

DELAWARE VALLEY CONSORTIUM FOR EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY



NEW JERSEY NETWORK TO CLOSE THE ACHIEVEMENT GAPS



LONG ISLAND CONSORTIUM FOR EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY



*“Preparing Each and Every Student for Success in Post-Secondary
Education and in Life”*

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout our country, and in our area, there exist great individual public schools, inspiring and dedicated teachers, and innovative and committed educational leaders. The challenge before us is not the creation of individual pockets of greatness, but rather the development of school district systems and the communities they serve that continually reach to improve the quality and depth of educational learning opportunities for each and every one of their students, and that reflect both excellence, continuous innovation and improvement, and equity in opportunity in policies and practice.

In 2004 the Penn Center for Educational Leadership in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania, in collaboration with the School District of Cheltenham Township, and in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Education, initiated the *Delaware Valley Minority Student Achievement Consortium*, now the *Delaware Valley Consortium for Excellence and Equity*, to form and sustain a regional network of school districts in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware that were committed to working together to enhance the achievement, well-being and future success of their struggling diverse students and close the districts' pervasive and long-standing opportunity and achievement gaps.

In the impending reauthorization of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act is clear that the primary goals for America's education system for today and tomorrow focuses on five key priority areas: 1) *College and Career Ready Students*, 2) *Great and Effective Teachers and Leaders In Every School*, 3) *Equity and Opportunity for All Students*, 4) *Raising the Bar and Rewarding Excellence*, and *Promoting Innovation and Continuous Improvement*.

Working intensively over past ten years we have developed a unique, cost-effective and self-sustaining regional school district consortium model for addressing these priority areas, all of which are focused around inter-district collaboration and shared learning for continuous improvement in closing the preparation, opportunity, and achievement gaps observed for many students of color and/or students coming from economic disadvantage.

The work of the DVCEE has seeded four other consortia: the *New Jersey Network to Close the Achievement Gaps* (NJNCAG) in southern New Jersey in partnership with the Educational Information and Resource Center in 2007, the *Central Jersey Consortium for Excellence and Equity* in central New Jersey in partnership with the Monmouth University School of Education in 2012, the *Long Island Consortium for Excellence and Equity* (LICEE) in metropolitan New York City in partnership with the Nassau BOCES in 2012, and the *Learning Achievement Coalition–Oakland County* (LAC-O) in metropolitan Detroit, Michigan in partnership with the Oakland schools and Oakland University School of Education in 2006.

We know that the presence of gaps in student achievement and attainment defined by race/gender/economics are by no means a new development; however, the elimination of these disparities is a national educational and economic imperative that has virtually gone unattended to at the district/community level or in a whole system way, in urban districts, as well as our suburban and rural districts that lie outside our large urban centers.

For years, evidence of disparities in achievement and attainment have been well-documented for low-income, boys and/or students of color in urban, suburban and rural school districts evidenced in standardized test score performance, grades, discipline referral and suspension rates, graduation rates, college-going and college graduation rates, placement in honors and advanced placement courses/tracks, placement in special education and remedial education classes, and almost every relevant indicator of academic performance and success.

Since its inception, DVCEE has served over 50 districts and partnered with regional county intermediate units, the College Board, and in the Pennsylvania State Education Association in systemically addressing achievement and opportunity gaps from a "big-picture" district and community perspective. The Consortium is collaborative network of school districts throughout Pennsylvania, Delaware and New Jersey that are committed to supporting one another in assuring that all students graduating from their systems be equipped with the skills, knowledge and dispositions for college and career success.

Dr. Robert L. Jarvis at the Penn Center for Educational Leadership in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania has provided leadership for program development, and has provided technical assistance and training resources, facilitated collaborative relationships with regional and national partners, and sought on-going support to enhance member district's efforts and capacities to individually and collectively address their observed achievement disparities through:

- engagement of district leadership teams, that include students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community representatives, in on-going dialog, high level professional development and action planning focused on the reducing the impact of race and economics on K-12 student success;
- refinement of individual district and consortium-wide collection, analysis, and dissemination of critical disaggregated data that defines the gaps;
- facilitation of district/school administrator and teacher leadership development for promoting meaningful and impactful change and using disaggregated data to inform necessary transformation of instructional and curriculum policies and practices and curricular decisions that would ensure enhanced achievement for all students;
- researching and sharing promising systemic strategies that have proved to be successful in addressing the learning and developmental needs of their increasingly diverse learners regionally and elsewhere in the country.

MISSION AND BELIEFS

DVCEE, NJNCAG, and LICEE are driven by a mission to positively transform the lives of each and every one of our students by preparing them for success in post-secondary education and in life – especially our diverse children and youth who have traditionally struggled academically in our systems, or who might likely be the first in their family to attend and graduate from college.

We are partners and a strong collective voice who can help gather the resources, thought and energy needed to create and sustain meaningful educational change to the benefit all of the children we serve locally and state-wide. The Consortia serves as a valuable resource where the best of what we know of research and informed practice percolate- ideas and strategies that help district leaders effectively address their critical local challenges of securing and sustaining high level student achievement for all and educational equity. We are committed to strengthen the capacities of our districts to advance new district and school-level practices and programs that positively impact success of their diverse learners.

Our progress toward excellence and equity requires innovative and collaborative approaches to educational reform, approaches that allow district and school decision-makers to reflect upon their practice and improve their systems' capacities to deliver intellectually engaging and impactful learning experiences that are accessible to each and every child that they serve.

We recognize that system leadership is paramount in promoting and supporting meaningful change and improvement. Our district leaders are committed to creating and sustaining structures, curricula and programs that will eliminate pervasive opportunity, achievement and attainment gaps defined by race/ethnicity, gender, language, (dis)ability or family economic background. Our work is informed by the following Six Goals of Educational Equity (Bradley Scott, 2008):

Goal 1: Comparably High Academic Achievement and Other Student Outcomes

As data on academic achievement and other student outcomes are disaggregated and analyzed, one sees high comparable performance for all identifiable groups of learners and achievement, attainment and performance gaps are virtually non-existent.

Goal 2: Equitable Access and Inclusion

There exists unobstructed entrance into, involvement of and full participation of all learners in programs and activities within our schools.

Goal 3: Equitable Treatment

Patterns of interaction between individuals and within our school environments are characterized by acceptance, valuing, respect, support, safety and security such that all students feel challenged to become invested in the pursuits of learning and excellence without fear of threat, humiliation, danger or disregard.

Goal 4: Equitable Opportunity to Learn

The creation of learning opportunities so that every child, regardless of characteristics and identified needs, is presented with the challenge to reach high standards and are given the requisite pedagogical, social, emotional and psychological supports to achieve the high standards of excellence that are established.

Goal 5: Equitable Resources

Funding, staffing and other resources for equity-based excellence that are manifested in the existence of equitably assigned qualified staff, appropriate facilities, other environmental learning spaces, instructional hardware and software, instructional materials and equipment, and all other instructional supports, are distributed in an equitable and fair manner such that the notion that all diverse learners must achieve high academic standards and other school outcomes become possible.

Goal 6: Equitable Shared Accountability

The assurance that all education stakeholders accept responsibility and hold themselves and each other responsible for every learner having full access to quality education, qualified teachers, challenging curriculum, full opportunity to learn, and appropriate, sufficient support for learning so they can achieve at excellent levels in academic and other student outcomes.

We believe that excellent and effective school systems are those with:

- A strong commitment to both excellence and educational equity;
- A commitment to “measure what matters” and effectively use disaggregated data to drive change and inform structures, programs, curricula and instruction;
- Policies and daily practices that communicate high expectations for the success of all students;

- Policies and daily practices that create opportunities for all students to access, take advantage of and thrive in intellectually rigorous curricula and engaging and enriching curricular and non-curricular learning experiences;
- Supportive learning environments that define success through students' high level intellectual engagement, academic achievement and quality character and social-emotional development;
- Culturally proficient educators who care deeply about the welfare and success of each and every one of their students, understand the content they teach and ultimately engage their students in taking ownership and responsibility for their own learning;
- Effective and supportive "leadership for learning" at both district and school levels;
- District administrators who actively support principals and teachers in improving their craft through on-going dialog and shared professional learning, and who always make decisions in the best interests of all students;
- Effective systems to assess student classroom learning, to evaluate what works most effectively in reaching and teaching diverse learners and maximizing their learning opportunities, and to effectively and creatively allocate human and financial resources accordingly; and
- Strong partnerships with engaged and committed families and communities.

DISTRICT COMMITMENTS

- Exploring and explicitly acknowledging the unique nature of the achievement and opportunity to learn gaps in their district/community;
- Actively collaborating with other consortium districts to discover, propose, and implement organizational and instructional strategies that measurably close the gaps;
- Monitoring critical district/school disaggregated data, including:
 - student assessments (State and district achievement measures, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, PSAT/SAT performance),
 - grades/GPA,
 - student and parent perceptions of their experiences,
 - enrollment patterns in advanced placement-international baccalaureate-honors-gifted-math and science courses,
 - enrollment patterns in Title 1-remedial programs and/or special education,
 - discipline referral rates and consequences,
 - extracurricular involvement,
 - attendance rates and patterns,
 - high school graduation rates,
 - college-going rates/attending first college of choice, and
 - college persistence and success.
- Changing school structures, policies and practices that reinforce and sustain the gaps;
- Developing annual plans to address district goals for closing/eliminating the gaps, including measurable objectives and outcomes;
- Participating in shared leadership and learning experiences, and disseminate promising and effective practices;
- Providing learning opportunities for emerging diverse student leaders in middle and high school; and
- Enhancing the recruitment and retention of administrators and teachers of color.

ACTIVITIES

To reach our long-term goals, our Consortia provide year-long technical assistance and training resources for all critical stakeholders (district and school administrators, teachers, school counselors and other pupil support staff, parents/caregivers and students), facilitate collaboration and nurture substantive relationships with regional and national experts in an effort to enhance member districts' capacities to better address their observed achievement and attainment disparities by:

- Providing support in the development and implementation of equity-informed district strategic plans;
- Engaging district leadership teams in on-going high level professional learning, on-going dialog and action planning focused on reducing the impact of race/ethnicity and class on pre K-12 student learning and success;
- Facilitating annual Middle and High School Student Leadership Institutes;
- Facilitating annual Educators of Color Recruitment Fairs in PA and NJ;
- Facilitating leaders' reflection and learning for promoting meaningful, impactful and sustainable change in their systems;
- Researching and sharing promising practices and strategies that have proved to be successful in addressing student underachievement locally and throughout the country; and
- Actively engaging in local and state-wide education policy development that furthers excellence and equity in our school systems.

2014-15

Delaware Valley Consortium for Excellence and Equity Member Districts

Abington	Amy Sichel, Superintendent	Montgomery County, PA
Allentown	C. Russell Mayo, Superintendent	Lehigh County, PA
Bensalem	David Baugh, Superintendent	Bucks County, PA
Bethlehem Area	Joe Roy, Superintendent	Lehigh County, PA
Brandywine	Mark Holodick, Superintendent	New Castle County, DE
Cheltenham Township	Natalie Thomas, Superintendent	Montgomery County, PA
Chester County Intermediate Unit	Joseph O'Brien, Superintendent	Chester County, PA
Downingtown Area	Lawrence Mussoline, Superintendent	Chester County, PA
Hatboro-Horsham	Curtis Griffen, Superintendent	Montgomery County, PA
Lenape Regional	Carol Birnbaum, Superintendent	Burlington County, NJ
Lindenwold	Geraldine Carroll, Interim Superintendent	Camden County, NJ
Lower Merion	Wagner Marseille, Acting Superintendent	Montgomery County, PA
Pennsylvania State Education Association	Michael Crossey, President Jerry Oleksiak, Vice President	Harrisburg, PA
Perkiomen Valley	Cliff Rogers, Superintendent	Montgomery County, PA
Phoenixville Area	Alan Fegley, Superintendent	Chester County, PA
Reading	Khalid Mumin, Superintendent	Berks County, PA
Red Clay Consolidated	Mervin Dougherty, Superintendent	New Castle County, DE
Rose Tree Media	James Wigo, Superintendent	Delaware County, PA
Salem City	Patrick Michel, Superintendent	Salem County, NJ
Southeast Delco	Stephen Butz, Superintendent	Delaware County, PA
Spring Ford Area	David Gooden, Superintendent	Montgomery County, PA
Springfield Township	Nancy Hacker, Superintendent	Montgomery County, PA
Upper Dublin	Deborah Wheeler, Superintendent	Montgomery County, PA
Upper Merion Area	Jane Callaghan, Superintendent	Montgomery County, PA
West Chester Area	James Scanlon, Superintendent	Chester County, PA
Wissahickon	Judith Clark, Superintendent	Montgomery County, PA

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**New Jersey Network to Close the Achievement Gaps
Member Districts**

Berlin Borough	Anthony Trongone, Superintendent	Camden County, NJ
Bordentown Regional	Constance Bauer, Superintendent	Burlington County, NJ
Cherry Hill	Maureen Reusche, Superintendent	Camden County, NJ
Clayton	David Lindenmuth, Superintendent	Gloucester County, NJ

Delsea Regional/Elk Township	Piera Gravenor, Superintendent	Gloucester County, NJ
Edgewater Park	Roy Rakszawski, Superintendent	Burlington County, NJ
Florence Township	Donna Ambrosius, Superintendent	Burlington County, NJ
Glassboro	Mark Silverstein, Superintendent	Gloucester County, NJ
Gloucester Township	John Bilodeau, Superintendent	Camden County, NJ
Lumberton Township	Terry Healey, Superintendent	Burlington County, NJ
Middle Township	Michael Kopakowski, Superintendent	Cape May County, NJ
Monroe Township	Charles Earling, Superintendent	Gloucester County, NJ
Mount Holly	Jim Didonato, Superintendent	Burlington County, NJ
Pine Hill	Ken Koczur, Superintendent	Camden County, NJ
Pittsgrove	Henry Bermann, Superintendent	Salem County, NJ
Quinton Township	Margaret Delia, Superintendent	Salem County, NJ
Waterford	Newlin Schoener, Superintendent	Camden County, NJ
Westampton	Ginny Grossman, Superintendent	Burlington County, NJ
West Deptford	Kevin Kitchenman, Superintendent	Gloucester County, NJ
Wildwood	Dennis Anderson, Superintendent	Cape May County, NJ
Woodbury	Joseph Jones, Superintendent	Gloucester County, NJ

2014-15 Long Island Consortium for Excellence and Equity Member Districts

Carle Place	David Flatley, Superintendent	Nassau County, NY
Elmont	Al Harper, Superintendent	Nassau County, NY
Freeport	Kishore Kuncham, Superintendent	Nassau County, NY
Hewlett-Woodmere	Joyce Bisso, Superintendent	Nassau County, NY
Long Beach	David Weiss, Superintendent	Nassau County, NY
Malverne	James Hunderfund, Superintendent	Nassau County, NY
Mineola	Mike Nagler, Superintendent	Nassau County, NY
Oyster Bay-East Norwich	Laura Seinfeld, Superintendent	Nassau County, NY
Port Washington	Kathleen Mooney, Superintendent	Nassau County, NY
Rockville Centre	Bill Johnson, Superintendent	Nassau County, NY
Roosevelt	Deborah Wortham, Superintendent	Nassau County, NY
Roslyn	Dan Brenner, Superintendent	Nassau County, NY
Sewanhaka Central	Ralph Ferric, Superintendent	Nassau County, NY
Valley Stream 13	Adrienne Robb-Fund, Superintendent	Nassau County, NY
Valley Stream 30	Nicholas Sterling, Superintendent	Nassau County, NY
Valley Stream Central HS District	Bill Heidenreich, Superintendent	Nassau County, NY

