



Every learner  
ready for success in  
college, career, and life.

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2028

**Presented by:**

Cindy Marten, Secretary of Education

**Our Promise:  
Start with Students.  
Build for Impact.**



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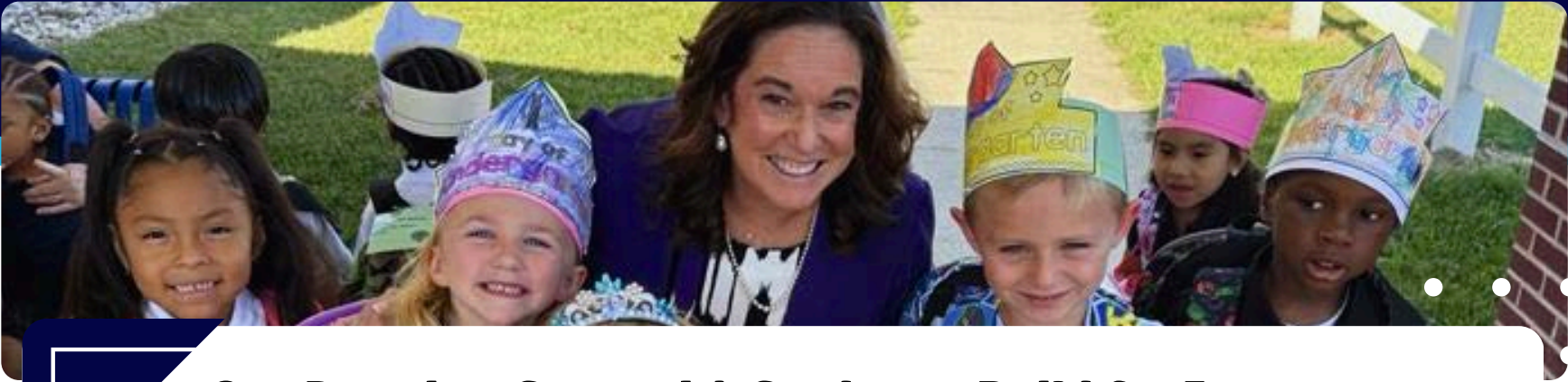
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The Delaware Department of Education's mission is to empower every learner with the highest quality education through shared leadership, innovative practices, and exemplary services. These priority initiatives provide the building blocks and roadmap for a world class Delaware education system.

# Letter from the Secretary



## **Our Promise: Start with Students. Build for Impact.**

As Delaware's Secretary of Education, I am proud to present our Strategic Plan for Education, a collective roadmap that reflects the voices of families, educators, students, and community partners across our state. Our promise is clear: Start with students and build for impact. Every decision we make begins with what is best for our learners and ends with the lasting difference it creates for their futures.

This plan enhances Delaware's strengths while addressing the evolving needs of our schools and learners. It sets measurable goals, promotes accountability, and aligns our collective efforts toward a stronger, more equitable Delaware education system. I invite all Delawareans to engage with this work, share ideas, and join us in shaping the next chapter of education in our state. Together, we can ensure that Delaware schools remain places where all children are supported and inspired to reach their full potential.

*Cindy Marten*

Delaware Secretary of Education

# Demographics

Delaware's education system serves children in early child care programs through the PK-12 system. Delaware learners represent a rich mix of backgrounds, languages, and learning needs. This diversity is a key strength and provides essential context for understanding student outcomes, identifying needs, and shaping strategies.



**893**

**Licensed Child Care Programs**



**30,461**

**Child Care Program Enrollment**

**In 2024**

6055 students enrolled in dual enrollment courses

15,780 students enrolled in an AP course



## What does PK-12 public education look like in Delaware?



**43**

**Local Education Agencies**

(19 Districts, 24 Charters)



**142,495**

**Public School Enrollment**

(District and Charter)

**19,032**

**Charter School Enrollment**



**52% Male**

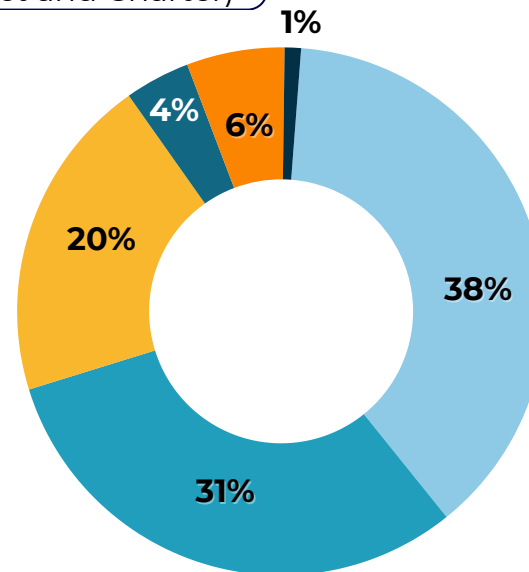
**48% Female**

### Student Population

**13%**  
Multilingual learners

**19%**  
Students with disabilities

**27%**  
Low income



- **38%** White
- **31%** Black
- **20%** Hispanic
- **4%** Asian
- **6%** Multi-Racial
- **>1%** Native American
- **>1%** Pacific Islander

**In the 2025 School Year**  
1% of graduated students (1,205 students) demonstrated readiness by successful attainment in industry credentials\*

**\*Industry Credentials:** Measurement of attainment is based on the specific credential within a state-approved CTE program of study (i.e., certified nursing assistant)

# National Performance

The **National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)**, which measures 4th and 8th grade proficiency in math and reading nationwide, showed declines in national reading performance between 2022 and 2024. While Delaware's fourth-grade math scores showed the greatest improvement of any state, overall performance remains below pre-pandemic levels and the national average.

How do  
**Delaware  
NAEP scores  
compare to  
nationwide  
scores?**

National Scores		2022 score	2024 score	Point change	Notes
Math	4th Grade	235	237	+2	<b>+24 pts</b> from 1990
Math	8th Grade	273	272	-1	<b>+11 pts</b> from 1990
Reading	4th Grade	216	214	-2	No statistical difference from 1992
Reading	8th Grade	259	257	-2	No statistical difference from 1992

Delaware Scores		2022 score	2024 score	Point change	Comparison to National Score
Math	4th Grade	226	233	+7	<b>-4 pts</b>
Math	8th Grade	264	263	-1	<b>-9 pts</b>
Reading	4th Grade	208	210	+2	<b>-4 pts</b>
Reading	8th Grade	253	249	-4	<b>-8 pts</b>



## **Our Vision**

Every learner is ready for success in college, career, and life.



## **Our Mission**

To empower every learner with the highest quality education through shared leadership, innovative practices, and exemplary services.



## **Our Promise**

Start with Students.  
Build for Impact.



# Building Blocks and Priorities

Turning clear priorities into measurable results.



## **BRIGHT BEGINNINGS**

### **Priority:**

Expand Early Education



## **SAFE, SUPPORTIVE SCHOOLS**

### **Priorities:**

- Student Wellbeing
- Instructional Leadership
- Educator Workforce Growth and Retention



## **GREAT TEACHING AND LEARNING**

### **Priorities:**

- Early Literacy Success
- Improved Student Achievement
- Data and Assessment Systems
- College and Career Readiness



## **FAIR OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVERY LEARNER**

### **Priorities:**

- Education Funding Reform
- AI Proficiency for Impact



## **FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES AS PARTNERS**

### **Priority:**

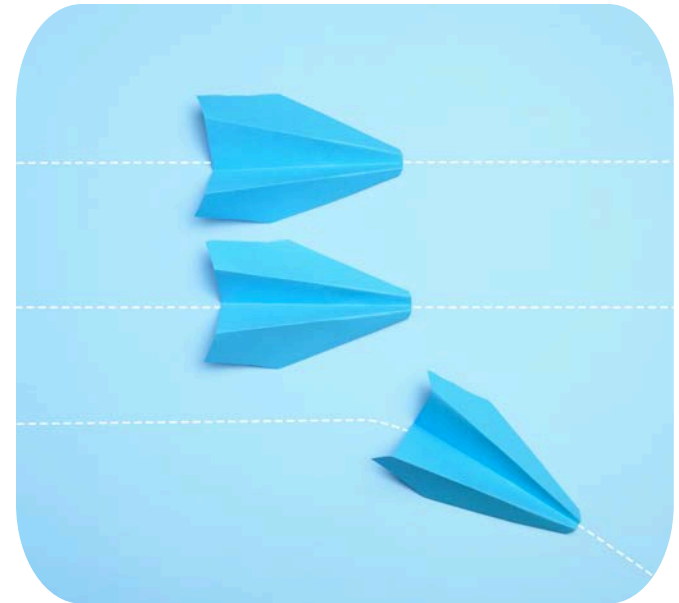
Family and Community Partnerships

# Deep Dive

Deep Dive into the Building Blocks and Priorities



**In this section, each priority is paired with measurable outcomes to track progress as well as implementation plans that define the actions, timelines, and responsibilities needed to achieve results. Together, these metrics and plans provide a clear roadmap for building a stronger foundation for Delaware learners.**



# Bright Beginnings

## Priority

- Expand Early Education

## Metric

- By September 2028, increase the percentage of children birth through age five who are enrolled in funded early care and education programs and services from 25% to 40%, through expanded access, as measured by state-led enrollment.

## Strategies

- Support children being developmentally prepared to enter kindergarten by aligning health, early learning, family support, and community partnerships to promote whole-child development.
- Increase the availability of early learning opportunities by opening more licensed child care programs statewide and expanding access to state-funded care and family support programs.
- Strengthen the quality of early learning programs and services across settings by implementing program standards and monitoring progress.
- Increase the percentage of children served in high-quality early learning environments statewide.
- Increase access to high-quality professional learning and advancement in credentialing pathways to recruit, retain, and elevate early childhood educators, ensuring that early learning programs and services are staffed by skilled, well-prepared professionals.



# Safe, Supportive Schools

## Priorities

- Student Wellbeing
- Instructional Leadership
- Educator Workforce Growth and Retention

## Metrics

- By June 2028, increase the three-year retention rate of all early career teachers from 72% to 75%.
- By June 2028, improve student wellbeing and belonging by reducing chronic absenteeism (missing 10%+ of school days) from 15% to 13%, as tracked in state attendance.

## Strategies

- Build trauma-informed, inclusive environments through professional learning that improve student resilience, educator well-being, and access to physical, mental health, wellness, and nutrition services.
- Deliver targeted services for students in foster care, experiencing homelessness, in secure care, military-connected, or facing chronic truancy.
- Develop strong school and district leaders through preparation, recruitment, mentoring, leadership networks, and staffing models that focus on coaching and ongoing improvement.
- Carry out a statewide educator workforce strategy that expands Grow Your Own, residency, and apprenticeship pathways; strengthens career ladders; enhances transparency for licensing; expands scholarships and mentoring; and partners with higher education to prepare educators for strong reading instruction and workforce needs.



# Great Teaching and Learning

## Priorities

- Early Literacy Success
- Improved Student Achievement
- Data and Assessment Systems
- College and Career Readiness Indicators

## Metrics

**Graduation and Readiness**, by June 2028, increase percentages in:

- Grade 9 on track to graduate (district/charter): 84% → 86%
- Graduation rate (state): 89% → 91%
- College and Career Readiness indicator met (state): 78% → 80%

**Academic Proficiency** by June 2028, increase:

- Grade 3 reading (statewide assessment): 38% → 53%
- Grade 8 math (statewide assessment): 26% → 35%
- Grades 3-8 Delaware School Success Framework Composite Score: 264 → 300

## Strategies

- Ensure high-quality teaching by using evidence-based materials to support learning in all schools.
- Implement statewide professional learning and coaching that strengthen instruction across subjects.
- Improve student success by strengthening multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) to provide academic, behavioral, and well-being supports, including personalized instruction across student groups.
- Make data and assessments work better by helping educators use student data and ensuring tests are fair, accessible, and aligned to state standards.
- Prepare students for college and careers by expanding career and technical education (CTE) pathways, work-based learning, industry credentials, college credit, and strong advising.
- Expand access to a well-rounded education through dual language immersion, multilingual pathways, arts education, health and physical education, and driver safety education.



# Fair Opportunities for Every Learner

## Priorities

- Education Funding Reform
- AI Proficiency for Impact

## Metrics

- By June 2026, provide agency support for the passage of legislation enabling a transition to a new hybrid funding model by August 2027.
- By June 2028, at least 75% of districts and charters will use AI tools to support educator workload or student outcomes, while maintaining 100% compliance with state AI governance, data security and privacy, and human-in-the-loop requirements.

## Strategies

- Put business processes in place to carry out Delaware's updated education funding model, ensure accountability, and guide fair use of federal and state funds.
- Roll out a statewide Assurance Lab to support operational and instructional decision-making.
- Provide clear guidance on media literacy and safe, responsible, and ethical use of generative AI for educators.
- Strengthen educator and system capacity for inclusive, high-quality instruction by building in supports for multilingual learners, advancing State Board priorities, and improving data-driven planning.
- Create and use fair, accessible assessments for multilingual learners and students with disabilities.
- Launch Early Warning Systems and improve inclusive, evidence-based instruction and coordinated supports for students with disabilities, including assistive technology, behavior supports, literacy help, and career transition services.



# Families and Communities as Partners

## Priority

- Family and Community Partnerships

## Metrics

- By July 2028, the use of data dashboards by educators to inform decision-making, equity, and accountability will increase to 75%.
- Launch an easy-to-use family and community portal that increases transparency and connects families to learning tools, updates, and support.

## Strategies

- Share clear, easy-to-understand data and reports that help educators, families, and communities see how students are learning, growing, and preparing for the future.
- Work with community groups, employers, and training providers to expand flexible learning options for adult learners.
- Strengthen afterschool and summer programs that build literacy skills, support academic success, and increase college and career exploration.
- Develop a statewide, easily accessible, dynamic dashboard to improve decision-making, equity, and accountability.
- Provide an Early Literacy Family Toolkit to increase exposure to literacy at home.

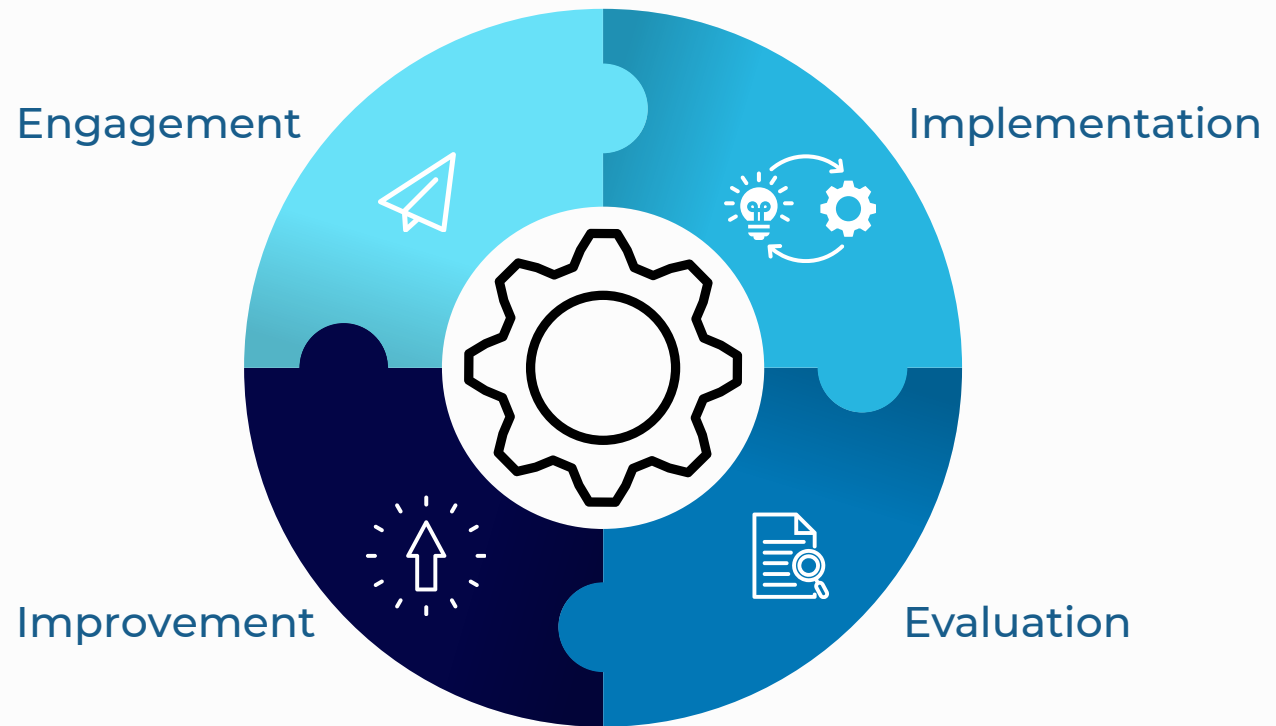


# Implementation and Next Steps

## Continuous Improvement

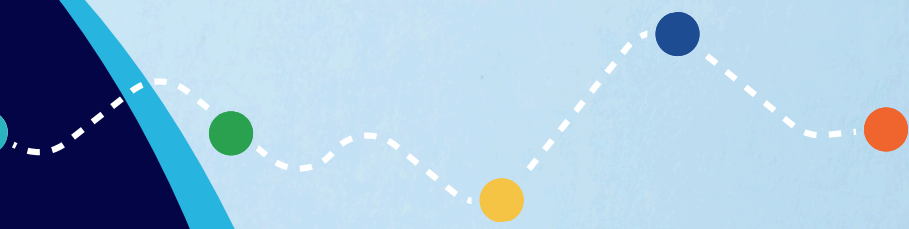
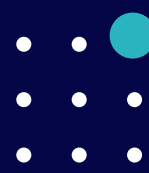
**Implementation of this Strategic Plan will continue with the further development, refinement, and execution of strategies, initiatives, and programs to achieve the outcomes and goals identified. Effective implementation will involve clear communication, strong leadership, and continued stakeholder engagement.**

Through a cycle of implementation, evaluation, and improvement, the Strategic Plan will remain dynamic, responsive, and aligned with evolving needs. Progress towards meeting the targets will be regularly monitored at the state and local levels, and shared publicly on a regular basis.





**Delaware**  
Department of Education



# Contact Us

Those seeking more information about this strategic plan are encouraged to contact the Department of Education. Together, our state's strengths and determination will shape a brighter future for every Delaware learner.



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