

DELEWARE EDUCATION NEWS

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Education News

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U.S. Chamber Report Card on Education Says States Failing our Students, Risking our Future

Leaders and Laggards: A State-by-State Report Card on Educational Effectiveness graded all 50 states and Washington, DC, on nine broad categories including academic achievement, return on investment, truth in advertising, rigor of standards, and data quality.

Delaware scored 2 A's, 2 B's, 2 C's, 2 D's and 1 F including a C in Academic Achievement.

A summary of Delaware's scores is available at <http://www.uschamber.com/icw/reportcard/default>

Delaware's Six-Year Improvement of Advanced Placement (AP) Grades Ranked Second in Nation

One Year Gain Places Delaware Third in U.S.

The College Board has released its annual "Report to the Nation" on Advanced Placement (AP) participation and performance data in all U.S. public high schools. The report shows that in a six year period, from 2000-2006, Delaware is ranked second in the nation in the percentage increase of students who received a grade of 3 or higher on AP exams. Also, Delaware is ranked third in the nation for the percentage gain of students receiving a grade 3 or higher in a one-year period (2005-2006).

For the graduating class of 2006, 14.5% of high school students in Delaware scored a 3 or higher on an AP exam, compared to 7.6% in 2000. This 6.9 percentage point increase is second in the U.S. only to Maryland, and surpasses the national average increase of 4.6%. Today's report also ranked Delaware third in the nation for the percentage increase in the number of students receiving a grade of 3 or higher from 2005 to 2006. Only Arkansas and New Hampshire (tied) had a higher percentage point gain.

In the past six years, Delaware has seen a constant, steady upward trend of students participating in Advanced Placement coursework. Since 2001, the number of students participating in AP has increased by 144 percent. Ten years ago, in 1996, 815 high school students took AP coursework, statewide. In 2006, that number has grown to nearly 3,300.

The number of exams taken by students has also increased dramatically. Since 2001, the number of AP exams taken by Delaware public school students increased by 3,739 or 165%. In comparison, between 1996 and 2001, the number of exams taken by students increased by 1,092 or 93.4%.

According to today's report, the number of students who scored a grade 3 or higher improved significantly as well. Just ten years ago, Delaware's students scored 3 or higher on 715 AP exams. Five years ago, the number increased to 1,329; while in 2006, the number reached 2,943. A comparison between 2005-2006 showed an increase of 15.7% compared to a national increase of 10.1%.

The College Board partners with colleges and universities to create AP exams of college-level learning in 37 subject areas. Most colleges in the U.S. recognize AP exams in the admissions process as a sign of a student's ability to succeed in rigorous higher education curricula. They also award college credit or placement into a higher level college course so that college entrants can move directly into the courses that match their level of academic preparation for college.

In the report, the College Board also praised Delaware for implementing initiatives designed to prepare low-income students for success in Advanced Placement courses. From 2001-2006, the College Board reports that participation by low-income students increased from 18 to 236. Also, since 2001, the number of tests taken by low income students rose from 375 to 408. This indicates that many low income students are taking more than one AP course.

The "Report to the Nation" also provided an in-depth analysis of the graduating class of 2006. In Delaware, 27.7% of the graduating class took an AP exam at some point in their high school career, in comparison to 24.4% for the nation. Also, 18.6% took one or more Social Science AP exam, more than any other area. Social Science courses include: Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Science, Physics B, Physics C: Electricity and Magnetism, and Physics C: Mechanics.

In 2006, 14.5% of the graduating class of 2006 scored 3 or higher on an AP exam at some point in their high school career, which is similar to the nation's 14.8%. Also, 8.7% scored 3 or higher on one or more Social Science AP exams. Compared to the

rest of the country, Delaware outscored students across the U.S. in Science, Math and Social Science; was even in Arts and All Areas; and less than one percentage point in English and Language.

Delaware Public Schools Advanced Placement

Student Participation

11.5% increase in the number of students participating between 2005 and 2006

In 2006: 3,284 Delaware Public School Students took AP Exams

In 2005: 2,944 Delaware Public School Students took AP Exams

In 2001: 1,346 Delaware Public School Students took AP Exams

In 1996: 815 Delaware Public School Students took AP Exams

- Since 2001, the number of Delaware Public School students participating in AP increased by 1,938 or 144.0%.

Exams Taken

15.1% increase in the number of AP Exams taken between 2005 and 2006

In 2006: Delaware Public School Students took 6,000 AP Exams

In 2005: Delaware Public School Students took 5,214 AP Exams

In 2001: Delaware Public School Students took 2,261 AP Exams

In 1996: Delaware Public School Students took 1,169 AP Exams

- Since 2001, the number of AP Exams taken by Delaware Public School students increased by 3,739 or 165.4%.

Exams Scored 3 or higher

15.7% increase in the number of AP Exams scored 3 or higher between 2005 and 2006

In 2006: Delaware Public School Students scored 3 or higher on 2,943 AP Exams

In 2005: Delaware Public School Students scored 3 or higher on 2,544 AP Exams

In 2001: Delaware Public School Students scored 3 or higher on 1,329 AP Exams
In 1996: Delaware Public School Students scored 3 or higher on 715 AP Exams

- Since 2001, the number of AP Exams scored 3 or higher taken by Delaware Public School students increased by 1,614 or 121.4%.

To see full report:

http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/about/news_info/ap/2007/delaware_ap-report_07.pdf

Science and Social Studies Scores

Delaware Department of Education (DOE) has released the results from the seventh administration of the fourth and sixth grade science and social studies portions of the Delaware Student Testing Program (DSTP).

In fourth grade **science**, 91.5% of the students tested scored at Level 3 or higher, a less than one percentage point decrease from last year's scores. In grade six, 78.4% scored at Level 3 or higher, a 1.6 percentage point decrease from last year's assessment. The science test measures students' knowledge and understanding in four areas: Inquiry, Life Science, Earth Science and Physical Science.

In fourth grade **social studies**, 70.1% of students scored at level 3 or higher, a 5.4 percentage point increase over last year's results. In grade six, 61.1% of students scored at level 3 or higher, compared to 60.1% last year. The social studies test measures students' knowledge and understanding in four areas: Civics, Economics, Geography and History.

For a more complete chart, please go to:

<http://www.doe.k12.de.us/news/2007/0215.shtml>

Delaware Achievement Gap Report for 2006

The Delaware State Board of Education has released the 2006 achievement gap report entitled *Awareness to Action Revisited: Tracking the Achievement Gap in Delaware Schools*. The report was compiled by the Research and Development Center at the University of Delaware and funded by the State Board of Education. It is the fourth in an annual series of reports which tracks the gap by school and by subgroups over a multi-year period.

The report is meant to be informative for both communities and schools. It shows all Delaware Student Testing Program (DSTP) tested grades by school. For each tested grade in a school both reading and mathematics scores are disaggregated by race, income status, limited English proficiency and special education categories. The scores are plotted from 2003 through 2006. Each school is also identified by its own demographic makeup and its status for 2006 under federal guidelines specified by No Child Left Behind.

In releasing the report, Jean Allen, State Board President, noted that we are seeing some real signs of progress at the school level with many of the elementary schools essentially closing the achievement gap in 3rd grade reading and middle schools and high schools are showing progress. "We continue to be concerned about the gaps that persist in mathematics across many of our schools as well as the large gaps that persist at the high school level particularly in math. These are areas on which we have to put more focus."

Additional findings show that special education students continue to fall further behind as they move through the grades and charter schools have little gap information due to the lack of diversity in their student bodies.

Copies of the achievement gap report can be found at:
http://www.rdc.udel.edu/awareness_to_action.asp?y=2006

Delaware's Top Two Youth Volunteers Selected in 12th Annual National Awards Program

*Wilmington and Bridgeville students earn \$1,000 awards,
engraved medallions and trip to nation's capital*

Honors also bestowed on other top youth volunteers in Delaware

Stephanie Seitz, 18, of Wilmington and **Taylor Richey**, 10, of Bridgeville have been named Delaware's top two youth volunteers for 2007 by The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, a nationwide program honoring young people for outstanding acts of volunteerism. The awards program, now in its 12th year, is conducted by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP).

Stephanie was nominated by Ursuline Academy in Wilmington, and Taylor was nominated by Girl Scouts of Chesapeake Bay in Newark. As State Honorees, each will receive \$1,000, an engraved silver medallion, and an all-expense-paid trip in early May to Washington, D.C., where they will join the top two honorees – one middle level and one high school youth – from each of the other states and the District of Columbia for several days of national recognition events. Ten of them will be named America's top youth volunteers for 2007 at that time.

Stephanie, a senior at Ursuline Academy, provides a wide range of volunteer services to a small Catholic middle school attended by boys from low-income families. When Stephanie read in an article that Nativity Preparatory School needed volunteers, she decided to investigate. "From the moment I became involved, I knew this was a special place," she said.

She began by tutoring the fifth- to eighth-graders in the evening and just doing "whatever was asked of me," she said. When she became aware of the school's desperate need for stationery supplies, she recruited fellow students to help her organize a stationery collection drive at her school, and then coordinated two "jean days" that raised more than \$600 to buy workbooks for Nativity Prep. She also painted classrooms, catalogued books, organized office files, and helped coach the school's baseball team. "Being at Nativity, I realize that some of the things I take for granted are viewed as a luxury by the boys," she said. "Working with the students has made me appreciate my family and all the opportunities I have even more," she said.

Taylor, a fifth-grader at Phyllis Wheatley Middle School in Bridgeville, raised funds to purchase toys, games and other play equipment for children undergoing treatment for cancer at A.I. Dupont Hospital in Wilmington. “I was hospitalized there all summer and I was bored,” said Taylor, who suffers from a rare skin and muscle disease. The hospital didn’t have much to entertain young patients, she said, and when a water leak destroyed the few toys, books, video games and movies that were there, Taylor decided to help. “I wanted to do something to make other kids happy,” she said.

Taylor made plans to conduct a raffle at a local festival for one of two bicycles she had won in summer reading programs. After her friend and school nurse offered to shave her head if Taylor raised more than \$3,000, Taylor received donations of over \$5,000 from friends and community members. Taylor then purchased so many books, puzzles, movies, art supplies and play stations that it took several trips to deliver everything. Taylor also has raised money to send supplies to troops overseas, and to buy books for her local library.

In addition, the program judges recognized two other Delaware students as Distinguished Finalists for their impressive community service activities. Each will receive an engraved bronze medallion:

Michael Davis, 17, of Dover, a senior at Dover High School, renovated a practice room used by the Rolling Thunder Drumline at his high school. Under the guidance of his band director, Michael drew up a proposal, obtained all of the necessary approvals, and collected more than \$1,000 in donated funds and supplies. He then shopped for materials, created a work schedule, recruited volunteers, consulted building experts, and led efforts to install shelves and mirrors, paint walls, and lay new carpeting in the room.

Mason Newark, 17, of Harrington, a senior at Sussex Technical High School in Georgetown, helped beautify a low-income neighborhood by planting 30 flowering dogwood trees along one of its streets. With the approval of community officials, Mason planned the project, recruited help, created a work schedule, and dug large holes to plant the trees.

“People as caring and committed as these young students are critical to the future of our neighborhoods, our cities and our nation,” said Arthur Ryan, chairman and CEO of Prudential. “By recognizing these honorees, we hope to encourage other young people – our future leaders – and all Americans to think more about the value and importance of volunteering in their communities.”

“NASSP is pleased to once again join Prudential in recognizing these young people

for their amazing accomplishments,” remarked Gerald N. Tirozzi, executive director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals. “This year’s honorees are proof that the youth of today are conscientious and capable of performing selfless acts of kindness in their local communities, on a national scale and at the global level.”

All public and private middle level and high schools in the country, as well as all Girl Scout councils, county 4-H organizations, American Red Cross chapters, YMCAs and Volunteer Centers, were eligible to select a student or member for a local Prudential Spirit of Community Award this past November. More than 7,500 Local Honorees were then reviewed by state-level judges, who selected State Honorees and Distinguished Finalists based on criteria such as personal initiative, creativity, effort, impact and personal growth.

While in Washington, D.C., the 102 State Honorees will tour the capital’s landmarks, attend a gala awards ceremony at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History, and visit their congressional representatives on Capitol Hill. In addition, 10 of them – five middle level and five high school students – will be named National Honorees on May 7 by a prestigious national selection committee. These honorees will receive additional \$5,000 awards, gold medallions, crystal trophies, and \$5,000 grants from The Prudential Foundation for nonprofit, charitable organizations of their choice.

Serving on the national selection committee will be U.S. Senator Norm Coleman of Minnesota; Arthur Ryan of Prudential; actor Richard Dreyfuss; Alma Powell, chair of America’s Promise – The Alliance for Youth; Robert Goodwin, president and CEO of the Points of Light Foundation; Amy B. Cohen, director of Learn and Serve America at the Corporation for National and Community Service; Kathy Cloninger, CEO of Girl Scouts of the USA; Donald T. Floyd Jr., president and CEO of National 4-H Council; Michael Cohen, president and CEO of Achieve, Inc.; Kathryn Forbes, national chair of volunteers, American Red Cross; Joe Militello, president of NASSP; and two 2006 Prudential Spirit of Community National Honorees: Ajay Mangal of Pascagoula, Miss., and Geneva Johnson of the Bronx, N.Y.

In addition to granting its own awards, The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program will be distributing President’s Volunteer Service Awards to more than 4,150 of its Local Honorees this year on behalf of the President’s Council on Service and Civic Participation. The President’s Volunteer Service Award recognizes Americans of all ages who have volunteered significant amounts of their time to serve their communities and their country.

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards represent the United States' largest youth recognition program based solely on volunteer service. The program is part of a broad youth-service initiative by Prudential that includes a youth leadership training program administered by the Points of Light Foundation; a free booklet of volunteer ideas for young people offered through the Federal Citizen Information Center; and a Web site featuring profiles of outstanding youth volunteers, volunteer tips and project ideas for students, an electronic newspaper on youth volunteerism, and more (www.prudential.com/spirit). The Spirit of Community Awards program also is conducted by Prudential subsidiaries in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, and is being introduced this year in Ireland.

For information on all of this year's Prudential Spirit of Community State Honorees and Distinguished Finalists, visit www.prudential.com/spirit or www.principals.org/prudential.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals -- the preeminent organization and the national voice for middle level and high school principals, assistant principals and aspiring school leaders -- provides its members with the professional resources to serve as visionary leaders. NASSP promotes the intellectual growth, academic achievement, character development, leadership development, and physical well-being of youth through its programs and student leadership services. NASSP sponsors the National Honor Society™, the National Junior Honor Society™ and the National Association of Student Councils™. For more information on NASSP, NHS, NJHS or NASC, visit www.principals.org.

Nominate an Outstanding Teacher for the American Stars of Teaching Award

The U.S. Department of Education is seeking nominations for its fourth annual American Stars of Teaching project, which recognizes exemplary teachers who raise student achievement, use innovative classroom strategies and make a difference in their students' lives.

Teachers across all grade levels and disciplines will be honored this fall as 2007 American Stars of Teaching. One teacher will be recognized from every state and the District of Columbia. Colleagues, parents, students, school administrators or

members of the community may nominate a teacher they believe has demonstrated the skills, talents and qualities that personify an American Star of Teaching.

Last year, the Department received more than 4,000 nominations for the program. Honorees were selected by a committee composed of former K-12 teachers who now work for the U.S. Department of Education. As in the past, Education Department officials will visit the schools of American Star teachers to congratulate them on their success.

Nominations for American Stars must be submitted by **March 31, 2007**. The online nomination form and more information about the award are available at <https://www.t2tweb.us/AmStar/About.asp>

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