

Delaware is one of the 10 states selected to participate in New Skills for Youth (NSFY), an initiative enhancing state efforts to increase the number of kids across the country who are prepared for success in both college and career. NSFY is a \$75 million, five-year initiative developed by JPMorgan Chase & Co. in collaboration with the Council of Chief State School Officers, Advance CTE and Education Strategy Group.

In Phase One of the initiative, the Delaware NSFY team built on the foundation laid by Delaware Pathways, a state career readiness program, to assess needs and student outcomes data.<sup>1</sup> The analysis found that, while the system has been effectively deployed at the state level, additional work was required to ensure that all students would be able to participate in work-based learning experiences that align with their career pathways.

Phase Two of the NSFY initiative began in January 2017. This snapshot profiles Delaware's progress in the first year of Phase Two, including:

- **Growing the Delaware Pathways program:** Delaware expanded the statewide system of career pathways for all youth as well as trainings opportunities for educators and community-based partners to ensure the success of career pathway implementation.
- **Rolling out new work-based learning (WBL) opportunities through a workforce intermediary:** The Delaware state team improved connections between K-12 educational institutions and local employers to instill a sense of ownership in WBL and pre-apprenticeship opportunities outside of the state K-12 education agency.
- **Ensuring access and equity:** The state also worked to improve relationships among the state Departments of Education, Labor and Health and Social Services to ensure that all youth — particularly students with disabilities and other barriers to employment — are able to pursue the career pathways of their choice and have a support network that facilitates transition beyond high school.

## *Foundations for Career Pathways in Delaware*

The growth of high-quality career pathways in Delaware is a governor-led initiative, beginning in 2014 under then-Governor Jack Markell and expanding under Governor John Carney. Building on strong cross-sector partnerships among the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE), Delaware Technical Community College (DeTech), the Delaware Department of Labor (DDOL), the Rodel Foundation of Delaware, the United Way of Delaware (UWDE), and the Delaware Workforce Development Board (DWDB), the program falls under the umbrella of the Delaware Promise — a statewide commitment

among public and private-sector partners to ensure that youth and adults enter the labor market with career-relevant credentials.

By 2020, Delaware aims to have more than 20,000 students (50 percent of students in grades 9-12) enrolled in career pathways that prepare them for in-demand occupations. The state has also set targets for demonstration of college and career readiness benchmarks by high school students.<sup>2</sup> With career pathways implemented statewide, Delaware is working to improve its accountability system to ensure that Delaware Pathways is on track to meet these goals. Delaware has implemented a set of incentives and supports for school districts, including incentive funding and revised regulations to allow industry professionals without teaching certifications to teach career pathways courses.

Delaware has incorporated career readiness indicators into its Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) state plan, which was approved in fall 2017.<sup>3</sup> These indicators include a measure of college and career preparedness for youth in grades 9-12 as part of the school quality or student success indicator. Students can demonstrate college and career preparedness by earning an industry credential, a passing score on an Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate exam, certificates of multiliteracy, postsecondary credits with grades B or higher, or a score of 70 or higher on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery General Technical Exam.

## *Growth of Delaware Pathways*

The Delaware NSFY team's work to expand Delaware Pathways builds on the five-point strategic plan designed by the NSFY team during Phase One. Delaware aims to set up shared accountability and ownership of Delaware Pathways work across multiple sectors through the following strategies:

- Build a comprehensive system of career preparation that aligns with the state and regional economies, led by DDOE;
- Scale and sustain meaningful WBL experiences for students in grades 7-14, led by DelTech;
- Integrate education and workforce development efforts and data systems, led by DDOL;

## **COLLECTIVE SUCCESS**

By 2020, our collective investment in Delaware Pathways will lead to the following achievements:

### **PATHWAY TO CAREER SUCCESS**

Every Delaware education institution will partner to scale Delaware Pathways, impacting more than 20,000 students (approximately 50% of all students in grades 9-12) as they enroll in career pathways that prepare them for in-demand occupations and provide opportunities to obtain early college credit and industry credentials.

### **LINK TO DELAWARE EMPLOYERS**

Youth will participate in early career experiences, impacting more than 2,500 high school students (approximately 25% of all students in grade 12) and 5,720 postsecondary students (approximately 30% of all students at the community college level) in partnership with a Delaware employer.

### **BRIDGE EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE EFFORTS**

Organizations that provide youth employment services at the state, county, and local level will partner, impacting how federal and state programs that serve in-school and out-of-school youth as well as youth with disabilities or other barriers to employment are administered to ensure that all youth reach their full potential.

- Coordinate financial support for Delaware Pathways, led by the UWDE and Rodel; and
- Engage employers, educators and community organizations to support Delaware Pathways, led by DWDB.

As a way to measure progress, the Delaware NSFY team produces twice annual “stocktake” memos that are available to the general public and an annual Delaware Pathways Outcomes report that includes up-to-date performance metrics for each area of the strategy.<sup>4</sup>

To date, DDOE has launched 14 secondary career pathways in high-demand occupations, which include opportunities for students to earn college credit and industry-recognized credentials and participate in meaningful work experiences. Five additional career pathways were developed through NSFY that will launch in school year 2018-19. The career pathways are spread across high-growth sectors of Delaware’s economy, including finance; information technology; manufacturing; health care; and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). These sectors complement industries that have traditionally underpinned Delaware’s economy, including agriculture, construction, hospitality and tourism, and education.

Career pathways were developed in collaboration with industry representatives, secondary and postsecondary educators, and community stakeholders and extend beyond high school to encourage students to earn postsecondary certifications, an associate degree or a bachelor’s degree in their chosen field. DDOE has collaborated with DelTech, Delaware State University and the University of Delaware to provide course-specific training to teachers and to ensure that career pathways implementation is consistent across school districts. School district administrators have the opportunity to collaborate and share success through quarterly meetings, and the DDOE provides additional training to new Career Technical Education (CTE) directors at the district level through both an onboarding routine and ad-hoc support. The state also uses a liaison model to pair DDOE staff and school district administrators for the purpose of providing support, progress monitoring and technical assistance.

In year one of NSFY, Delaware has grown the number of youth participating in the career pathway system from 1,850 youth in school year 2015-16 to more than 5,000 youth in school year 2016-17 or approximately 13 percent of all students in grades 9-12.

## ***Improving WBL and Apprenticeships***

Delaware is also prioritizing the expansion of WBL and pre-apprenticeship opportunities for K-12 students to provide more options for career readiness. In 2017, the NSFY project team met with more than 1,000 employers and community partners, as well as with more than 500 educators, to identify strategies to build institutional capacity to facilitate WBL.

In spring 2017, DelTech hired a director for its Office of Work-Based Learning to serve as a statewide intermediary and coordinate these efforts. The Office of Work-Based Learning connects employers and educators to expand WBL efforts at the secondary and postsecondary levels as well as support employers to develop career awareness and exploration opportunities for students. A WBL manual and toolkit are scheduled for launch in spring 2018 alongside additional supports for employers and schools to create and maintain effective WBL placements.<sup>5</sup>

## How Delaware Pathways Students Engage in WBL



Retrieved and modified from <http://delawarepathways.org/employers/>

In year one of NSFY, Delaware has grown the number of youth participating in early career experiences from 187 youth in school year 2015-16 to more than 950 youth in school year 2016-17 or approximately 10 percent of all students in grade 12.

### *Ensuring Access and Equity*

In developing work under NSFY, the Delaware team has consciously addressed challenges in ensuring equal access to high-quality career pathways for all youth. Improving access for students with disabilities and youth with barriers to employment has been highlighted as an issue of particular importance.

As a result, the state provides training for educators on how to establish support systems for students with disabilities as they enroll and matriculate through their career pathways of choice. Educator trainings are conducted in partnership with the Delaware State Education Association and were influenced through focus groups of CTE teachers, which identified common barriers to success for students with disabilities, such as limited support for teachers and a lack of authentic WBL opportunities for youth.<sup>6</sup> The state is currently mapping the resources available to support disabled students and is developing a proposal with the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity to create a school-based support model that pairs resources from the DDOE, DDOL (Division of Vocational Rehabilitation), and the Department of Health and Social Services to facilitate pre-employment transition services.

The DDOL (Division of Employment & Training) is also supporting youth who have barriers to employment through the alignment of in-school and out-of-school youth programs and the statewide career pathway system. This work includes the development of pre-apprenticeship policy and the creation of a pre-apprenticeship credential in addition to efforts to align in-school and out-of-school youth programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act with high-quality CTE programs in partnership with local school districts.

In year one of NSFY, enrollment in Delaware Pathways programs is on track to reflect the population of Delaware. Specifically, in school year 2016-17, 47 percent of enrolled youth were female, 53 percent

were male, 32 percent were African American, 14 percent were Hispanic, 47 percent were white, 12 percent were special education, 3 percent were English learners, and 29 percent were low income.

## *Looking Ahead*

As the expansion of Delaware Pathways moves forward, the Delaware NSFY team will continue to engage stakeholders across multiple organizations and sectors to ensure that ownership of the program is spread out among a variety of implementing bodies. The continued involvement of institutions of higher education, community partners, state agencies and non-profits will contribute to the initiative's sustainability and ability to generate the fiscal and human capital necessary to support all youth. As efforts to ramp up WBL opportunities continue, Delaware will engage the intermediary at DelTech and local school districts to define a collaborative business engagement model.

With a strong focus on accountability and measurable results, Delaware will continue to use student outcome data to monitor progress on Delaware Pathways implementation. Availability of extensive data on student outcomes will inform the continued rollout of career pathways and WBL opportunities in local school districts throughout the state.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://careertech.org/resource/delaware-phase-one-nsfy-snapshot>

<sup>2</sup> [https://ptopnetwork.jff.org/sites/default/files/DE-PATHWAYS-OUTCOMES-REPORT-V9%203\\_0.pdf](https://ptopnetwork.jff.org/sites/default/files/DE-PATHWAYS-OUTCOMES-REPORT-V9%203_0.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.doe.k12.de.us/Page/3794>

<sup>4</sup> <https://ptopnetwork.jff.org/network/resources/delaware-pathways-outcomes-report>

<sup>5</sup> <http://delawarepathways.org/wblmanual/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://transitionta.org/system/files/events/The%20Need%20for%20Innovative%20Collaboration%20in%20CT%20E%20C%20SPED%20and%20VR%20%20Tilson%20%26%20Matusevich%202018.pdf>