

April 8, 2010



Vision Network participants celebrate their work

Delaware IS the *First State in Education!*

The First State ranked #1 out of all 41 applications submitted in Round One of the federal *Race to the Top* grant competition, securing approximately \$100M to improve our schools. So how did Delaware do it? As The New Teacher Project pointed out this week in its [analysis](#) of the Race to the Top applications, the state's application stood out because it relied on a combination of state leadership, boldness and buy-in. The Markell administration developed a clear and coherent plan that was built around making the tough choices needed to enable our children to succeed. In crafting the plan, they worked with the State Board of Education to develop [leading-edge policies](#) on teacher evaluation and turning around our lowest performing schools. And throughout the process, beginning as early as this summer, they engaged in a collaborative effort among our state government, teachers union, and business and community leaders to get the support of every school district and charter school in the state. In short, Delaware laid out a plan for breaking new ground and demonstrated it had the commitment of those on the ground to engage in the tough work of implementation.

Celebrate the Vision Network

Delaware educators, administrators and school board members are invited to join state officials and legislators to celebrate the innovative work of all 25 [Vision Network](#) Schools.

Thursday, May 13, 2010
4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Dover Downs Hotel & Casino
Ballroom A
1131 North DuPont Highway
Dover, Delaware

This special reception will provide you with the opportunity to learn about the Vision Network and what's happening in our districts and schools to accelerate student achievement.

Advance registration by May 6 is required. RSVP to info@vision2015delaware.org or 302-504-5240.

Show your support for making Delaware schools world-class!

The Nuts and Bolts

It would take hours to fully read and digest the 500+ pages of [Delaware's Race to the Top plan](#). So how will Delaware educators, students, and families benefit from the initiatives supported by *Race to the Top*? Click [here](#) to find out.

State officials and representatives from the U.S.

Delaware's delegation was interviewed in Washington D.C. on March 16 to present the state's case for funding. Led by Governor Jack Markell, Delaware's interview team included Secretary of Education Lillian Lowery, Delaware State Education Association President Diane Donohue, Red Clay Consolidated School District Superintendent Merv Daugherty and Vision 2015 Chair Skip Schoenhals. The Delaware team delved into the details of the proposal and demonstrated the extraordinary level of collaborative support behind Delaware's bold application, which vaulted it to winning status. Congratulations on a job well done!

Read the [press release](#) by the U.S. Department of Education and [Secretary Duncan's letter](#) to the Governors. Also, check out this [interview](#) about the *Race to the Top* victory with Governor Markell on Philadelphia's Fox29 News.

Read the [comments from the Race to the Top independent review team](#) and [see the results](#) from the final score sheet.

Be A Leader in Your Child's School

The [Learning Link of Delaware](#) (LLOD) is committed to accelerating the educational achievement of every student in the state and to reducing achievement gaps among diverse student groups. Through training programs, outreach and communication, it links families, schools and communities to build a learning environment in which all children can succeed.

One program LLOD offers is the [Delaware Parent Leadership Institute](#) (DPLI), a training program focused on improving student achievement and increasing parental involvement in Delaware's public schools. Since it was established in 2004, DPLI has trained 130 parent leaders and has impacted the lives of more than 1,000 children and families.

You can do it too! DPLI is currently recruiting for its next training sessions (to be held August through November of this year), and is seeking parents and guardians of public school students to participate in this **FREE** and invaluable training experience. **The application deadline is May 1.** For more on information sessions, training dates, and to access the application, [click here](#).

Did you know?

Department of Education will meet over the next several weeks to finalize the details of the *Race to the Top* award. Through this federal grant opportunity, half of the \$100M will go directly to the districts and charter schools, and half will support state-level initiatives. Within the next 90 days, school districts and charter schools will be asked to submit a plan to demonstrate how their portion of the funds will be spent. Funds must be used for initiatives that align with the student achievement goals set forth in the *Race to the Top* plan.

Read more about Delaware's Race to the Top in *The News Journal* – [Delaware Gets \\$100 for Schools, Every Public School to Share 'Top' Dollars, Next Step, Bold Reform](#) – and [Education Week](#).

Success Stories in School Turnarounds

On Wednesday, March 24, educators from throughout Delaware were invited to a series of events keynoted by Kerry Purcell. Purcell is the former principal of Harvard Park Elementary School in Springfield, Illinois, who led the school, which had been on the state "watch list," to achieve significant academic gains in both literacy and mathematics. Superintendents and principals in the Vision Network were invited to special sessions with Purcell, where they exchanged ideas and discussed challenges. Purcell then shared her story with a broader public audience, who also viewed a screening of the movie, "[The Principal Story](#)."

Purcell currently works with [Focus on Results](#), which provides leadership training to 25 [Vision Network schools](#) throughout Delaware.

VISION-aries

"All along we said that we would set a very high bar for success because we know that real and meaningful change in public education will only come from doing hard work and setting the highest of expectations. Both Delaware and Tennessee cleared that bar."

- U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, announcing the winners of Round One of the Race to the Top grant competition. Click [here](#) for the complete transcript of his press conference.

Last week, President Obama signed legislation to revamp the federal student loan program, expanding college access to millions more Americans. The new law will eliminate fees paid to private banks to act as intermediaries in providing loans to college students and use much of the nearly \$68 billion in savings over 11 years to expand Pell grants and make it easier for students to repay outstanding loans after graduating.

Read [more](#) about the changes to federal student loan program and view a video blog by Dr. Jill Biden.

Mark Your Calendars!

April – [National Poetry Month](#)

April 11-17 – [National Library Week](#)

April 16 – Deadline to apply for the [Harvard Club of Delaware Scholarship](#) for Summer 2010 Professional Development for Educators at the Harvard Graduate School of Education

April 22 – [Earth Day](#)

April 23-25 – [Global Youth Service Day](#)

April 24 – Grand Opening of the [Delaware Children's Museum](#)

"What's really important today is where we go from here; whether we have the will to put our children first and move forward with reforms to improve our schools so that Delaware children can successfully compete for the best jobs in an increasingly competitive global economy."

- Governor Jack Markell, after learning of Delaware's Race to the Top victory. Read the complete press release [here](#).

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Contact us!

For more information on how to become involved with Vision 2015, please visit our web site, <http://www.vision2015delaware.org>, or e-mail us at info@vision2015delaware.org.

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