

# Vision 2015

Contact: Dorothy R. Jacobson, 302.504.5247

## ***“VISION 2015” TO CREATE WORLD-CLASS PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM IN DELAWARE***

### ***Delaware attracts national support for unprecedented state-wide plan.***

A broad cross-section of Delaware leaders today announced an ambitious effort, *Vision 2015*, which will produce a bold new blueprint to strengthen public education in the state. Its goal is to prepare every student for higher education, the work place, and responsible citizenship in a world that is increasingly interdependent and competitive.

“Today we have the opportunity to exercise unprecedented leadership. We have the chance—and the momentum, resources, and talent—to create a vision for public education in Delaware that will achieve world-class status by 2015,” said Marvin N. “Skip” Schoenhals, co-chair of both the *Vision 2015* Steering Committee and the Delaware Business Roundtable Education Committee. “We can’t do anything less for our children; it’s an obligation and an opportunity that we hope everyone in Delaware will embrace.”

“For the first time in several years, we have education, business, labor, philanthropic, and community leaders at the same table, at the same time, committed to the same vision,” added Delaware Department of Education Secretary Valerie Woodruff. “We have made impressive progress in recent years, yet it’s clear that we need to accelerate our progress so that Delaware’s students can prosper in an increasingly global economy. This requires that we work together.”

*Vision 2015* is driven by the shared realization that having *good* schools won’t be enough to build and sustain healthy communities and a vital economy in Delaware. *Great* schools will be essential. An estimated two-thirds of the jobs in 2010 will require some post-secondary education, but only 36% of high school graduates enroll in college within five years and only 20% of low-income students are likely to attend college. This disconnect has serious implications for Delaware’s attractiveness to businesses, entrepreneurial talent, and families.

Led by a Steering Committee of 27 public, private, and civic leaders, the *Vision 2015* initiative will involve several phases of work from February through June 2006:

- Developing a vision for education in 2015 that raises the bar for all students, from pre-kindergarten through postsecondary education or training, and helps them reach their greatest potential;

- Identifying policies and practices that are making a real difference in student achievement in the United States and internationally;
- Analyzing how Delaware's system compares with these national and global leaders;
- Developing an education action plan with specific, measurable steps for implementation.

The effort will be broad-based and collaborative. *Vision 2015* will establish work groups and conduct public forums to identify and set priorities for exemplary practices deemed essential to ensure a world-class education for all Delaware students. Areas to be studied include: school system governance; teacher and principal recruitment and retention; curriculum and standards; assessment and accountability; school choice; a longer school day and school year; and school-community engagement. Issues related to school funding will build on the results of a Delaware Public Policy Institute study currently underway. As *Vision 2015* develops, there will be briefings with elected and appointed officials, as well as a broad range of interest groups.

"On behalf of the Delaware State Education Association, I'm pleased to be able to participate in *Vision 2015*," said Barbara Grogg, DSEA President. "As every student and parent knows, the quality of our teachers is linked directly to student learning. How we recruit and retain them is an essential focus of *Vision 2015*."

Two internationally recognized consulting firms will assist the Steering Committee: the Boston Consulting Group will provide research and analysis, and Cambridge Leadership Associates will facilitate decision-making by the work groups and Steering Committee. *Opportunity Knocks*, the statewide needs assessment published by the Rodel Foundation of Delaware in July 2006, will serve as an important starting point.

The Rodel Foundation of Delaware and The Broad Foundation, based in Los Angeles, are supporting the development of the plan, which will serve as a prospectus for additional investments by national, state and local funders to ensure successful implementation. "The opportunity to create a world-class plan would not be possible without the interest, involvement, and support of The Broad Foundation," said Paul Herdman, President and CEO of the Rodel Foundation of Delaware. "Its support also lends great credibility to the tremendous opportunity we have in Delaware." Eli Broad, founder of The Broad Foundation, added, "Public education is the single greatest crisis facing America today, and our democracy and economy are at risk if we do not dramatically improve our nation's public education system. Delaware can serve as a model for the state-wide change that is needed to prepare our children to compete in the 21st Century. We are very encouraged by the vision, talent and collective determination in Delaware, and we are pleased to support and advance this groundbreaking effort." Representatives of both foundations will serve on the *Vision 2015* Steering Committee. Their combined investment in the development of the plan is approximately \$2.0 million.

----- END -----