

State Board of Education Meeting
January 21, 2021

Although schools were on a “pause” from December 14th to January 11th as a COVID-19 mitigating strategy, students have now returned to classrooms. Most districts are again offering in-person instruction to those who have selected it. Some have employed a rolling return plan in which grade clusters are week by week re-engaged in hybrid models. Sussex Tech and New Castle County Vo-Tech will invite all grade levels to return at the beginning of the second semester. Fifteen of the 23 charter schools have students in their buildings. A few are waiting to open at the beginning of the second semester as are Sussex Tech and New Castle County Vo-Tech. Interestingly, despite schools having taken a break due to operational challenges, we Department members have been extremely busy during the past few weeks.

- The Department is organizing and overseeing the plan for vaccinating approximately 25,000 Phase 1B educators in public, private and parochial schools and child care facilities at myriad sites across the state. This plan will be managed by the DDOE in partnership with the Division of Public Health (DPH). Individual schools WILL NOT need to develop their own plans or criteria for vaccine distribution. Information has been made available along with a Vaccination Toolkit (appropriate for all faculty and staff), a survey to gauge interest in participation and information on how to register for the vaccination events, which are slated to begin by the end of the month.
- I had the privilege of volunteering at the huge event at Georgetown’s DMV during which hundreds of Sussex County first responders and school nurses received Moderna vaccinations on the evening of January 5th.
- Kim Klein and I will take the lead in working through the details on the latest round of federal relief funds for public education. Round Two of the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER II) brings to us a total of \$182.9M in funding of which \$164.6M is a direct allocation to districts and charter schools. In addition to these funds, Delaware will be receiving \$8.6M in Round Two funding of the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER II). More than half of GEER II is currently slated to be used for equitable services to non-public schools; however, we are currently awaiting guidance from USED with additional details. A core DDOE team has initiated conversation about retaining the allowable 10% at the state level. Preliminary discussion concluded with the tentative decision to reserve the funds to invest in our students’ unfinished learning during the summers of 2021, 2022, and 2023.
- I had the pleasure of joining the Governor and Dr. Rattay during the Governor’s weekly press conference on January 5th.
- I staffed the Opportunity Funding Oversight Committee meeting on January 11th and have completed the meeting minutes.
- I decided to celebrate students’ returning to school by visiting them in their classrooms. Thus, last week I arranged to observe hybrid learning at Long Neck Elementary (Indian River); Silver Lake Elementary (Appoquinimink); Redding Middle and Meredith Middle (Appoquinimink); and the new Odessa High School (Appoquinimink). At all sites I detected the joy of learning on the masked faces and students’ and staffs’ delight in being back at school. To date I have visited 47 of the state’s schools this year.
- Moreover, the Office of the Secretary
 - continues to daily partner with DPH on COVID-related documents and issues.
 - is busily preparing for the upcoming legislative session.
 - has distributed a revised *Reopening Schools* document.
- The Student Support Team facilitated the successful completion of the fall sports season. DIAA has reported that fall state championships ran successfully from December 1 – December 19. There were limited spectators at events due to COVID-19 restrictions. Dover High School hosted championships for boys’ soccer, field hockey, unified football and football. St. Mark’s High

School hosted the volleyball championship. Cross-country championships were held at Killens Pond State Park with no spectators.

- Our Adult Ed team was highly involved in the Delaware Correctional Reentry Commission's completion of a two-year project. As a result, (1) new offenders entering prisons are being surveyed for academic skills and are completing a vocational survey to determine both job skills and interest in vocational training; (2) Delaware Tech is working with DDOE and DOC to initiate a prison college program; and (3) a systems approach to providing vocational training is being implemented that will coordinate trainings across the prison system to maximize training opportunities.
- The Office of Equity and Innovation's Teri Lawler, who leads the state's social and emotional learning initiative, collaborated on DDOE's behalf and highly contributed to a newly released CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) resource entitled [Reunite, Renew, and Thrive: Reopening Schools with SEL](#).
- The Academic Support Team has partnered with Digital Promise to build a micro-credential pathway for professional learning as part of the **Delaware Literacy Plan**. This partnership creates a competency-based option for developing and recognizing Delaware's teachers for their skills in literacy education. In addition, these micro-credentials support educators as they develop skills and acquire knowledge to improve professional practice that promotes student success in the area of early literacy.
- The Academic Team has also worked with our partners at American Institutes for Research (AIR), University of Delaware, and a core group of literacy and content experts from seven Delaware school districts to develop 17 of the 29 planned micro-credentials that will enter the pilot phase this winter with 24 Delaware educators across 10 districts and charters.
- The Educator Support Team recently released a Request for Applications (RFA) to support yearlong teacher residencies from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. The team anticipates awarding a total of \$1,000,000 for districts and charters to partner with Delaware Educator Preparation programs to implement yearlong residency programs.
- The Office of Early Childcare Support this month
 - is partnering with DHSS to continue to fund enhanced reimbursement to providers through March 2021 in order to continue stabilizing the child care sector. A final decision will hopefully be shared on January 21st at the provider call.
 - has signed an MOU with the federal reserve of Philadelphia to study the role of child care in supporting economic development projects in the State.
 - is continuing discussion regarding the creation of regulations for the licensure of summer youth camps.

In addition, since the last meeting I have also

- joined the Governor, superintendents and DPH reps to review and react to the redesigned My Healthy Community dashboard before its release.
- worked with a Family Service Council organizer on details of a plan to analyze the disengaged students challenge and subsequently propose strategies for mitigating their "unfinished learning".
- was interviewed by a News Journal reporter about schools' reopening on January 11th.
- participated in the Zoom meeting with Department of Justice members, superintendents, and districts' legal counsels to discuss COVID data and the vaccination rollout plan.
- led a DDOE Equity Council Leadership meeting.
- joined my Council of Chief State School Officers peers in our weekly meeting to discuss collective concerns.
- held a Chiefs' Liaison Group meeting and subsequently presented specific topics at the Chiefs' regularly schedule January 2021 meeting.
- joined fellow Governor's Cabinet members in the Ivy Planning Group's "A Look Backward in Order to Move Forward" training and at the Governor's regularly scheduled monthly Cabinet meeting.

- met with DDOE’s Early Head Start team to discuss attendance data, various initiatives, current spending, and the proposed budget.
- participated in DDOE’s *Cultivating Genius* book study that occurs biweekly on Tuesday mornings at 7 a.m.
- participated in our #IloveDEschools campaign planning session.
- worked with members of the Secretary’s DDOE Advisory Team to design a February All-Staff Meeting.
- joined fellow Chiefs across the country in a CCSSO-led session on ESSER II and GEER II parameters and spending plans.
- participated in the monthly Committee on Police Training meeting.
- attended the Delaware Workforce Development Board meeting.
- conducted an Interagency Resource Management Committee quarterly meeting.
- hosted a DDOE virtual coffee break to facilitate communication, camaraderie, and teamwork among staff members.
- joined other members of the Department’s Equity Resource Subcommittee in a planning meeting.
- presented a tribute from the Governor’s Office at a Caesar Rodney Board of Education meeting.
- met with Senators Lockman and Sturgeon and Representatives Williams and Chukwoucha to discuss Education Committee topics.
- “attended” the Governor’s and Lt. Governor’s Inauguration Celebration.

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Secretary of Education