

Race to the Top

Comments on Delaware's Winning Plan

“The competition will not be based on politics, ideology, or the preferences of a particular interest group. Instead, it will be based on a simple principle — whether a state is ready to do what works. We will use the best data available to determine whether a state can meet a few key benchmarks for reform — and states that outperform the rest will be rewarded with a grant. Not every state will win and not every school district will be happy with the results. But America’s children, America’s economy, and America itself will be better for it.” — **President Barack Obama, announcing Race to the Top at Department of Education Headquarters, July 24, 2009**

“We received many strong proposals from states all across America, but two applications stood out above all others: Delaware and Tennessee. Both states have statewide buy-in for comprehensive plans to reform their schools. They have written new laws to support their policies. And they have demonstrated the courage, capacity, and commitment to turn their ideas into practices that can improve outcomes for students.” — **U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, announcing the winners of the first phase of the Race to the Top competition, March 29, 2010**

“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 global economy. That won’t be easy, but we have proven in these past few months that it can be done.” — **Delaware Governor Jack Markell, March 29, 2010**

“Finally, the competition has spotlighted successful reforms that deserve to be emulated. Consider the teacher evaluation and training program proposed in Delaware, which recognizes that the state cannot create a high-performing teacher corps simply by firing struggling teachers. The state’s political leadership has gained broad support for a system that will hold teachers responsible for improving student performance but provide intensive coaching and feedback to help them master the job.” — **The New York Times, editorial, April 8, 2010**

“The goals may be lofty, but they mean nothing if they don’t help, as the governor said, the students progress. So that tough plan has to be implemented and all the stakeholders have to do their part, especially when tougher decisions have to be made down the road. But for now, with a hard-earned Race to the Top award in hand, Gov. Markell and his team should take a victory lap.” — **The News Journal, (Delaware Online) opinion, March 30, 2010**

“To be successful we must help all Delaware students meet high standards and ensure that we have effective teachers with the necessary resources to make that possible. While we are very pleased Secretary Duncan has agreed to partner with us in these efforts, we have a lot of hard work and tough decisions ahead of us as we make these reforms a reality.” — **Lillian Lowery, Delaware State Secretary of Education**

“No education reform effort of this magnitude will succeed without a strong partnership between educators, parents, students, administrators, local school boards, community leaders, and state policy makers. DSEA remains committed to partnering with these stakeholders to successfully implement educationally sound programs that will positively impact the learning environment of all Delaware public schools.” — **Diane Donohue, president, Delaware State Education Association**

“I think Delaware has a perfect plan for where we wanted to go.” — **Merv Daugherty, superintendent, Red Clay Consolidated School District, member of Race to the Top interview team**

“Education reform is a very long and complicated process. The success of winning this competition is only because we’ve been working at it for 20 years.” — **Marvin N. “Skip” Schoenhals, chairman, WSFS Bank and chair, Vision 2015**

“This is a huge and humbling opportunity. ... There is going to be a lot of attention on all of us here. The eyes of the nation are going to be on Delaware.” — **Paul Herdman, president and CEO, Rodel Foundation of Delaware**

“It’s wonderful. Now the work begins.” — **Terry Schooley, chair, Delaware House Education Subcommittee**