



STATE OF DELAWARE  
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT  
DOVER, 19901

**EXECUTIVE ORDER  
NUMBER FIFTY-FOUR**

**RE: REVIEW PANELS FOR SCHOOL ASSESSMENTS AND  
PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

WHEREAS, academic standards in English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies were developed by large stakeholder groups comprised of public school educators, higher education representatives, parents and members of the business community; and

WHEREAS, those standards were approved by the State Board of Education in June 1995; and

WHEREAS, in 1997 the Delaware General Assembly required the development of an assessment system to measure progress toward meeting those standards; and

WHEREAS, the Delaware Student Testing Program (DSTP) in reading, writing, and mathematics has been administered to students in grades 3, 5, 8, and 10 since 1998; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly directed the Department of Education to identify five levels of individual student performance relative to state content standards to be used for identifying levels of proficiency; and

WHEREAS, students in grades 3, 5, 8, and 10 who perform at Level II (below the standard) must participate in improvement activities and students who perform at Level I (well below the standard) must attend summer school and must show proficiency at the end of summer school in order to be promoted; and

WHEREAS, concerns have been raised about the performance of students at grades 8 and 10 on the mathematics component of the DSTP; and

WHEREAS, recent studies have shown that the DSTP is aligned to the academic content standards; and

WHEREAS, a study completed by the National Center for Education Statistics shows a correlation between the DSTP reading and the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) reading; and

WHEREAS, no such study has been completed to determine a correlation between the DSTP mathematics and the NAEP mathematics assessment; and

WHEREAS, students who graduate from public high schools must meet a specific level of proficiency in order to receive one of three levels of diploma (Distinguished, Standard or Basic); and

WHEREAS, a review of student grade point averages and diploma indexes show a correlation between the two; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate to periodically review both the content standards and the assessments as well as the performance levels established for said assessments; and

WHEREAS, Delaware's accountability system holds students, teachers, schools and districts accountable for the academic achievement of all students; and

WHEREAS, any change to the DSTP performance levels will affect all components of the system; and

WHEREAS, the examination of the performance levels will be beneficial to the overall system;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RUTH ANN MINNER, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE DO HEREBY ORDER AND DECLARE:

1. The Delaware Department of Education shall convene a panel of three national experts in the areas of assessment, accountability, and/or standard setting. Said experts will be chosen as follows: one by Delaware Department of Education, one by the members of the Delaware Education Consortium (Delaware Chief School Officers Association, Delaware Association of School Administrators, Delaware State Education Association, Delaware School Boards Association, the State Board of Education and the Delaware Charter Schools Network) and one jointly chosen by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
2. The panel shall be provided with all applicable and related information regarding the development of the assessments, the setting of performance levels, and the design of the student accountability system from the



Department of Education and from any other study or paper that has been produced by any other stakeholder groups.

3. The panel may also consider other sources of information from regional or national studies that have been conducted on related matters.
4. The panel shall also examine the levels of incentives and consequences associated with the student accountability system including requirements for student improvement activities such as Individual Improvement Plans, summer school, retention and promotion, and awarding of diplomas and scholarships.
5. The Department of Education shall also contract with three national experts to conduct a full review of the implementation of standards based curriculum in mathematics in both middle and high schools in Delaware. Said experts will be chosen in the same manner as the assessment panel, one by the Department of Education, one by the Education Consortium and one jointly chosen by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
6. To ensure public participation in the process, a posted public comment period shall be utilized to allow members of the public to submit written public comments to either or both panels.
7. The expert panel on assessment and accountability and the expert panel on curriculum shall present findings and recommendations regarding these issues, including a timeline for proposed implementation, to the Governor and the General Assembly not later than February 15, 2005.

APPROVED this 8th day of April, 2004



  
Governor

ATTEST:

  
Secretary of State