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Markell school reform proposal moves state education forward

WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION

The News Journal

The Markell administration has put forth a strong, clear plan to make Delaware's schools better -- for the state, for the economy and, especially, for the children's future in the world beyond the classroom.

It will be a tough job to accomplish the goals the governor and the Department of Education have laid out, but the alternative is unacceptable. If our students can't compete against students in countries like India and China, then their future -- and the country's -- will be a second-rate one.

The administration's plan is to provide schools, administrators and teachers incentives and help in giving every student in Delaware a world-class education. Some of these techniques would involve using the state's highly regarded longitudinal data system to track and steer students development. The plan also calls for better education, training and mentoring of teachers.

Schools will have to challenge students with higher standards. Teachers will have to track student performance and adjust approaches so every student moves forward.

But the program also calls for some stiff measures to make sure administrators, teachers and, indeed, schools enable students to make that progress. Teacher advancement will be tied to that progress. If a school continues to fail, leaders and staff could be changed or the school could be closed.

As long as the support to reach those goals is supplied, the administration's proposals are more than fair. They are crucial.

The timing of the plan aligns with a federal "Race to the Top" that offers states incentive money to improve schools, toughen standards and advance students. But the changes are needed even with the incentives.

The Markell administration has moved the state closer to better schools.
