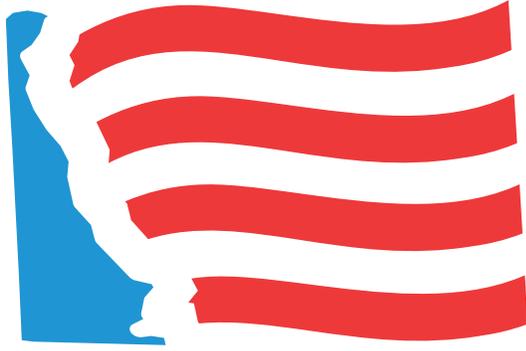


JOHN 
CARNEY
G O V E R N O R

EDUCATION POLICY



Quality education is key to the success of our children and to the state as a whole.

And Delawareans know that. John has been talking to people all over the state – educators, parents, graduates, business owners – about our education system. The consensus is the same: We’ve made some real progress in many schools. But there is a lot more work to be done.

We need to create an education system where every student has the opportunity to succeed. Despite improvements over the past decade, too many students, especially poor and minority students, are not meeting the standards that have been set.

The challenges we face in improving our public education system are very difficult to overcome. We have to give every child access to a quality early education that sets them up for future success. We have to care for our students’ needs physically, emotionally, and academically to keep them on track. We have to give educators the resources and support they need to reach students who come to school every day with

different abilities, challenges, and ways of learning. And we need to ensure that as students graduate they are well prepared to enter the workforce or continue their education in college.

Meeting these challenges will require focus, consistency, and targeted changes in areas where improvement is needed the most. The last ten years have been a decade of reform in education at the national level and here in Delaware. While many of these changes have been positive, there have also been missed opportunities. As a result of shifting focus from one reform to the next, many good ideas have never been fully implemented and others were abandoned before we could assess their impact on students. Legislation that was recently passed at the federal level gives us a new opportunity to pick a strategy that works for Delaware and stick with it.

Students, educators, and districts need more consistency to have their best chance at success. There are no quick fixes for strengthening Delaware’s public education system. But progress needs to accelerate because competition in the global economy is fierce.

Delaware students are no longer only competing for jobs against students just over the line in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, or Maryland. They’re competing against the best and the brightest from countries all around the world.

The states that will be successful in the future are the ones that have a quality, well-trained workforce. The future of our state’s economy depends on the talents and skills that our young people have to offer. Our education system needs to be dynamic and responsive to the needs of a 21st century workforce to prepare our students for the opportunities that lie ahead.

JOHN BELIEVES WE SHOULD FOCUS ON:

- Making sure all children get to kindergarten ready to learn
- Giving educators the tools and students the resources they need
- Ensuring that all students graduate high school and are college and career ready

Making Sure All Children Get to Kindergarten Ready to Learn

The foundations for success are built in the first years of a child's life. A child's brain development is most significant between birth and age 3. In fact, 90% of children's brain capacity develops by age 5, before they even step foot into a kindergarten classroom. So, if we're going to get children started on the right path, we have to focus on providing quality early childhood education.

With the development of the STARS program, Delaware has made real progress in helping children get to school better prepared to learn. Since 2012, the number of Delaware early learning programs that have earned the highest quality rating, five stars, has gone from 24 to 127.

And all children are seeing the benefits, especially children from low-income families. In 2011, only 5% of Delaware low-income children were enrolled in a highly rated STARS program. Last year, nearly 60% of low-income children were in one of these quality programs.

We need to build on this progress. As Governor, John will:

CREATE A CABINET-LEVEL COUNCIL TO BETTER DELIVER EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMMING.

State government is still inefficient at coordinating early childhood programs and services that children and their parents depend on. Currently, three state departments, the Department of Education, Department of Health and Social Services, and Department of Children, Youth, and their Families have a role in early childhood education. As Governor, John will create a Council, led by the secretaries of each agency and including leaders in the early childhood community, to prioritize early childhood education in state government, develop ways of cutting unnecessary red tape in the system, and give teachers and providers a voice to share their ideas for improvement.

BUILD STRONGER CONNECTIONS BETWEEN EARLY LEARNING AND K-12 SCHOOLS.

A child's transition between their early childhood program and kindergarten should be seamless. But, too often Delaware children advance from their daycare or pre-K program and are unprepared to enter kindergarten. Steps have been taken to lessen this gap. There are hundreds of Delawareans serving on 21 Readiness Teams that bring together early childhood programs, educators, and community leaders. And more children than ever before are taking the Early Learning Survey when they enter kindergarten, giving their teachers important information on where students are succeeding and where they need more help. A Carney Administration will improve on these efforts by facilitating better communication between kindergartens and daycare programs to ensure providers are aware of the skills children should have when they advance and recognize areas that could be improved.

MAINTAIN SUPPORT FOR HIGH QUALITY STARS RATED PROGRAMS.

The progress Delaware has made on early childhood education in recent years has been remarkable. More children from low-income families than ever before now have access to a quality early childhood program, giving them a better chance at success throughout their school careers. And more daycare providers than ever before are making needed improvements that better prepare their students to move to the next level. As Governor, John will maintain the state's focus on making sure every child has access to a quality early education.

PROVIDE AT-RISK PARENTS AND FAMILIES WITH EARLY INTERVENTION AND COACHING FROM BIRTH THROUGH EARLY CHILDHOOD.

So much of a child's development is determined at a very early age by their home environment and interactions with parents, siblings, and other caregivers. Unfortunately, not every child grows up in a supportive household. And parents often need additional help and training to ensure that their children are learning the foundational lessons and skills that position them for success in school and beyond. Delaware is fortunate that groundbreaking work in this area is happening right here. For example, Dr. Mary Dozier at the University of Delaware, has created a training and intervention program that supports parents of young children and helps them develop skills to effectively teach and nurture children that exhibit challenging behavior. The program has demonstrated success in Delaware and is being piloted in 15 other states across the country. As Governor, John will work to expand this program in Delaware to give more children, especially those living in challenging, and possibly traumatic environments, a better chance of getting on the right path early in life.

Giving Educators the Tools and Students the Resources They Need

Without question, the most important influence on a student's education is the teacher at the front of the classroom. We have some of the best teachers in the country working in Delaware schools.

They know that every child learns differently, and understand what it takes to reach each of their students and prepare them for the next level.

John believes that since teachers are the most important component to student learning, we need to maximize their time working directly with students. In visiting dozens of Delaware schools over the past two decades, John has heard time and again from teachers and principals that they want fewer administrative burdens and more hands-on assistance in the classroom. John's plan to better support teachers will do just that.

REFOCUS THE ROLE OF DOE FROM A REGULATORY AGENCY TO A SUPPORT AGENCY.

Change has to start at the top. The Delaware Department of Education should be a support system for teachers and administrators. Too often, it acts as an enforcement agency focused on implementing reforms. Teachers and principals are in the best position to understand what their students need. DOE should be a resource that helps educators implement their ideas and move students along the path to success. John will reorient the Department of Education from a focus on monitoring and mandates to a focus on collaboration and support for districts. He'll create resource centers at DOE to ensure that teachers and curriculum directors have access to experts with deep knowledge in critical areas who can provide advice and guidance and help share best practices across district lines.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE FLEXIBILITY IN ESSA TO SET GOALS AND ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES THAT MAKE SENSE FOR DELAWARE.

Delaware's regulations on school accountability were created under the burdensome, top-down rules mandated by the No Child Left Behind law. NCLB has been replaced with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which provides much more flexibility and input from state and local leaders who know the needs of their students the best. We should take full advantage of this opportunity and develop a plan that includes meaningful goals and appropriate accountability measures that keep Delaware students and schools on track.

OFFER USEFUL AND EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO DELAWARE EDUCATORS.

Educators are some of the most dedicated professionals we have. They want to continue learning and developing to help their students improve. But, John has heard from teachers across the state that the professional development they are offered doesn't help them toward their goal of improving student outcomes. As Governor, John will work to improve the professional development offered to Delaware teachers by including relevant and meaningful lessons on Delaware's standards, the science of student learning, and effective instruction for disadvantaged and trauma informed students.

DEVELOP LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES TO KEEP HIGH QUALITY TEACHERS IN THE CLASSROOM AND SUPPORTING OTHER TEACHERS.

Teachers shouldn't have to become administrators to advance in their career. Excellent teachers should be able to stay in the classroom and take on leadership roles that help them expand their impact by mentoring their peers. Delaware is implementing a pilot "teacher-leader" program during the 2016-2017 school year. John will learn from this effort and move forward on a path that gives teachers throughout the state other options to move up, help their colleagues succeed, and increase student learning.

Teachers need this support in order to provide their students with the best possible education. But, teachers alone aren't able to solve the many challenges Delaware students face. And they shouldn't be asked to.

The only way students can succeed academically and come to school prepared to learn is if they have their basic needs met -- healthy food, clean clothing, safe homes and neighborhoods. More than one-third (36%) of Delaware students come from low-income families that struggle with these basic needs. During every school year, about 3,000 students will face homelessness. And when the final school bell rings, many students return to neighborhoods that are plagued by crime and violence.

Poverty and traumatic experiences make it more difficult for children to learn. And teachers are spending valuable instruction time helping students deal with tremendous stress.

Delaware must provide these students and their families the resources and support they need. As Governor, John will:

CREATE FLEXIBILITY WITH STATE RESOURCES SO TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS CAN MORE EFFECTIVELY ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF THEIR STUDENTS.

Every student in every classroom comes to school with different abilities, strengths, and challenges. And this is especially true in schools that serve high numbers of students from low-income families, English Language Learners, or students with special needs. Teachers and principals are the ones who know their students the best, their successes and their struggles. John believes they should have input on using state resources in ways that will best meet their students' needs. The Wilmington Education Improvement Commission has worked hard to develop a plan that would better serve our most disadvantaged students, particularly those who live in the City of Wilmington. John would work with legislators and education stakeholders to determine which elements of that plan should be implemented. He believes improving the way we educate low-income and minority students has to be a priority for the next governor. To that end, he will also create a 21st Century Opportunity Grant program that creates additional flexibility in state education funding and gives teachers and principals needed resources and support to implement solutions that work for individual students.

BREAK DOWN SILOS TO GET SOCIAL SERVICES IN SCHOOLS FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES.

State government also needs to be a stronger partner in helping schools deal with the challenges students and their families face. John will ensure that state agencies are working together, rather than in silos, to get families the comprehensive support they need.



ENSURE THAT ALL STUDENTS GRADUATE HIGH SCHOOL AND ARE CAREER AND COLLEGE READY

Delaware's economy is changing. The economy of the 21st century will look a lot different than it did just a few years ago. For previous generations, employers like DuPont, GM, and Claymont Steel provided Delawareans that had a high school diploma and a good work ethic with middle class jobs.

We live in a very different world today. More and more, the economy is becoming a startup and innovation economy. Workers will have to be better educated, and more skilled than ever before.

The bar for students today is higher than it's ever been, and Delaware has to rise to the challenge. Every Delaware student has to graduate high school prepared to succeed in college or the workforce.

We've made progress. More students than ever before are taking college courses while they're still in high school, and enrolling in college after graduation. We're starting to make strong connections between students, training and apprenticeship programs, and Delaware employers.

But there are still significant challenges. One of the biggest we face is closing the opportunity gap for students living in poverty. More than 25% of students living in poverty failed to graduate on time according to the most recent data.

Of those that do graduate, many are not prepared to be successful at the next level. Forty two percent of Delaware students have to complete a remedial English or Math class when they get to college. These classes cost money and don't count for credit, making it more difficult for students to earn their degree. Studies show that 30% of students required to take a remedial class in college never graduate with a bachelor's degree.

Addressing this challenge must be a high priority for Delaware public schools if the state is to remain strong and prosperous and our students are to be successful. The states that will be successful in the future are the ones that have a quality, well-trained workforce.

We have to prepare our graduates with a world class education to be part of this 21st century workforce. As Governor, John will:

EXPAND CAREER PATHWAYS PROGRAMS TO GET MORE STUDENTS PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS BEFORE GRADUATION.

The Markell Administration's Pathways to Prosperity program has expanded rapidly over the last two years, from 500 students in two school districts to 6,000 students statewide next year. They're taking classes and earning professional certifications in professions like computer science, engineering, and biomedical science. And the certifications they're earning can be taken directly to the workforce, or help them further their education in college. As Governor, John will work with Delaware high schools and the business community to identify workforce needs and opportunities for graduating students. He'll also work to expand partnerships between Delaware Tech and the state's high schools to get more students the critical skills and qualifications they need to be valuable members of the workforce.

CREATE MEASURES FOR SCHOOL AND STUDENT SUCCESS BASED ON OUTCOMES, INCLUDING CAREER READINESS.

Delaware's school evaluation system very clearly measures students' college preparedness and enrollment. But, according to the most recent available data, 40% of Delaware graduates don't enroll in college the following school year. Many of these students take skills they've learned in high school, and with some additional training or time in an apprenticeship program, go directly into the workforce. Career readiness must be a priority, and it starts with assessing schools based on how they are preparing their students for the workforce. Under the recently passed federal Every Student Succeeds Act, states have the flexibility to choose their assessment methods for high schools. As Governor, John will make sure effective career readiness measures are included in Delaware's system, incentivizing schools and districts to invest in these programs.