PARTNERS IN EARLY SUCCESS

Members of the Delaware Pathways Steering Committee wish to thank the following employers and community partners for their ongoing commitment and contribution to ensure that youth have the skills they need to enter and advance in a career. Your partnership is essential to continuously improve our education and workforce system. For more information on Delaware Pathways or to become part of the Delaware Pathway network, please visit: http://delawarepathways.org.

Agilent Technologies
Assurance Media
AstraZeneca
Bloom Energy
Delaware State University
Delaware STEM Council
DuPont
Easter Seals of Delaware
FMC
Kuehne Company
Nemours
PBF Energy
PPG
Siemens
Testing Machines, Inc.
University of Delaware
Wilmington University
Young Conaway Stargatt & Taylor, LLP
As the path to achieve the American Dream has changed, Delawareans have risen to the occasion. Just a few short years ago we faced a collapsing economy and a growing deficit. The challenges we faced weren’t just the result of a temporary economic downturn, but of a changing world, an economy forever altered by global competition and new technology.

In response to these shifts, businesses have found new global markets, workers have invested hundreds of hours in job training, and students have become the first in their families to attend and complete college. These achievements are a reflection of the remarkable talents and character of Delawareans. But we have more to do and new adversities to conquer.

We now confront the incongruous reality that Delaware employers are hiring, but can’t find enough qualified applicants. This is frustrating because we know that many Delawareans could do the work, but may not have the right skills. We can change this trend by better connecting educators and employers. It is our responsibility to provide Delawareans with the bridge to the life they want—workforce training for people who want to upgrade their skills, education that aligns with the knowledge they need in the new economy, and more responsive government that supports their drive to succeed.

That is why we are committed to achieving the Delaware Promise—and ensuring that sixty-five percent of our workforce has a college degree or professional certificate by 2025. And that is why we are investing in new opportunities for youth and adults to partner with employers through Delaware Pathways. The path to middle-class security is not what it was thirty years ago and our approach to career preparation can’t be either. Let’s ensure that all of our youth and adult learners are on a path to fulfill their educational goals and career aspirations.

An incredible amount of work is being done to further the goals outlined in this plan. Now we need to accelerate our effort and keep the Delaware Promise. We hope that you will join us in this extraordinary opportunity. It is work that changes lives, supports our employers, and helps to build a brighter economy.

Sincerely,

Members of the Delaware Pathways Steering Committee
The path to continuing education and a career is not the same for every young person. Students have different needs, different aspirations, and will ultimately make different career decisions. A good education provides students with options and allows for choice. A good educational system serves the needs of every student by creating a more fluid relationship between the public education system (K-12), postsecondary education, and the employer community.

For students to have rewarding careers beyond high school, they must be aware of their options and prepared to take the next step. Most Delaware jobs that provide a living wage require education or training beyond a high school diploma. Many of these careers require complex technical knowledge and the ability to communicate. These skills can be acquired through advanced training, certification, apprenticeship, military service, and two- and four-year degrees.

This means that students must possess the academic and technical skills necessary to pursue postsecondary education or training that is aligned with their career aspirations. It also means that a single expectation for all students is not effective and that a more permeable relationship between educators and employers is the best way to serve the diverse needs of students.

Delaware Pathways is an education and workforce partnership that creates a career pathways system for all youth. This effort builds upon Delaware’s rich history in providing Career and Technical Education (CTE) through the state’s vocational school districts and Delaware’s community college which have produced a robust and highly skilled workforce for Delaware and the surrounding region. This work spans all secondary and postsecondary partners, and includes the integration of community-based organizations and workforce partners to ensure that all youth are successful in pursuing postsecondary education and gainful employment.
Delaware’s labor market can be organized into three categories of employment: low-, middle-, and high-skill jobs. Low-skill jobs require a high school diploma or less and provide an average wage of $26,350 per year. Middle-skill jobs require some type of postsecondary education, such as an apprenticeship, certification, or an Associate degree and provide an average wage of $44,960 per year. High-skill jobs require a Bachelor’s degree or higher and provide an average wage of $88,510 per year.1

Middle-and high-skill employment accounts for 62% of all Delaware jobs and will represent 69% of all projected growth openings through 2024.2 Further, employment in middle-skill jobs can be accessed through cost effective education and training programs which are desirable for youth entering the workforce and adults seeking to up-skill. By defining a statewide strategy to increase the number of youth and adults prepared to enter middle- and high-skill employment, we will provide new opportunities for Delawareans and help drive our state’s economic growth.

Acquiring both academic and technical skills in combination with meaningful work experience gives students the freedom to choose their life’s path. Delaware Pathways link education and workforce development efforts for youth and provide opportunities for youth to gain work experiences aligned with their career goals through a statewide Workforce Intermediary—an organization whose purpose is to better connect educators and employers and place secondary and postsecondary students in meaningful work experiences. This includes the integration of community-based organizations and services for individuals with disabilities or other barriers to employment. Delaware Pathways is organized around five core priorities to carry out this work:

1. Build a comprehensive system of career preparation that aligns with the state and regional economies. To ensure that all students have an opportunity to pursue a great career, we will scale Delaware Pathways and provide support to educators and employers to effectively serve youth.

2. Scale and sustain meaningful work-based learning experiences for students in grades 7-14. To ensure that learning occurs both in the classroom and in the workplace, we will establish a statewide Workforce Intermediary to place students into meaningful work experiences and support employers to recruit and onboard student talent.

3. Integrate our education and workforce development efforts and data systems. To establish a direct link between education and training programs and changes in state and regional employment, we will create a connected service model for students with disabilities and other barriers to employment, and implement a workforce data quality campaign.

4. Coordinate financial support for Delaware Pathways. To address pervasive issues in our education and workforce system that might otherwise prohibit youth from moving directly into continuing education and employment, we will establish a diversified funding model that includes public, private, and philanthropic support.

5. Engage employers, educators, and community organizations to support Delaware Pathways. To collectively ensure that the path to a meaningful career is accessible for every student and that the state’s economy remains strong, we will develop a robust communication and partnership strategy to coordinate the delivery of support services and activities across the public, private, and non-profit sectors.

Source Materials:
1 Delaware 2024: Occupations and Industry Projections, Delaware Department of Labor, 2016
2 Employment by Education Level, Training, and Work Experience, Delaware Department of Labor, 2016
The idea of connecting educators and employers is not new. Yet states and school systems continue to struggle with the design of an educational system that successfully places students in continuing education and facilitates entrance or advancement in a career. In 2014, this resulted in an unemployment rate of 12.2% for young adults (age 20-24) as compared to a 5.8% unemployment rate for all other age demographics. Delaware Pathways draws on lessons from international and national models to develop new solutions to address this challenge.
PROMISING PRACTICES

In looking abroad, we find countries that have defined strategies to reduce youth unemployment by connecting school and work. For example, Switzerland (CHE) and Germany (DEU) have created a systemic approach that ensures educators and employers have a mutual interest in the educational achievement and career advancement of youth. The impact of these strategies is reflected in the national unemployment rate, which in 2014 was 4.5% (CHE) and 5.0% (DEU) for all age demographics and 8.6% (CHE) and 7.8% (DEU) for youth (ages 16-24).4

These systems remove the perception that school is the central place for learning by creating a system where students own their knowledge and skill development—both inside and outside of the classroom. **Students work across the education and employer communities to develop skills and ensure those skills have value in the marketplace.** This includes students’ participation in academic and technical instruction, career counseling, and paid work experiences that have been developed cooperatively by educators, employers, and community partners through a defined apprenticeship model.5

To ensure student, educator, and employer success and the ability to scale, a Workforce Intermediary provides support by helping train and place students into related work experiences. Additionally, financial support is provided by both public and private organizations, and a favorable policy environment is provided by the equivalent of both state and local government.

At the highest level, educators and employers are mutually responsible for student achievement, there is a defined system of support, and students are able to continue their education while also pursuing a meaningful career.6 It should be noted that both of these countries are more comparable to a U.S. state than to our nation overall—and while other countries’ contexts and cultures vary from those in the United States, we can learn from and adapt elements from their successful policies and practices to fit our needs.

Source Materials:
4 Youth Unemployment (ages 16-24) and Unemployment by County, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2016
5 Gold Standard: The Swiss Vocational Educational Training System, National Center on Education and the Economy, 2015
6 Vocational Education and Training in Germany, European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, 2007
7 Pathways to Prosperity, Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2011
8 Jobs for the Future, 2016

PATHWAYS TO PROSPERITY

In February 2011, the Harvard Graduate School of Education published the Pathways to Prosperity report, which argued that our education system was limiting to students because of an overly narrow focus on preparation for a four-year college or university.7 As a result of the report, the Pathways to Prosperity Network was established, representing a consortium of states and regions that have partnered to develop public policy, share best practices, and support students as they continue their education and pursue a career. Pathways to Prosperity is an initiative of Jobs for the Future, a national non-profit that works to ensure that all young people and workers have the skills and credentials needed for career success. Further, Jobs for the Future advocates for federal and state policies to support these solutions and acts as a catalyst to improve our education and workforce delivery system.8
A PATHWAY FOR SUSTAINABLE CHANGE

THE DELAWARE PROMISE
BY 2025, 65% OF OUR WORKFORCE WILL EARN A COLLEGE DEGREE OR PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE AND EVERY STUDENT WILL GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL PREPARED FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION AND A CAREER.

EARLY SUCCESS

The *Delaware Promise* is a commitment among educators, employers, policy makers, and community-based organizations to work collaboratively to ensure youth and adults enter the labor market with credentials that support their education and career goals. Further, the *Delaware Promise* calls for an investment in education and training programs that focus on demand-driven occupations, are reflective of employers’ needs, and align services across the public, private, and non-profit sectors. This includes the integration of community-based organizations as well as the expansion of career counseling and support services, with particular attention to individuals with disabilities or other barriers to employment. As a result, Delaware’s workforce will possess the skills necessary to compete in a global economy.

To initiate support for the *Delaware Promise*, a group of stakeholders that included representation from various state agencies, institutions of higher education, non-profits, and the business community began to meet as part of the national Pathways to Prosperity Network. As a result of these efforts, Delaware Pathways was created as a vehicle to ensure all youth have the opportunity to fulfill their educational goals and career aspirations.

Delaware Pathways has shaped extensive school reform and the development of regional Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways that accelerate academic and technical instruction, reflect the needs of our economy, and purposefully integrate employers. Each pathway offers students the opportunity to earn an industry-recognized credential, early college credit, and relevant work experience. These instructional models are now being scaled across the state in key industry sectors such as: agriculture, education, finance, health care, hospitality and tourism, engineering and science, information technology, and manufacturing.
DELAWARE’S TALENT PIPELINE

The greatest obstacle to the development of a strong Delaware workforce is the lack of systemic coordination across stakeholder groups. To address this gap, Delaware is developing a career pathways system that spans secondary and postsecondary education, aligns with employer needs, and provides high-quality education, training, and support services for youth and adults.

In Delaware, career pathways begin in the public education system (K-12) through Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways offered in charter, comprehensive, and technical school districts. These pathways continue through adult education, occupational training programs, and postsecondary programs that are administered by partnering state agencies, institutions of higher education, and other service providers. As a result, Delaware’s career pathways system aligns secondary and postsecondary education and concurrently pairs rigorous academics and workforce education within the context of a specific occupation or occupational cluster. Students who complete a career pathway attain a secondary school diploma or its equivalent, earn an industry-recognized credential, certificate, or license that holds value in the labor market, and have the opportunity to complete an Associate or Bachelor’s degree program at a Delaware college or university.

Delaware Pathways builds on the success of secondary and postsecondary institutions, community-based organizations, and workforce partners to scale career pathways for all youth. This design acknowledges that young people will make different decisions along the way and provides multiple entry and exit points to connect students, educators, and employers. By defining points of transition, educators and community partners are able to integrate social supports for youth who have a barrier to employment and ensure youth can enter and progress through various levels of education as their career interests evolve.

Creating a relationship between students’ interests and their potential career helps students to build their identities beyond high school. This includes education and career goals and the opportunity to further those goals through early college credit and dual credit coursework in both academic and technical areas. Students who are enrolled in early college and career experiences have higher rates of college entrance, persistence, and completion. Additionally, research on early college has shown positive outcomes for all students, which can further reduce barriers for underserved populations of youth—ultimately putting students on a path to employment in middle- and high-skill occupations that provide a living wage.

DELAWARE PATHWAYS MISSION STATEMENT

INCREASE THE NUMBER OF DELAWAREANS WHO CONTINUE THEIR EDUCATION AND ENTER THE LABOR MARKET IN A DEMAND-DRIVEN OCCUPATION WITH WORK EXPERIENCE AND AN INDUSTRY-RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATE, LICENSE, OR CREDENTIAL THROUGH THE ALIGNMENT OF SECONDARY AND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND A NETWORK OF ENGAGED EMPLOYERS.

Source: Adapted from Pathways to Prosperity, 2014 & Tennessee Department of Education, 2015
Delaware employers struggle to find talent in occupations that require complex technical knowledge and communication skills. Many of these jobs are classified as middle-skill jobs, which require education beyond a high school diploma, but not necessarily a Bachelor’s degree. As the example illustrates, careers in health sciences and information technology are growing rapidly in Delaware. This is also true of occupations in business and finance, construction, education, engineering and science, hospitality and tourism, logistics, manufacturing, and transportation.

Middle-skill jobs provide above-average wages and offer opportunities for entrance and advancement for individuals with various levels of education and with different work experience. Further, these careers offer a defined career ladder with specific entry points and the opportunity to acquire additional education and work experience for career growth and financial gain. By focusing our investment on middle-skill jobs with a clear entry point and progression of skills, we will help students and adults to enter and advance in careers.

**HEALTH SCIENCES**

- **Registered Nurse (BSN):**
  - Requires a Bachelors Degree
  - Average Wage: $71,410

- **Registered Nurse (ASN)*:**
  - Requires an Associates Degree.
  - Average Wage: $56,160

- **Medical Assistant:**
  - Requires Certification, No Degree.
  - Average Wage: $30,950

**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

- **Computer Network Administrator:**
  - Requires a Bachelors Degree.
  - Average Wage: $76,480

- **Computer Network Support Specialist:**
  - Requires an Associates Degree.
  - Average Wage: $69,640

- **Computer User Support Specialist:**
  - Requires Training, No Degree.
  - Average Wage: $55,160
MEASURING SUCCESS

The success of Delaware Pathways will be measured by the impact on students and employers as students graduate and enter into postsecondary education and the workforce. Students, educators, employers, and community-based organizations will provide feedback to continuously improve the delivery model and ensure Delaware’s education and workforce system has the greatest impact on all youth. As a result, Delaware Pathways will lead to the following achievements:

PATHWAY TO CAREER SUCCESS

Every Delaware high school, school district, and institution of higher education will partner to scale Delaware Pathways. By 2020, more than 20,000 students (approximately 50% of all students in grades 9-12) will enroll in career pathways that prepare them for in-demand occupations and provide opportunities to obtain early college credit and industry credentials. As a result, students will graduate high school and successfully transition into continuing education and competitive employment aligned with their educational goals and career aspirations.

LINK TO DELAWARE EMPLOYERS

Youth will have the opportunity to participate in early career experiences through the statewide Workforce Intermediary. By 2020, 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) will participate in an early career experience in partnership with a Delaware employer. As a result, student growth in the workplace and employer feedback will guide the refinement of Delaware’s educational delivery model for youth and adults.

BRIDGE EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE EFFORTS

Organizations that provide youth employment services at the state, county, and local level will partner to address gaps in Delaware’s education and workforce system. By 2020, federal and state programs that serve in-school and out-of-school youth as well as youth with disabilities or other barriers to employment will work collaboratively to define common performance measures and refer youth who need additional assistance to partner organizations. As a result, Delaware will connect education and workforce data, improve services to youth, and increase the efficiency of education and training programs.

Progress on the stated goals and expectations is measured through an annual report. To review the annual report and related performance data, please visit: http://delawarepathways.org.

Source Materials:
9 The Delaware Pathways team includes representatives from the Delaware Departments of Education and Labor, the Delaware Economic Development Office, Delaware Workforce Development Board, Delaware Technical Community College, United Way of Delaware, the Delaware Business Roundtable Education Committee, the Rodel Foundation, and Capital One
15 Still Searching: Job Vacancies and STEM Skills, Metro Area Data (PA, NJ, DE, MD), Brookings, 2014
16 Employment Projections by Cluster and Occupation, Delaware Department of Labor, 2014
(* please note the Associates in Science Nursing Salary is computed from the Nurse Journal, 2016)
A ROADMAP FOR THE WORK AHEAD

CORE PRIORITIES

The foundation of this plan is the five (5) core priorities listed on this page and the work strategies to fulfill them. Each core priority area is aligned to the Student Success 2025 report developed by the Vision Coalition of Delaware and the Delaware Growth Agenda report developed by the Delaware Business Roundtable. A lead agency or organization is assigned to each core priority area to accelerate work, engage additional partners, and ensure success.

Our ability to achieve the Delaware Promise and meet these goals depends on our capacity to mobilize across all sectors to address one of our nation’s greatest challenges. For more information on the plan of work associated with each core priority or to review the Delaware Pathways annual report, please visit: http://delawarepathways.org.

BUILD A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF CAREER PREPARATION THAT ALIGNS WITH THE STATE AND REGIONAL ECONOMIES

Expand Delaware’s model of career preparation and continuing education to include all secondary and postsecondary education partners (grades 7-14). These efforts must support a diverse group of students as they enroll in career pathways that reflect the needs of the state and regional economies and lead to an industry-recognized credential, certificate, or license that holds value at the professional or postsecondary level.

Lead Organization: Delaware Department of Education

Major Work Strategies:

- Scale high quality career pathways (Delaware Pathways) for all students (grades 7-14) which include college and career counseling services;
- Incorporate career-focused measures into the state accountability system; and
- Develop public policy that supports student matriculation into continuing education and employment aligned with middle- and high-skill careers.
SCALE AND SUSTAIN MEANINGFUL WORK-BASED LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES 7-14

Establish a statewide Workforce Intermediary to link educators and employers and scale work-based learning experiences for secondary and postsecondary students. These efforts must leverage industry sectors and employer associations to build the professional capacity of employers to recruit and onboard student talent and design work-based learning activities that enrich and advance school-based instruction.

Lead Organization: Delaware Technical Community College

Major Work Strategies:
- Scale work-based learning experiences for secondary and postsecondary students;
- Ensure secondary and postsecondary students are successful in work experiences; and
- Engage employers and local education agencies to build institutional capacity and facilitate work-based learning experiences.

INTEGRATE OUR EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS AND DATA SYSTEMS

Align our education and workforce system to create postsecondary options for all students, including the expansion of apprenticeship and support services for individuals with disabilities or other barriers to employment. These efforts will underpin a workforce data quality campaign that provides partners with the necessary information to ensure our human capital can compete in a global economy.

Lead Organization: Delaware Department of Labor

Major Work Strategies:
- Expand career support services, job placement services, and postsecondary programming for youth, with specific attention to youth who are at-risk of not completing high school;
- Ensure students with disabilities participate in education and training programs and receive career support services that align with their postsecondary goals; and
- Align data systems to improve policy and programming for in-school and out-of-school youth as well as adults.

COORDINATE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR DELAWARE PATHWAYS

Engage the public, private, and philanthropic communities to garner the initial and ongoing capital necessary to implement and scale Delaware Pathways. These financial and in-kind resources will be applied to address the most pervasive issues in our education and workforce system and ensure that partners have a shared stake in the educational outcomes of students.

Lead Agency: United Way of Delaware & Rodel Foundation of Delaware

Major Work Strategies:
- Develop a structure to receive and allocate philanthropic support and in-kind contributions based on strategic need and direction;
- Coordinate state and federal support to leverage additional resources to support Delaware Pathways; and
- Develop a catalog of funding opportunities and ways in which individuals or organizations can support Delaware Pathways.

ENGAGE EMPLOYERS, EDUCATORS, AND SERVICE PROVIDERS TO SUPPORT DELAWARE PATHWAYS

Develop a communication and partnership strategy to expand visibility, facilitate public support, and brand Delaware Pathways. These efforts must build support for youth employment to ensure the next generation of Delaware’s workforce has the skills and work experience required to achieve the Delaware Promise.

Lead Organization: Delaware Workforce Development Board

Major Work Strategies:
- Design a mobile and social media campaign to better inform the public and facilitate support;
- Establish convening routines, partnership agreements, and a reflective process to share success, facilitate support, and engage in program improvement and innovation; and
- Develop a brand association for Delaware Pathways and marketing campaign to be applied across partnering agencies and organizations.
ACHIEVING THE DELAWARE PROMISE

As a result of Delaware Pathways, students will have the freedom to choose their life’s path. Students will establish relationships with employers that have been built through career coaching and coursework that unfolds in the classroom and in the workplace. Upon completion of high school, students will have earned an industry-recognized credential and early college credit to accelerate their educational goals and career aspirations.

Educators and employers will partner to expand rich career and technical education pathways, engage teachers in professional learning and externships, and support students as they find their career interests and enter the workforce. Career coaching and mentoring opportunities that enrich and advance school-based instruction will become routine through online tools that engage students and encourage a dialogue amongst students and employers.

Opportunities for all youth to acquire work experience that aligns with their career aspirations will be made available through a statewide Workforce Intermediary. Further, the Workforce Intermediary will engage employers to better facilitate student employment and provide support to successfully onboard and train student talent—ultimately reducing the youth unemployment rate.

Measures for career readiness will be established and applied across partnering agencies and organizations through both the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the Every Student Succeeds Act. Public policy governing career programs at the secondary and postsecondary level will be updated to reflect the needs of students, educators, employers, and community-based organizations.

State, county, and local government will partner with school districts and community organizations to coordinate youth employment programs and activities. These institutions will also partner to garner the initial and ongoing capital necessary to scale career pathways, engage employers through the Workforce Intermediary, and support youth through a shared development model that includes public and private funding.

Collectively we will ensure youth and adults have the support they need to pursue their education and career goals. Through these collaborative and coherent efforts, we will create a vibrant and strong education system, workforce, and economy for Delaware’s future.
DELAWARE PATHWAYS  STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

A special thank you to the following Steering Committee members whose guidance, support, and leadership has been instrumental in launching Delaware Pathways and in the preparation of this document.

- Mark Brainard, President, Delaware Technical Community College and Chair, Delaware Pathways Steering Committee;
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- Victoria Gehrt, Superintendent, New Castle County Vo-Tech School District;
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- Steven Godowsky, Secretary, Delaware Department of Education;
- Verna Hensley, Vice President of Public Affairs, Easter Seals of Delaware;
- Paul Herdman, President/CEO, Rodel Foundation of Delaware;
- Rita Landgraf, Secretary, Delaware Department of Health and Social Services;
- Brian Nixon, Plant Manager, Invista and Chair, Delaware Manufacturing Association;
- Teri Quin-Gray, New Product Commercialization Manager & Six Sigma Consultant, DuPont Crop Protection and President, Delaware State Board of Education;
- Michelle Taylor, President/CEO, United Way of Delaware;
- Gary Stockbridge, President, Delmarva Power Region for Pepco Holdings, Inc. and Chair, Delaware Workforce Development Board; and
- Bernice Whaley, Secretary, Delaware Economic Development Office.

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Jason Peel, Director of Secondary Instruction, Milford School District; and

DELAWARE PATHWAYS  STRATEGIC PLAN
http://delawarepathways.org