

## Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Highlight

### Human Capital: Update on Delaware’s Work

By Harriet Dichter

Our goal in Delaware is to develop, attract and retain quality, effective teachers and leaders with the knowledge and skills to serve our children and families and foster improved outcomes; professionalize the field (leaders & teachers with college degrees with appropriate compensation); and align appropriately with K-12.

Consistent with the National Survey of Early Care and Education, Delaware’s portrait of the early learning workforce forcefully demonstrates why a change strategy is necessary. A recent Delaware surveys has some good news—those surveyed were at their programs for an average of 5.6 years, and had been in the field for over 11 years. But the overall entrance requirements into the field of early learning remain low, as shown by Table 1, and much work remains to raise the numbers of teachers and leaders with a college education and preparation in early childhood as shown in Table 2. Delaware’s portrait is on target with the recent federal study in terms of education and compensation levels. We took a deeper look to compare the Delaware workforce to out k-12 public education work force. This shows sharp disparity, as shown in Table 3, not only for lead teachers but also with aides in the public school classrooms.

Table 1:

## Delaware Early Learning Workforce Position, Education & Pay

Position	Minimum Education & ECE Training	Average Pay/Hourly	Average Pay/Annual
ECE Administrator	AA/AS (including 12-15 ECE credits)	\$15	\$31,620
Curriculum Coordinator	HS plus 15 ECE credits	\$11	\$22,880
Teacher	TECE 1 & 2 (DE specific CDA like credential) or 9 ECE college credits in specific areas	\$11.50	\$23,920
Assistant Teacher	TECE 1 or 6 ECE college credits in specific areas	\$10.50	\$21,008

Table 2:

## Delaware Early Learning Workforce Educational Attainment

High School/GED or Less	21%
Some College	27%
Associate Degree	17%
Bachelor's Degree	29%
Master's Degree	6%
Ph.D./Ed.D.	.6%
College Degree (All levels)	53%



Table 3:

## Teacher Comparisons

	Compensation	Benefits
DE ECE Teacher	\$23,920 (average)	43%-health insurance; 28%-vision; 35%-dental; 58%-vacation; 50%-sick leave; 44%-planning time
National All ECE Teachers	\$22,000 (median)	75%-health insurance
National ECE Teacher/B.A.	\$30,576 (median)	75%-health insurance
DE Kindergarten Teacher	\$53,000 average \$40,000 starting salary/B.A.	Yes
DE Public School Teaching /Clerical Aide	\$28,790 average	



Prior to Delaware’s participation in the Early Learning Challenge, the state had focused on policy as well as funding to address workforce issues. Similar to many states, Delaware had developed early childhood competencies, a career lattice, a non-credit bearing professional development system, a data system for housing qualifications information, and funded T.E.A.C.H. scholarships. In addition, Delaware also had a B-2 certification as well as a high school career path for early childhood.

Using this baseline, Delaware has conceptualized the next phase of its work to meet its goal for the early learning workforce, as shown below:



An overview of these 10 new strategies follows. Taken together, these ten dynamic strategies fill in gaps and begin to address structural issues.

1. **Child care licensing regulations revisions (in process)**
  - Regulations reorganized, wording simplified, and redundant regulations eliminated
  - Charts created for simplicity and clarity of information
  - Staff qualifications expanded – acceptable education requirements broadened; required experience reduced; supervised experience added
2. **Compensation Retention and Education (CORE) Awards (August 2013)**
  - Compensation program for teachers at Star 3, 4, 5 programs (the top tiers of the Delaware QRIS)
  - Education: awards based on professional’s career lattice step and continued growth up the lattice
  - Retention: awards for those applicants who have a minimum of an AA and have worked in the current program for a minimum of 12 months
  - Recruitment: award for recruiting highly qualified teachers – minimum of AA and stay in program for at least 6 months
3. **Align IHE Coursework with Competencies and Early Learning Foundations (In process)**

- Partnership with Delaware IHEs to review ECE content for alignment of course content/instruction with Delaware frameworks
  - Gap analyses & individualized work with IHEs to address content enhancements, along with resources to support
4. **B-2 Certification Re-design (In process)**
    - Review of Praxis exams to eliminate undue burden of 3 tests for those candidates seeking special education and early childhood certification
    - Recommendations for revisions/additions to B-2 content to include special education, offering dual early education and special education certifications from IHEs
  5. **Dual Enrollment/Early College (September 2013)**
    - Vo Techs are participating in career-specific content dual enrollment coursework
    - Successful completion will lead to 6 or 9 ECE credits; entry requirements for Del Tech, the state's community college, will already be completed
  6. **Enhanced PD for Stars Programs: TSI GOLD Formative Child Assessment (Summer 2013) & ASQ Child Developmental Screening (Summer 2013) and Curricular Supports (Spring 2014)**
    - Pilot Teaching Strategies Gold Child Assessment training and ongoing support offered to Stars 3, 4, 5 participants as a pilot; Full scale roll-out in summer/spring 2014; links to Kindergarten Delaware Early Learner Survey
    - Ages and Stages Questionnaire training & support fully available to Stars programs as of 2013
    - Designing training and supports for providers' use of evidence-based curriculum, integrating work of the professional development system and the Stars program
  7. **Leadership Development (September 2013)**
    - Early Learning Leadership Initiative: nine modules of online PD, monthly Community of Practice and resources, led by a facilitator, using nationally regarded program developed by McCormick Early Leadership Center at National Louis University in Chicago
    - Teach for America infant, toddler and preschool teachers experience a Community of Practice designed specifically for them
  8. **Professional Development Re-design with emphasis on intentional teaching (In process for implementation 2014)**
    - Multi-year planning for PD; new focus on sequenced Level I, II, III training aligned with core competencies and national standards
    - New courses being designed to reflect identified needs from research & data: assessment, curriculum and instruction, the diverse learner
    - PD for all enhanced by coaching for Stars programs, ongoing support with implementers, technical assistance
  9. **Stars Plus (2011)**
    - Cohorts of Stars programs serving children with high needs
    - Additional technical assistance and supports offered to move them through Stars levels, including individualized professional development
  10. **TECE 1 & 2 Revisions to Articulate to IHE (In process)**
    - Delaware's baseline for becoming an early childhood teacher revolves around a state-determined sequence, TECE 1 and 2
    - Alignment being completed to demonstrate match of content to CDA, individual IHEs' courses
    - Reviewing and revising content to better reflect rigor of IHE courses
    - Developing remedial strategy for adult education participants to support successful entry into college