

**Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE)  
Assessment and Accountability in the Fifty States: 1999-2000**

**DELAWARE**

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All information was current as of that date.*

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**State Assessment System (1999-2000 school year)**

1. *Provide a brief overview and history of the assessment system as the context.*

In 1996, committees of Delaware educators began developing test questions for the Delaware Student Testing Program (DSTP). In 1997, legislation was passed that required the DSTP to serve as a primary indicator in a statewide accountability system. Additional legislation was passed in May 2000 which requires Individual Improvement Plans to be developed by schools for all students in grades 3, 5, 8, and 10 who do not score at meets the standard or higher in reading (grades 3, 5, 8, and 10) and math (grade 8) on the Spring 2000 DSTP.

2. *What are the characteristics of the state assessment system, including:*

- *Name of Assessment Instrument(s) or Program(s)*

**Delaware Student Testing Program (DSTP)**

- *Grade Levels and Subjects Tested*

The DSTP assesses students in the following subjects and grades:

- Reading, writing and math: grades 3, 5, 8 and 10
- Science and social studies: grades 4, 6, 8 and 11.

- *Norm or Criterion Referenced*

The reading and math data are divided into two parts:

1. the National Percentile Rankings (NPRs) and
2. the Standards-Based Scores (SBSs).

The NPRs come from a subset of items embedded in the test that were also given to a representative sample of students in the country. The SBSs in math and reading are geared to measure student progress toward state standards, and are reported on a scale that runs from approximately 150-800. Students in the earlier grades tend to score lower while students in the upper grades tend to score higher – this type of scale score gives a sense of how students are progressing over grade levels as well as over time.

Writing scores are reported on a scale from 3-15 at each grade level. The writing score is actually the raw score.

- *Matrix or Census Testing: Census*

- *Item Types*

The test questions are composed of those from the SAT9 and criterion-referenced questions designed and field tested by educators, community members and parents in Delaware. The tests include three item types: *multiple choice, short-answer, and extended response*.

Short answer questions require students to record their answers with a few words or sentences; in math they might also include numbers, sketches of simple graphs. Extended response questions require answers with a few paragraphs or pages. Trained scorers grade these types of questions. The reading and writing portions of the test have been integrated so that a student is scored in both subjects by providing extended written responses after reading a passage of text. The written sections also ask students to answer a prompt – they are allowed to draft and then rewrite an essay. The social studies and science assessments also use these three item types to test student knowledge.

- *Time of Testing (specific month(s) or testing window):*

Students in grades 3, 5, 8, and 10 took the tests in reading, writing and mathematics in the spring of 2000, and grades 4 and 6 will take the science and social studies tests in the fall of 2000. Grades 8 and 11 took tests in science and social studies in the spring of 2000. This will be the third administration of the Delaware Student Testing Program (DSTP) reading, writing, and mathematics tests, and the first for the science and social studies. Specifically, assessments were given over the following dates:

- Writing Assessment, grades 3, 5, 8, and 10: March 29-31, 2000
- Reading and Math, grades 3, 5, 8, and 10: April 3-7, 2000
- Science and Social Studies, grade 11: April 3-7, 2000
- Science and Social Studies, grade 8: May 8-10, 2000
- Science and Social Studies, grades 4 and 6: October 9-13, 2000

- *High School Exit Exam (date of implementation and/or phase-in timeline)*

The 2004 high school class will be the first students required to pass the 10<sup>th</sup> grade DSTP in reading, math and writing in order to be eligible for one of three types of state diploma.

Multiple opportunities will be provided for students to improve their scores prior to graduation.

- *Other Assessments:* None
- *Transitional or Final Assessment System:* Final

3. *Who designed and produced the assessment(s) used by the state? If a commercial test was used by the state, were modifications or additions made to the assessment to address state requirements or standards? If so, what did they include?*

The norm referenced portion of the test consists of items from the SAT9. In addition, for the past several years Delaware educators have been developing the criterion referenced portion of the Delaware Student Testing Program (DSTP). In spring 1998 the Department of Education and *Harcourt Brace Educational Measurement* began administering the operational DSTP.

4. *What are the state requirements for local assessment, including the types of assessments and their use in areas such as reporting and accountability, as well as Title I adequate yearly progress? What grade levels and subjects are tested?*

No such state requirements exist.

5. *Is the state assessment system aligned with the state standards? Are there plans for alignment, and if so, how will the assessment and standards become aligned?*

The tests are aligned to the Delaware content standards that define the knowledge required for the state's students to "succeed beyond high school."

6. *What is the state's approach for ensuring alignment and what evidence of that alignment is provided?*

The alignment between the norm referenced portion (SAT9) of the DSTP and the state standards was coordinated by a group of Delaware educators. The remainder of the test is items designed by the Delaware educators on the test development committee to be aligned with the state standards. The state has also developed a test "blueprint" or database to identify which assessment items address which standards.

7. *How is the data included in the state assessment system used?*

The Delaware Student Testing Program is designed to do the following:

- serve as a measure of progress toward the Delaware standards;
- ensure that students can apply their academic skills to realistic, everyday problems;
- promote better instruction and curriculum by providing timely reports of students' strengths and weaknesses;
- serve as a primary indicator in the statewide accountability system;

- help districts deal with the issue of who should and should not be promoted from grade to grade.
8. *Are there changes planned for the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

**Senate Bill 260** passed in May of 2000 now requires that all “off grades” or those grades not currently tested by the DSTP be tested with a “DSTP-like test” in reading, writing and math for the purpose of early warning and educator accountability. This test will be field tested in 2001 and fully implemented in 2002.

Changes may also take place once the state’s contract with Harcourt Brace expires in December of 2001. Such changes, are, at this point, unknown.

9. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of state assessment? Explain.*

The respondent identified three issues and challenges of significance:

1. maintaining test security
2. ensuring test reliability and validity, and
3. working with schools and districts on how data is used.

## **Inclusion Policies for Assessment**

1. *What exclusions are made in the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP? Who makes the decision about exclusion of a particular child? Does the state collect data or in other ways monitor the number and types of students excluded? Does that vary by test?*

All students in grades 3, 5, 8, and 10 (for English language arts and mathematics) and grades 4, 6, 8, and 11 (for science and social studies) will participate in the DSTP unless included in the **Delaware Alternate Portfolio Assessment (DAPA)**. Students with disabilities in non-graded programs will test at ages 8, 10, 13, and 15. Students may:

1. test under regular conditions,
2. test with accommodations that permit aggregation of test scores,
3. test with accommodations that do not permit aggregation of test scores,
4. be included in the **Delaware Alternate Portfolio Assessment (DAPA)**, or
5. for LEP students, be exempted from part or all of the DSTP.

For students with disabilities under IDEA, students who qualify under Section 504, and limited English proficient students, five types of testing conditions may occur during the Delaware Student Testing Program:

**Testing condition 1:** Students may test under regular conditions, even if accommodations are being used in the classroom.

**Testing condition 2:** Students may test with accommodations that do not interfere with the comparability of their scores to the scores of students testing under regular conditions. Accommodations used must be documented in the Individualized Education Program (IEP), or Section 504 plan, using the Student with Disabilities Form or on the Limited English Proficient Student Form for LEP students.

**Testing condition 3:** Students may test with accommodations that interfere with the comparability of their scores to the scores of students testing under regular conditions.

**Testing condition 4:** Students with disabilities may be included in the DAPA if they meet the proper criteria (*see below*). The IEP team must document the criteria and the inclusion in the DAPA in the Individualized Education Program (IEP), and indicate participation on the Student with Disabilities Form.

**Testing condition 5:** Limited English proficient students may be exempted from the DSTP one-time only if they have been in Delaware schools less than two consecutive years. Educators may consider exemptions from the written test only after reviewing the criteria for exemption. Any exemption must be documented on the Limited English Proficient Student Form.

2. *What accommodations and/or modifications are made on the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP?*

### **Eligibility for Accommodations or Participation in the Delaware Alternate Portfolio Assessment (DAPA)**

School staff may consider providing accommodations on the DSTP only if students:

- are eligible for services under IDEA or Section 504 **and**
- have an IEP or 504 plan and instructional program that includes accommodations and/or assistive devices in the instructional process.

These students are eligible for the same accommodations in the test that are in their IEP or 504 plan. Students who have been formally identified through the IDEA or 504 process but do not have accommodations or assistive devices documented in their plans **are not** eligible for any accommodations during the Delaware Student Testing Program.

The following accommodations are allowable for **students with disabilities** under testing condition 2 to produce aggregated scores:

### **Accommodations for the Presentation or Reception of the Test**

- Presenting the test in Grade 1 and/or Grade 2 Braille.
- Presenting the test in 18 point or larger print.
- Enhancing lighting.
- Using visual magnification devices.
- Providing verbal or signed assistance, such as reading, signing, or using a translator for the actual test including the prompts and test questions for all tests.
- Using an auditory trainer.
- Providing special acoustics, such as buffers.
- Using a sign language interpreter, oral interpreter, cued speech interpreter or translator during oral instructions. Students needing sign language interpreter or translator may be tested individually or in small groups.

- Presenting instructions, test questions, and individual items in such a way that allows students to stop the test when necessary, such as when student is fatigued.
- Chunking or highlighting information in passages in a standardized format for students who use American Sign Language.

### **Accommodations for Interaction or Processing During the Test**

- For the writing test, using a tape recorder for first draft and as a tool for writing the second and final draft of the paper. Student must be tested individually.
- For the writing test, permitting deaf students to videotape their first draft in American Sign Language and use the videotape as a tool for writing the second and final draft of the paper. Student must be tested individually.
- Using spell check, grammar options, and word prediction software or a personal scribe who can interpret speech and provide assistance with those functions for constructed response items in all content tests except for the writing test.
- Administering the test individually.
- Administering the test in a small group.
- Rereading or resigning directions for each subtest or each test question.
- Providing minimal physical assistance, such as manual guidance including intermittent verbal, signed, cued speech, physical prompts or picture communication system prompts to refocus and direct attention to the task.
- Using personal assistance from a test administrator to perform steps that cannot be bypassed or adapted such as direct assistance with turning pages or navigating in electronic format.
- Providing adaptive or special furniture or equipment to accommodate a physical disability.
- For the writing test, using test administrators as a resource for spelling of a word, signed word or short phrase whenever dictionary use is permitted for other students.
- Using an abacus.
- Using arithmetic tables.
- Using templates, graph paper, acetate color sheets, (e.g. typo-scope) or other markers, if they are not part of the regular testing conditions.
- Extending the maximum allowable time to complete the Stanford-9 reading and mathematics portions of the test.
- Completing the test over several sessions for tests that do not have discrete sections, for example stopping when the student tires.
- Using spell check, grammar options and word prediction software or a personal scribe who assists with those functions for the writing test when dictionary use is permitted.

### **Accommodations for Student Responses**

- Responding using individualized written communication systems. Examples include: Alpha-Smart, eye gaze to letters, Intellikeys, customized keyboard layouts, Braille device, typewriter, speech to text and computer.
- Responding verbally or via a tape recorder or videotape with answers being transcribed onto an answer sheet using a scribe protocol.

- Using a tape recorder or test administrator to record the student's response to a writing prompt using a scribing protocol. Tape-recorded response must be transcribed onto the appropriate DSTP response form using a scribe protocol.
- Marking directly on the test booklet with answers being transcribed onto an answer sheet.

The following accommodations are allowable for **students with disabilities** under testing condition 3:

#### **Accommodations for Interaction or Processing During the Test**

- Reading or signing passages or texts for the reading test (or using cued speech or oral interpreter).
- Out-of-level testing; before a student may take a test that is out-of-level, evidence or indicators must be present and considered by the IEP team.

#### **Unique Accommodations**

- Unique accommodations specific to the individual student as determined by the IEP team and approved by the DOE/DSTP Review Committee. The status (aggregation/non-aggregation) of the accommodation will be decided by the Committee.

The following accommodations are allowable for **limited English proficient** under testing condition 2 to produce aggregated scores:

#### **Accommodations for the Presentation or Reception of the Test**

- In a small group or individually, administering an audiotape of **test directions** in English, then in the student's native language (Spanish only).
- In a small group or individually, administering an audiotape of **test directions** in native language (Spanish only).

#### **Accommodations for Interaction/Processing**

- Administering the test to the student individually in separate location.
- Administering the test in a small group in a separate location.
- Student using a DOE approved bilingual dictionary for test (not appropriate for the reading test passages).
- In a small group or individually, administering an audiotape of stand alone writing prompts in English.
- In a small group or individually, administering an audio tape of stand alone writing prompts in English, then in the student's native language (Spanish only).
- In a small group or individually, administering an audiotape of test (directions, prompts, and questions) in English.
- In a small group or individually, administering an audiotape of test (directions, prompts, and questions) in native language version (Spanish only).
- In a small group or individually, administering the English version of the written test in content areas and providing audio taped test questions in a native language version (Spanish only).
- In a small group or individually, administering two side-by-side written tests at the same time, one version in native language (Spanish version only) and the second in English.

- In a small group or individually, using an interpreter to translate directions, prompts, and/or questions. Reading test passages CANNOT be translated.
- Giving extra breaks.
- In a small group or individually, completing the test over several sessions for tests that do not have discrete sections.
- In a small group or individually, extending the maximum allowable time to complete the SAT 9 reading portions of the test.
- In a small group or individually, extending the maximum allowable time to complete the SAT 9 mathematics portions of the test.

#### **Accommodations for Student Responses**

- Using a scribe to record the student's English or Native language (Spanish only) response to a writing prompt.
- Student responding in writing to the test in native language (Spanish only)\*. Note that this is NOT appropriate for the writing test or for the text-based item on the reading test.
- On the writing test, student using native language to write the first draft.

The following accommodations are allowable for limited English proficient students under testing condition 3:

#### **Accommodations for Interaction or Processing During the Test**

- Simplifying or paraphrasing test directions or questions in English or native language\*\*.
- Reading the reading test passages to students in English or native language\*\*.
- Out-of-level testing.

#### **Unique Accommodations**

- Unique accommodations specific to the individual student as determined by the appropriate school staff and approved by the DOE/DSTP Review Committee. The status (aggregation/non-aggregation) of the accommodation will be decided by the Committee.

3. *Does the state provide assessments in languages other than English? If so, describe. In what grades and subjects?*

Although the state does not have a separate test in a language other than English, it will provide directions and questions to students in Spanish as an accommodation (*see accommodations for LEP students above*).

4. *Does the state provide alternative assessments for students with disabilities? If so, describe. For which students and in which subjects and at what ages?*

Under testing condition 4, students may be included in the **Delaware Alternate Portfolio Assessment (DAPA)**. The student's IEP team must evaluate the possible inclusion of the student in each of the five parts of the DSTP: reading, writing, mathematics, science, and/or social studies.

5. *Does the state have a goal for the inclusion of students with disabilities and/or LEP students on the statewide tests? Does the state use any strategies to encourage the inclusion of students with disabilities? LEP students?*

The state does not have a specific goal, but expects all students to participate in the DSTP or the DAPA.

6. *Are changes planned in the for the inclusion of SWD and LEP students in the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*  
**SB 260** as passed in May 2000 provides that local school districts have the ability to determine which students take alternative assessments. Special education students who are unable to take the DSTP with accommodations may be given the DAPA or alternative tests which are developed by the local districts. This will take effect in the spring of 2001.

## Performance Standards

1. *How many and what performance levels has the state established for its assessments?*

DSTP Performance Levels are the following:

- Level 5: Distinguished – excellent performance
- Level 4: Exceeds the standard – very good performance
- Level 3: Meets the standard – good performance
- Level 2: Below the standard – needs improvement
- Level 1: Well below the standard – needs significant improvement

Cut points for the reading assessment:

Grade	Below	Meets	Exceeds	Distinguished
• 3	387	411	465	482
• 5	427	451	508	529
• 8	475	500	564	584
• 10	477	502	573	593

Cut points for the math assessment:

Grade	Below	Meets	Exceeds	Distinguished
• 3	382	4107	464	499
• 5	424	449	503	525
• 8	469	493	531	549
• 10	500	525	559	574

Cut points for the writing assessment:

Grade	Below	Meets	Exceeds	Distinguished
• 3	5	7	11	13
• 5	6	8	11	13
• 8	6	8	11	13
• 10	6	8	11	13

2. *Has the state set acceptable levels or targets for schools, districts or the state on tests, drop-out rates or other measures (e.g. 70% of students in Maryland pass the MSPAP)?*

The Department shall **rank schools** in three basic categories (*see accountability section for complete description*):

- 1) Superior Accredited: for schools which have demonstrated superior absolute performance, improvement performance, or distributional performance;
- 2) Accredited: for schools which have demonstrated adequate performance; and
- 3) Accreditation Watch: for schools whose student bodies demonstrate deficient absolute performance or whose student bodies' academic performance is in serious decline.

**NOTE:** The state has not yet established the cut points for the school accreditation rankings listed above, but are expected to do so in the fall or winter of 2000 or winter of 2001.

3. *How are these performance standards calculated? What data are included in the calculations, and at what proportions (e.g. assessment results 60%, dropout and attendance rates 40%). How are the calculations made? What is the final unit of analysis for reporting school and district achievement levels (e.g. performance index, grade, category)?*

The ranking of schools will be based on the following factors (*see accountability section for complete description*):

- the absolute performance of all the school's students on the assessments ("absolute performance");
- the school's record in improving the performance of all the school's students on the assessments ("improvement performance"); and
- the school's record in improving the performance of students at lower levels of achievements on the assessments ("distributional performance").

4. *Are all students, schools and districts included in these performance calculations? If not, who is excluded?*

The scores of students with accommodations that do not interfere with the comparability of their scores will have their scores included with those of students tested under regular conditions in the school, district and state reports. If these accommodations do interfere, the scores are not included in the reporting, except for the individual student reports. All schools, including charter schools, are included.

5. *Are changes planned for the state performance standards (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

No changes are planned for the state performance standards listed above.

6. *What proportion of schools and/or districts fail to meet acceptable levels on performance targets?*

The state has not yet assigned the accreditation categories to schools or districts so this question is not yet applicable. School accountability begins in 2001.

## **Reporting Performance Data**

1. *Describe the characteristics of the state performance data reporting system (by whom, what data, who is the audience) for each of the following levels:*

- *Student reports*

The results for individual students are reported to parents and to schools. The score report received contains the following sections of information regarding student performance on

**Reading and Writing:**

1. Grade, testing date and SAT9/Level and Form;
2. The date the SAT9 Norms were developed;
3. The Reading scaled score compared to other students at the same-grade level in the school;
4. The average Reading scaled score for the school (for students in the same grade as the student);
5. The average Reading scaled score for the district (for students in the same grade as the student);
6. The average Reading scaled score for the State of Delaware (for students in the same grade as the student);
7. The Writing score of the student compared to other students at the same-grade level in the school;
8. The average Writing score for the school (for students at the same grade as the student);
9. The average Writing score for the district (for students in the same grade as the student);
10. The average Writing score for the State of Delaware (for students in the same

- grade as the student);
- 11. The student's SAT9 percentile rank for Reading;
- 12. The student's Instructional Needs for Reading and Writing; and
- 13. The student's Performance Level and score in Reading and in Writing.

The Mathematics Individual Report has the following sections of information on student performance:

1. Grade, testing date and SAT9/Level Form/ and year the SAT9 Norms were developed;
2. The Mathematics scaled score for your student compared to other students at the same-grade level in the school;
3. The average Mathematics scaled score for the school (for students in the same grade as your student);
4. The average Mathematics scaled score for the district (for students in the same grade as your student);
5. The average Mathematics scaled score for the State of Delaware (for students in the same grade as your student);
6. Your student's SAT9 percentile rank for Reading;
7. Your student's Instructional Needs in Mathematics; and
8. Your student's Level of Performance in Mathematics.

- *School and District reports*

The English Language Arts Summary Report for schools and districts has five sections of information regarding the performance of students in reading and writing:

1. grade, testing date and SAT9 Level and Form;
2. score comparisons of grade tested for reading for the school;
3. score comparisons of grade tested for writing for the school;
4. percentile score for reading for the school;
5. instructional needs for reading and writing for the school.

The mathematics individual report has four sections of information on student performance:

1. grade, testing date and SAT9 Level and Form;
2. score comparisons of grade tested for mathematics for the school;
3. percentile score for mathematics for the school;
4. instructional needs for mathematics for the school.

### **School Profiles**

In a joint effort between the SDE and individual schools, each school has a school profile that is compiled and published, and is made available through the SDE Internet site. School profiles include the following:

- School name, address and contact information
- Mission
- Goals
- General information (building status, staffing, school promotions by grade, percent days present, parent involvement)

- Students and Instructional Staff (students, demographics, staff characteristics, student/instructor ratio, class size, etc.)
- School Programs
- Student Achievement
- Student Conduct
- District Finances.

School profiles will also list the school ranking (*see accountability section*) as:

- Superior Accredited;
- Accredited; or
- Accreditation Watch.

### **District Profiles**

Similar to school profiles, district profiles include:

- School name, address and contact information
  - List of schools in the district
  - Mission
  - Goals
  - Graduation and drop-out rates
  - Student Achievement
  - Number and percent of assessed students by performance level
  - District Finances and Funding.
- *State reports*

The **DSTP State Summary Report** includes:

- DSTP results statewide
  - Comparisons of the current and previous year's data
  - Students participation (accommodations and exemptions, absences, suspensions and expulsions)
  - Disaggregated data (by gender, race, LEP, SES, SpEd, Title 1)
  - District average scores in grades and subjects tested
  - District performance levels in grades and subjects tested
  - District data by content area by grade
  - School results by subject.
2. *How are the data distributed? When during the year (month or time period after assessment)? To whom (students, teachers, parents, the media, the community)?*

DSTP reports are distributed to parents, teachers (if requested), and education Administrators at different points in the year:

**Parents** receive two reports in June: the DSTP English Language Arts and Math Individual Reports;

**Schools** receive two reports in June for each grade level tested: the DSTP English Language Arts and Math Reports for the school and individual student reports;

**Districts** receive two district-wide reports in June for each grade level tested: the DSTP English Language Arts and Math Reports for the Schools and the District.

3. *At what level(s) are data disaggregated (state, district and school levels)? For what groups are disaggregated data reported (see Internet sites for state, district and school level report cards)?*

Scores are disaggregated by gender, race/ethnicity (American Indian, African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic, White), low income status, Title I, Special Education, migrant and limited English proficiency at the school, district and state levels.

5. *Does trend data exist from the state assessments (example: Texas State Assessment data is available from “1996-97 on”)?*

1998 was the first year for DSTP administration. A comparison of 1998 and 1999 scores was provided in the 1999 state summary report and again in the 2000 State Summary Report.

6. *How are the results of students with disabilities and limited English proficiency reported? Are they included in the aggregate scores reported to the public, or disaggregated by group?*

The scores for students testing with accommodations **that do not interfere** with the comparability of their scores to the scores of students testing under regular conditions will be included (be aggregated) in the school, district, and state test results. In addition, students will receive an individual score report. However, the scores for students testing with accommodations **that do interfere** with the comparability of their scores to the scores of students testing under regular conditions will **not** be included in the school, district, and state test results; these students will still receive an individual score report.

7. *What are the state’s requirements for the use of data in school and district improvement planning?*

The state does require that school and district improvement plans written by those identified as on “Accreditation Watch” include an analysis of DSTP data, and may also include supplemental data as appropriate.

8. *Are changes planned for performance reporting (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the accountability system (Title I or in general)?*

The school and district profiles will include the accreditation categories after the 2000-2001 assessment results have been calculated.

9. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of performance standards and reporting? Explain.*

The state is waiting to be able to report on the accreditation levels of schools and districts once the necessary years of DSTP data have been collected. The impact of these

accreditation levels and school and district responses to being placed in these categories will be an issue soon.

## State Accountability System (1999-2000 school year)

### 1. *Provide a brief overview and history of the accountability system as the context.*

The **Educational Accountability Act of 1998** created a system in which “students, schools and districts are responsible for fostering excellence.” The state will begin holding schools accountable for student performance in the 2000-01 school year after a period intense professional development for teachers. The data from the 1998 and 1999 DSTP will become the baseline for the accreditation of schools beginning in 2001. Accountability legislation was passed in 1997-98 and again in May 2000 for social promotion, retention and graduation. Further requirements in May 2000 determined that:

- To be eligible for promotion, students in grades 3 and 5 must meet the standard in reading on the DSTP and students in grade 8 must meet the standard in reading and math on the DSTP beginning with the Spring 2002 DSTP administration;
- To receive a high school diploma, grade 10 students must meet the standards of a combined score in reading, writing and math by the end of their twelfth grade year beginning with the Class of 2004.
- Students in grades 8 and 10 who are the highest performing students in either reading, writing and/or math are eligible for scholarships of \$1000. These scholarships will be awarded based on the Spring 2000 DSTP and includes the highest performing students and the highest performing low income students.

### 2. *What are the characteristics of the state accountability system? Organize the response into the following subsections:*

#### • *Student Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

A student receiving a score of “*Well Below the Standard*” in grades 3, 5, and 8 in reading and grade 8 in math will be required to attend summer school and take the summer retest of the DSTP beginning in 2002. In addition, students receiving scores Well Below the Standard in grades 3, 5, and 8 in reading and grade 8 in math **will not be promoted** to the next grade until they retest and reach the appropriate cut score in Reading (and Mathematics). If the student fails to meet the standard on the summer Reading Test at grades 3, 5, and 8, or the Mathematics Test at grade 8, the student must receive intensive assistance and is not eligible for promotion.

A student receiving a score of “*Below the Standard*” in grades 3, 5, and 8 in reading and grade 8 in math will have an Individual Improvement Plan (IIP) developed and agreed upon by the parent(s) and school staff beginning in 2002. The IIP will provide extra-time assistance for the student in the area(s) of need. The student will progress to the next grade and will re-take the DSTP in the spring of the following year. Failure to score at meets the standard on the re-take will cause the student to be retained at the current grade level. Should the school staff and parent not reach agreement on the IIP, the student will attend mandatory

summer school and re-take the DSTP at the end of summer school scoring at meets the standard or better to be promoted.

For the 2000 DSTP, a student receiving a score of:

- Well Below the Standard in grades 3, 5, and 8 in reading and grade 8 in math; or
- Below the Standard in grades 3, 5, and 8 in reading and grade 8 in math

will have an Individual Improvement Plan (IIP) developed for the 2000-2001 school year. The plan will provide for extra time assistance in the areas of reading and/or math.

- *School Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

The **Educational Accountability Act of 1998** required the Department of Education to establish criteria for ranking schools on the basis of their performance in improving the academic performance of their students in the core subjects of English/Language Arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

It was determined that the ranking of schools would be based on the following factors:

1. the absolute performance of the school's students on the assessments ("absolute performance");
2. the school's record in improving the performance of the school's students on the assessments ("improvement performance"); and
3. the school's record in improving the performance of students at lower levels of achievements on the assessments ("distributional performance").

After at least two years of baseline data, the Department shall **rank schools** in three basic categories:

- Superior Accredited - - for schools which have demonstrated superior absolute performance, improvement performance, or distributional performance;
- Accredited - - for schools which have demonstrated adequate performance; and
- Accreditation Watch - - for schools whose student bodies demonstrate deficient absolute performance or whose student bodies' academic performance is in serious decline.

Schools which are denominated "**Superior Accredited**" receive recognition in the annual School Profiles, and are eligible for further recognition through: special ceremonies; the award of plaques or flags; and monetary awards as provided for in the annual appropriations act. Up to fifty percent of any such award may be utilized for staff compensation and the remainder is to be invested in the school pursuant to the determination of a school-based committee.

Schools which are denominated "**Accredited**" are recognized in the annual School Profiles.

Schools which are denominated as on "**Accreditation Watch**" are identified in the annual School Profiles and shall be subject to the following four step process:

1. **Step One** - - The school must develop a school improvement plan which must be approved by the school's local board of education. To the extent that the school does not have a shared decision making committee, such a committee shall be formed to develop the

plan. The public must be given access to and an opportunity to comment on the plan before local board approval. Subject to appropriations for this purpose, the Department of Education shall provide technical assistance to schools in this process.

2. **Step Two** - - Schools on accreditation watch shall have their accreditation status reviewed at the end of each school year subsequent to being placed on accreditation watch. A school whose performance meets improvement goals may be moved into a higher status at that time. A school whose performance fails to demonstrate sufficient progress after two years shall be denominated as "Non-Accredited".

3. **Step Three** - - A "Non-Accredited" school shall be identified as such in the annual School Profiles and shall be required to implement a revised school improvement plan specifically developed and adopted for it by the school's local board of education. Such plan shall address specific criteria set forth in the bill. In addition, the Secretary of Education shall receive prior notice so that he or she may comment on any such proposed plan. The Secretary's comments may include public suggestions for staff changes at the school. Ultimate decision making authority is left to the local school board.

4. **Step Four** - - If a school district remains in "non-accredited" status for two years, the Secretary of Education may also investigate the reasons for the continued deficiency of the district's performance, and may request that the State Board hold public hearings to assist in that investigation. Thereafter, the Secretary of Education may make public his or her recommendations for improvement including recommendations that the school's leadership be changed or that the General Assembly merge the school district with another adjacent school district which is performing at satisfactory levels. Ultimate decision making authority in these areas is left to the General Assembly or the local school board.

- *District Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

The criteria consider the collective performance of the district's schools on the rankings of schools set forth in the act; that is, based on the percentage of district schools which are ranked

1. "Superior-Accredited",
2. "Accredited",
3. "Accreditation Watch", and
4. "Non-Accredited".

The criteria shall also consider the average grade level at which the district's students reach state grade level standards of achievement in the core subjects (e.g., what the average grade level is of district students upon their first successful demonstration of eighth grade proficiency in mathematics) as a measure of efficiency ("efficiency performance").

After at least two years of baseline data, the Department shall rank school districts in three basic categories:

- "Superior-Accredited" - - for school districts which have demonstrated superior absolute performance, improvement performance, distributional performance, or efficiency performance;
- "Accredited" - - for school districts whose schools, on average, have demonstrated adequate performance; and
- "Accreditation Watch" - - for school districts whose schools, on average, demonstrate deficient performance. Schools districts which are denominated "Superior Accredited"

shall receive recognition in the annual School Profiles, and shall be eligible for further recognition through special ceremonies and the award of plaques or flags.

School districts which are denominated "Accredited" shall be so recognized in the annual School Profiles. School districts which are denominated as on "Accreditation Watch" shall be so identified in the annual School Profiles and shall be subject to the following four step process:

- **Step One** - - The school district must develop a district improvement plan which must be approved by the school's local board of education. The public shall be provided with an opportunity to comment upon the draft plan before adoption. Subject to appropriations for such purpose, the Department of Education may provide technical assistance to districts preparing such plans.
- **Step Two** - - Districts on "accreditation watch" shall have their accreditation status reviewed at the end of each school year subsequent to being placed on accreditation watch. A district whose performance meets improvement goals may be moved into a higher status at that time. A school district whose performance fails to demonstrate sufficient progress after two years shall be denominated as "Non-Accredited".
- **Step Three** - - A "Non-Accredited" school district shall be identified as such in the annual School Profiles and shall be required to adopt a revised school improvement plan specifically adopted for it by the school's local board of education. The school district plan shall address specific criteria set forth in the bill, including whether the district is dedicating sufficient classroom time and sufficient staff and instructional materials funding to instruction in the core academic subjects. Notice of the proposed plan must be given to the public and the Secretary of Education before adoption so that they may comment upon the plan. The Secretary of Education's comments may include suggestions for changes in district administration. Ultimate decision making authority is left to the local school board
- **Step Four** - - If a school district remains in "non-accredited" status for two years, the Secretary of Education may also investigate the reasons for the continued deficiency of the district's performance, and may request that the State Board hold public hearings to assist in that investigation. Thereafter, the Secretary of Education may make public his or her recommendations for improvement including recommendations that the district's administrative leadership be changed or that the General Assembly merge the school district with another adjacent school district which is performing at satisfactory levels. Ultimate decision making authority in these areas is left to the General Assembly or the local school board.

3. *What methods of measuring progress are used in the state accountability system?*

The state will use three factors to measure progress (*see above*):

- the **absolute performance** of all the school's students on the assessments;
- the school's record in **improving the performance** of all the school's students on the assessments; and
- the school's record in improving the performance of students at **lower levels of achievement** on the assessments.

4. *Are all students included in calculating the measures of progress? If not, who is excluded (probe on inclusion of SWD and LEP students)?*

The scores for students testing with accommodations **that do not interfere** with the comparability of their scores to the scores of students testing under regular conditions will be included (be aggregated) in the school, district, and state test results. In addition, students will receive an individual score report. However, the scores for students testing with accommodations **that do interfere** with the comparability of their scores to the scores of students testing under regular conditions will **not** be included in the school, district, and state test results; these students will still receive an individual score report.

5. *How do the general state accountability system and the system of accountability for Title I schools compare? Are they the same, or different? How?*

The systems of accountability for Title I and non-Title I schools have not been aligned, but the Title I system is currently “evolving.” See the Title I section for further details.

6. *Are subgroup performance results used as an indicator in the calculation of state accountability measures? If so, how? To identify schools or districts in need of improvement? For recognition and rewards?*

Although the state’s accreditation system uses and measures the results of all students as opposed to specific subgroups, the school’s record in improving the performance of students at lower levels of achievements on the assessments ("distributional performance") will be used to determine accreditation.

7. *Are charter and/or non-public schools included in the accountability system? If so, how?*

Charter schools work under the same requirements as all other public schools. Private schools do not adhere to these requirements.

8. *Are changes planned for the state accountability system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

The state education department plans to revise its school profiles to include school rankings based on a new accreditation system linked to student-assessment scores. Beginning in 2002, schools designated as "superior accredited" will be recognized with special ceremonies, flags, and cash awards of \$250 per instructional unit.

The schools that don't perform at the state's expected levels for student performance will proceed through a four-step process that begins with local education officials developing a school improvement plan, to be approved by the local school board. At the end of the academic year, the school's performance will be reviewed, and if it has not met the goals in its plan, the state will designate it "nonaccredited." The education department will continue to

monitor the school; if it still does not show improvement, the secretary of education may recommend changes--including personnel changes--to be approved by the local board. The state is to implement school and district accountability in 2002. Students are accountable for DSTP scores to be promoted or graduate.

New legislation passed in May of 2000 will also add new aspects to the state accountability system. **Senate Bill 260** established a professional standards board which will propose rules and regulations in the areas of teacher pre-service training, licensure, certification, recruitment, evaluation and professional development. In the area of **student accountability**, the bill also:

1. phases in the state student testing program's impact on graduation and promotion to allow two additional years to address issues regarding student accountability
2. adjusts the approach for special education students, so that a Certificate of Performance will be awarded to students who have completed the requirements of their IEP but have not completed general education requirements or achieved satisfactorily on the DSTP
3. offers alternatives to mandatory summer school
4. institutes a parental accountability component and a three-level state diploma system (distinguished achievement diplomas, academic diplomas and standard diplomas), effective for students graduating in 2004.
5. Provides IIPs for students who do not score at meets the standard in reading at grades 3, 5, 8, and math at grade 8 for the spring 2000 DSTP.

More specifically regarding #1, the bill changes the current approach to promotion and matriculation. The parent or guardian of a student not meeting standards at grades 3, 5, 8, in reading and grade 8 in math has a choice: the LEA can develop an individual improvement plan for the student to be presented to the parent or guardian. If the parents and the districts agree to the plan that describes instructional interventions and support, the student will not be retained but will take the previous grade's assessment again the following year. If the student does not meet the standards at that point, s/he will be retained. If the parents do not agree with the improvement plan then the student will attend summer school and be retained if s/he does not meet the standards tested by the DSTP at the end of summer school. However, if a student scores at well below the standard, the student will attend mandatory summer school and be retained if s/he does not meet the standards tested by the DSTP at the end of summer school.

9. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of accountability? Explain.*

The state currently is waiting to be able to report on the accreditation levels of schools and districts once the necessary years of DSTP data have been collected. The impact of these accreditation levels and school and district responses to being placed in these categories will be an issue soon.

## **Identifying and Assisting Low Performing Schools and Districts**

1. *How are schools and districts identified as low performing? Using what criteria? Do the identification processes and/or criteria differ for Title I and non-Title I schools?*

Schools and districts can be ranked Accreditation Watch or Non-Accredited, and would therefore be considered as low performing.

2. *Does the district or the state decide whether a school is low performing? If the district is involved in the process, how much discretion do they have?*

The state makes the determination using the state assessment system results.

3. *What types of assistance are provided to these schools and districts by the state?*

The state has not yet placed schools and districts into categories of accreditation; however they have been providing technical support and assistance to districts and schools in areas such as curriculum alignment, data collection and data driven decision making.

4. *Who provides the state assistance?*

The state has not yet placed schools and districts into categories of accreditation; however they have been providing technical support and assistance to districts and schools in areas such as curriculum alignment, data collection and data driven decision-making. Staff at the Department of Education as well as other national and local experts have been providing the assistance.

5. *Does support to Title I and all low performing schools and districts differ? Is support generally provided for all schools and districts, or are services specifically designed to help those that are low performing?*

The general state system has not yet identified low performing schools (see question 3 above) and does not offer assistance through this system as yet. Low performing Title I schools have, however, been offered financial support as well as a support system including SDE staff and Distinguished Educators (see Title I section).

6. *Has the state established a set of criteria and/or a process for getting schools and districts out of low performing status? If so, what do they include?*

The state has not yet placed schools and districts into categories of accreditation and so has not yet established such a process. The SDE will be developing these regulations soon.

7. *Once a school or district is identified as low performing, what types of plans must it prepare? Who are they submitted to once completed? How do they differ from other planning documents?*

Districts and schools which are denominated as on "Accreditation Watch" must develop a district or school improvement plan which must be approved by the local board of education. To the extent that the school does not have a shared decisionmaking committee, such a committee shall be formed to develop the plan. The public must be given access to and an

opportunity to comment on the plan before local board approval. Subject to appropriations for this purpose, the Department of Education shall provide technical assistance to schools and districts in this process.

8. *Are changes planned for the state system of identifying and assisting low performing schools or districts (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

The state has not fully implemented the current system and so no changes are planned.

## **Title I and Adequate Yearly Progress**

1. *What criteria are included in the definition of adequate yearly progress for schools and districts under Title I?*

Student performance in the assessment grades and subjects included in the Delaware Student Testing Program (DSTP) is the criteria for adequate yearly progress in the state.

2. *What are the definitions of adequate yearly progress for the following:*

- *Title I schools and non-Title I schools*
- *Targeted vs. schoolwide programs, charter, non-public and small schools*
- *Districts*

*Are these transitional or final definitions? If transitional, when will the final definitions be in place and what criteria and processes will they include?*

During the 1998-1999 school year, a school was defined as making adequate yearly progress if the aggregate gain in the performance (between 1998 and 1999) of “academically needy students” was at or above the average aggregate gain in student performance (of needy students between 1998 and 1999) in all Delaware schools.

The Department’s definition for AYP in FY99 was transitional. In FY 2001, the Department’s definition for AYP will be the same as that defined in the school accountability legislation for distributional performance (see page 15) for identifying schools in need of improvement. A statewide committee will be convened to review the state distributional performance definition for school accountability and the relationship of that definition with schools providing Title I services and federal Title I requirements.

3. *What is the process for identifying those schools and districts that are not making adequate yearly progress under Title I? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools? If the districts plays a role, does the state provide guidance on local criteria?*

The state is responsible for this process and identifies those not making adequate yearly progress.

4. *What are the criteria and processes for identifying schools and districts in need of*

*improvement under Title I? What plans must be prepared? How can a school or district get out of Program Improvement? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools?*

Schools that fail to meet the requirements of adequate yearly progress for a period of two consecutive years are identified for school improvement. All Delaware schools are in program improvement status as a continuous process for improving student performance. Schools identified as being in "School Improvement " are removed from that status when they meet the standard for AYP.

5. *What types of assistance are provided to those in need of improvement under Title I?*

Schools identified for school improvement or not meeting AYP are provided resources (funds) for making school improvements. In FY 2001 over \$300,000 will be available for those schools. Additionally, the DOE support system provides staff development and technical assistance to those schools.

6. *Who provides the assistance?*

The support system includes DOE staff in all areas and Distinguished Educators. The DOE also integrates program areas when providing support to districts and schools.

7. *Have waivers played a role in this process?*

Waivers were not identified as having played a role.

8. *Are there future plans for the state system for schools or districts receiving Title I funding (proposed or enacted and to be implemented) or for the definition of adequate yearly progress? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

The state will include provisions for comparing the performance of Title I children with all children, using disaggregated data, and considering school progress. Additionally, the definition for AYP will be the same as the definition for school distributional performance required in the state's accountability legislation.

9. *Is there alignment between Title I and non-Title I systems for adequate yearly progress?*

The definition for AYP will be the same as the definition for school distributional performance required in the state's accountability legislation.

10. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of Title I? Explain.*

The state is in the process of modifying the system of determining adequate yearly progress at this time to bring AYP in line with the school accountability and distributional performance, and so the primary issue is that of transition.

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