



# Statewide Review of Educational Opportunities

*Phase II Findings and Recommendations*

Delaware Department of Education  
October 25, 2016

# Agenda

- Project Background
- Project Scope
- Key Findings
- Areas for Additional Review
- Recommendations



# Project Background

## SREO Phase I (2015)

### PCG partnered with DDOE/SBE to:

- Identify the current specialized educational opportunities available in traditional, vocational, charter, and magnet schools
- Produce a report on statewide educational opportunities with supporting data and analysis
- Develop an [interactive statewide geographical map](#) detailing school data and information

Data showed that students from **low income families, students with disabilities, and students receiving ELL services** participate in specialized educational opportunities at lower rates than their peers.

# Project Scope

## SREO Phase II (2016)

PCG was contracted by DDOE in 2016 to complete the following scope of work:

| Best Practices   | Gap Analysis   | Qualitative Data Collection   |
|--|--|---|
| What policies and procedures increase participation of diverse and at-risk learners in school choice opportunities?                            | Are there areas where additional schooling options or an adjustment of practice are needed to meet a growing number of students or a shifting demographic profile? | What do stakeholders perceive as strengths and areas for improvement in the current education system? |
| <h2>Recommendations</h2> <p>How can school and programming options be tailored to meet the diverse needs of Delaware's student population?</p> |  |   |

# Data Sources

## DDOE & Longitudinal Data System

- **Data Collected:**
  - Student demographic data
  - School enrollment data
  - School performance data
  - Statewide enrollment projections

## Survey and Focus Groups

- **Data Collected:**
  - Definition of school quality
  - Satisfaction with education options
  - Sources of information re: school options and school quality
  - Factors that impact schooling decisions
  - Strengths of current DE programming
  - Areas of programming need in DE

# Key Findings

Best Practices, Gap Analysis, and Qualitative Data Collection

# Investigating the National Landscape

## Best Practices Review

### National Landscape

- Twenty-one states give students the opportunity to enroll across district lines.
- Twenty-two states allow students to enroll in other schools within the district.

### Shared Challenges

- Policies have led to separation of students by race and ethnicity across schools/programs.
- English learners, students with disabilities, and socioeconomically disadvantaged students are not accessing options.
- Parents aren't effectively communicated with.
- Transportation often serves as a barrier.
- High-performing schools and districts are "full."
- Schools within and across districts are not effectively collaborating.

### Inventory of Promising Practices

- Implementing policies explicitly designed to foster diversity.
- Disseminating information about the availability of open enrollment to more disadvantaged families.
- Improving transportation options.
- Increasing capacity of high-demand schools.
- Facilitating collaboration across schools.

# Characteristics of a Quality School

## Overview of Themes

### **Student, Staff and Parent Engagement**

- *Students and families are welcome and encouraged to participate in a non-threatening manner that fosters true learning*

### **School Climate and School Safety**

- *A quality school is a place kids feel they belong and love coming to every day*

### **College and Career Readiness**

- *Students are adequately prepared for the rigors of college if they choose to attend, or the work force if they choose not to go to college*

### **Responsiveness to Diversity**

- *Students are treated with equity regardless of race or national origin*
- *A quality school provides various learning experiences that meet children's diverse learning styles*

### **Quality of Teachers and Leaders**

- *Teachers are interested in their own growth as well as the growth of their children and embrace learning opportunities*

### **Educational Programs**

- *Provides individualized supports for students to promote both academic and social-emotional well-being*



# School Quality and Choice Patterns

## Stakeholder Outreach and Data Review

### School Quality

- 80.1% of survey respondents are either satisfied or very satisfied with their current schooling experience
- Nearly 90% of survey respondents believe that access to a quality school is not a given for all of Delaware's students

### School Choice Patterns

- Low income students and English learners are less likely than their peers to exercise school choice
- There are five zip codes in which fewer than half of all students attend their feeder pattern school – all are located in New Castle County

### School Academic Performance

- Black students, Hispanic students, English Learners, and students who are low income are more likely to be enrolled in schools receiving the lowest academic achievement ratings in the DSSF
- White students are more likely to be enrolled in schools receiving the highest academic achievement ratings in the DSSF
- Nearly 70% of Wilmington students attend schools receiving low academic achievement ratings in the DSSF (1 or 2-stars)
- Less than 1% of Wilmington students attend schools receiving 5 stars for academic achievement in the DSSF

# Recommended Areas for Additional Review

- Analyzing the basis of choice decisions
- Identifying areas of concern
- Identifying existing best practices

# Additional Data Collection

## English Language Learner Needs

- Low sample size of parents who identified as English learners
- Further outreach needed to determine perceptions of school quality and educational opportunities
- Further outreach needed to identify desired programs and current barriers to access

## Analysis of High Demand Schools

- Identify schools in high demand amongst subgroups of students with low choice participation rates
  - School Enrollment Patterns Data Report
- Collect information on parent outreach strategy
- Collect information on programs/offerings that draw families to the school
- Identify and replicate best practices

# Additional Analysis

## School Level Choice Patterns

- Conduct further analysis on schools with a large percentage of students choicing in or out
  - Examine characteristics of students exercising choice
  - Review data and school context: what options exist nearby?
  - What is the basis of these choice decisions?
- Conduct annual review of choice data to identify best practices and areas of concern

## District Level Review

- Identify districts with significant demographic differences between students who:
  - Reside in the district
  - Enroll in the district
  - Choice into the district
  - Choice out of the district
- Identify district-specific factors influencing enrollment patterns

# Policy Recommendations

- Addressing barriers to access
- Meeting the needs of diverse learners
- Developing school authorization protocol

# Recommendations

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>New School Approval Process</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop a comprehensive set of policies regarding authorization of new schools</li></ul>   |
| <b>Communications and Marketing</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Centralize communications at the state level</li><li>• Target outreach activities to families who are low income, non-English speakers and/or who live in the City of Wilmington</li></ul> |
| <b>Collaboration</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop formal and informal networks that encourage public, charter, and vocational technical schools to share knowledge and resources</li></ul>   |

# Recommendations Continued

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Admissions Preferences</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review and revise admissions preference policies that may result in marginalized access (either real or perceived)</li><li>• Modify recruitment strategies to reflect admissions preferences</li></ul>    |
| <b>Vocational Technical</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Determine if additional vocational technical programs are needed at comprehensive high schools</li><li>• Clarify current admissions and applications processes for vocational technical schools</li></ul> |
| <b>Disproportionate Choicing Out</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop clear policies and practices for schools where an excessive number of students are choosing not to attend the school</li></ul>  |

# Recommendations Continued

## English Learner Taskforce

- Create a Taskforce to specifically address the educational needs of English learners

## Transportation

- Ensure that transportation is not a barrier to school choice





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