



The Future of Delaware's Teacher Workforce: A Focus on Teacher-Preparation Programs

November 2016

A successful K–12 educational system requires a complementary system of teacher preparation that is aligned with the needs of the K–12 community and provides a high-quality, diverse teacher workforce in numbers matching the current and future demands of the K–12 educational system.

This brief provides evidence of the challenges that Delaware faces in achieving this goal with specific attention to the issue of teacher preparation. These challenges demand a statewide, cohesive effort designed to ensure Delaware's system of teacher preparation fully meets the needs of the state's K–12 educational community.



several Associate of Arts degrees that prepare students for a teacher-preparation program at a four-year institution. In-state alternative routes include Alternative Routes to Certification (ARTC) and Delaware Transition to Teaching Partnership provided by the University of Delaware and Teach for America in collaboration with the Relay Graduate School of Education.

Delaware's Teacher Preparation System

Delaware's system of teacher preparation may be viewed as an ecosystem, or a complex, interconnected network consisting of both in- and out-of-state traditional and alternative routes of preparation and certification.

Delaware's institutions of higher education, namely Delaware State University, University of Delaware, Wilmington University, and Wesley College, provide traditional in-state routes. In addition, Delaware Technical Community College offers

Teachers, far more so than other college graduates, choose to work close to where they themselves attended high school. According to the Delaware Aspiring Educator Survey, 79% of surveyed early career teachers who grew up in Delaware considered Delaware their first choice for employment locations. This trend highlights the importance of targeted recruitment of in-state teacher candidates.

Our teacher workforce is mostly homegrown, warranting a deeper look at Delaware's teacher-preparation ecosystem, including both in-state teacher-preparation programs and pre-preparation

pathways into the teaching profession. Of the teachers employed in Delaware, approximately 59% enter the profession through the in-state system of preparation. Of those teachers prepared in state, approximately 90% enter the profession through traditional routes with the other 10% entering through alternative routes. However, it is important to note that there are large numbers of teachers prepared in Delaware that do not remain in the state. Additionally, 41% of Delaware’s teacher workforce is prepared outside the state. This finding means that out-of-state teacher-preparation programs are an important part of Delaware’s teacher-preparation ecosystem.

Challenges for Teacher Preparation in Delaware

Ensuring a Robust Supply of High-Quality Teachers

The first key challenge facing Delaware’s teacher-preparation ecosystem is one of ensuring a robust supply of high-quality teachers to meet the needs of the state. Between 2009 and 2013, there has been a decline in enrollment in teacher-preparation programs in the United States, and consequently there are increased efforts within states to stop this decline. The local situation in Delaware appears to be worse than the national situation. Using Title II reporting data, enrollments can be examined by in-state teacher-preparation providers (see Table 1).

Table 1 – Enrollments in various in-state teacher preparation programs between 2010 and 2015.

Year	Alternative Routes to Certification*	Delaware State University	University of Delaware	Wesley College	Wilmington University	State Total
2015	94	48	1068	37	821	2068
2014	123	34	1080	22	1599	2858
2013	144	45	1162	62	2149	3562
2012	105	44	1191	165	1637	3142
2011	74	42	1259	234	2001	3610
2010	52	59	1220	257	1904	3492

*Alternative Routes to Certification (ARTC) and Delaware Transition to Teaching Partnership provided by the University of Delaware and Teach for America, in collaboration with the Relay Graduate School of Education. Data obtained from <https://title2.ed.gov/public/DataTools/Files.aspx>

Enrollment in Delaware programs has dropped by 41% between 2010 and 2015. Nationally, teacher-preparation-program enrollment has decreased approximately 32% between the 2010–11 and 2013–14 school years. It is projected that these trends will persist. As the teacher workforce is a local workforce, Delaware must combat this decline with a focus on recruiting the next generation of teachers through attractive teacher-preparation programs that are aligned with the areas of need in the districts.

For example, Delaware school districts reported that the areas of foreign language, high school mathematics and science, special education, and English as a second language had the least number of high-potential applicants while elementary and social science had the most high-quality applicants during the 2015 hiring season.

Table 2 shows the number of teacher preparation program graduates who pursued a particular subject area in 2014–15. The table also illustrates the areas in which teacher-preparation programs are not currently meeting local hiring needs. For example, only 13% of Delaware teacher-preparation program graduates in 2014–15 pursued the most needed areas of foreign language, mathematics, or science. Hiring needs could inform teacher-preparation programs about how to best meet the needs of school districts by programs changing their offerings accordingly; however, there is currently no mechanism for sharing this information between school districts and teacher-preparation programs.

Table 2 – Enrollments by subject area in 2015.

Subject Area	Number of Graduates	Percentage of Students in the Subject Area
Early Childhood	60	8%
Elementary	312	40%
English Language Arts	45	6%
English as a Second Language/ Bilingual	20	3%
Foreign Language	19	2%
Health and/or Physical Education	21	3%
Mathematics	56	7%
Middle School (General)	18	2%
Music	29	4%
Science	31	4%
Social Studies	41	5%
Special Education	168	22%
All Others	26	3%

N=780. Some graduates pursued multiple areas of certification; therefore the number of graduates in the chart is greater than 780. Data obtained from <https://title2.ed.gov/public/datatools/files/asp>.

Promoting a Diverse Teacher Workforce

Delaware also faces the challenge of a teacher workforce that does not reflect the diverse population that currently exists in Delaware’s K–12 education system. Fifty-four percent of the state’s K–12 learners are from underrepresented backgrounds, yet only 28% of 2015 graduates from Delaware programs were from underrepresented populations. Additionally, the number of diverse learners has continued to rise and has risen 3.4% over the past five years.

In addition to low rates of minority teachers statewide, there is also evidence that schools serving high-minority populations have higher percentages of both uncertified and inexperienced teachers. According to a Learning Policy Institute state-by-state analysis of teacher supply, 8.36% of teachers in low-minority schools are considered “inexperienced” compared to 15% of teachers in high-minority schools. In order to promote equity in Delaware’s teacher workforce, further research

should examine why high-minority schools have difficulty attracting experienced, certified educators and coordinated action should be taken to address this issue.

Aligning Teacher Preparation Programs to Promote Excellence in a Changing K–12 Landscape

Teacher preparation programs must satisfy requirements imposed by a variety of sectors, including accreditation organizations, state and federal agencies, and individual institutions. Partnerships among state agencies, districts, and teacher preparation programs can promote alignment with the needs of the districts and innovation in teacher preparation. Strong partnerships with districts, including identifying quality clinical experiences for teacher candidates, may be accomplished through strategies such as educator exchanges, teachers-in-residence, and professors in the classroom.

Teacher preparation programs must also actively respond to the evolving needs of the K–12 education system. For example, there is currently a growing need for computer science educators in response to a growing economic demand for computer science professionals. However, there are no teacher-preparation programs or certification pathways in the state in computer science. Additional examples of the alignment needed in Delaware’s teacher-preparation programs with the changing needs of the K–12 system include engaging teacher candidates with the cultural competencies needed to serve diverse student populations, active-learning strategies, and the Common Core State Standards.

Call to Action

Delaware requires a comprehensive statewide effort to address the urgent and important challenges discussed in this brief. With clear data about teacher supply and preparation and the commitment of key stakeholders, Delaware can move toward innovative and collaborative solutions. However, the challenges facing teacher preparation are not isolated from other aspects of teaching—from attracting candidates into the profession, to

hiring and supporting teachers in practice, and to creating a policy environment that supports an effective, aligned ecosystem. The Partnership for Public Education will continue to generate briefs on these critical issues and begin the conversation around developing a teacher workforce that fully meets the needs of the Delaware's K–12 education community.

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Contributors

John Pelesko, Associate Dean of Natural Sciences, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Delaware (UD)

Laura Glass, Director of the Delaware Center for Teacher Education, UD

Taylor Hawk, Public Administration Fellow, Institute for Public Administration, UD

Asha Chintala, Public Administration Fellow, Institute for Public Administration, UD

Elizabeth N. Farley-Ripple, Associate Director of the School of Education, UD, and Director of the Partnership for Public Education

Kelly Sherretz, Assistant Director of the Partnership for Public Education

Ariana Minella, Project Coordinator of the Partnership for Public Education

The **Partnership for Public Education** (PPE) is inspired by a vision of excellence and equity in public education for all Delaware children and families.

Our work is grounded in the belief that research, practice, family, and community are all needed in the systematic improvement of educational opportunities and outcomes. This goal can only be achieved through collaboration and cooperation.

The mission of PPE is to unite members of the University of Delaware and the broader education community, including schools, families, and community organizations, to identify and address shared needs and opportunities.

Together, we can strengthen public education for all Delaware children.



Learn more about PPE!

Ariana Minella
aminella@udel.edu | 302-831-0184

182 Graham Hall
University of Delaware
Newark, DE 19716

www.sites.udel.edu/ppe/