is a need to focus on the talent pipeline, beginning with high school pathways and continuing through higher education programming, to encourage individuals to enter into the education profession and ensure we have qualified educators with diverse educational backgrounds and experiences that reflect the student population and are able to meet their needs.
  - High-Need Areas: There is a need to create innovative and cross stakeholder solutions to address hard-to-staff content areas.
- Next steps will be recommended and established by the P-20 Council in FY22.

## State Board Operations and External Engagement

- The State Board of Education took steps to increase communications, accessibility, and transparency on its work through:
  - Updates to the website to clarify the role of the Board related to regulations, charter schools, and appeals and hearings, and clarified how the public can engage with the Board via public comment;
  - Increased use of social media and publication of information regarding public comment opportunities, resulting in the following increases from FY20 to FY21:
    - Increased Facebook followers by 75% and “reach” by 72%
    - Increased Twitter followers by 14% and “reach” by 48%
    - Increased website views by 29% and unique users by 3%.

These actions resulted in increased public comment received both in writing and via meetings, to inform the Board’s work.

- The State Board took steps to improve processes and procedures through an update to its hearing procedures and rules, with the intention on cutting down the time between when an appeal is filed and when a decision is issued. (December 2020)
- Held a hearing and issued a decision on the school district boundary dispute filed with the State Board for 410 Todds Mill Rd. (January, February 2021)