

Program trains principals to work in high-needs schools

Delaware State News

DOVER — The Delaware Leadership Project — an intensive 14-month training program for aspiring school leaders that is the state's first alternate route to principal certification pathway — launches this week.

The first cohort of seven candidates began its intensive summer training Monday and this fall will begin year-long residencies at schools throughout the state, working beside seasoned school leaders who will provide mentoring and coaching to participants.

Funded with a portion of the state's \$119 million federal Race to the Top grant, significant local private funding, and district and charter school contributions, the Delaware Leadership Project is designed to attract, develop, place and support a select cohort of outstanding school leaders to work in Delaware's highest-need schools each year.

In only its first year of recruitment, the Delaware Leadership Project received more than 90 applications for seven positions.

Admission to the Delaware Leadership Project is highly selective and the program is cost-free to participants. Participants receive a stipend that is competitive with their current salary.

In March, the Delaware Professional Standards Board approved the Delaware Leadership Project for a two-cohort pilot alternative-route to certification program.

The state Board of Education followed this by voting unanimously to approve the Delaware Leadership Project on April 21. The Department of Education recently signed a two-year contract with Wilming-

ton-based Innovative Schools, the non-profit public school resource center that brought this program to Delaware and will run the initiative under DDOE's oversight.

Innovative Schools is modeling the Delaware Leadership Project after the New York City Leadership Academy's (NYCLA) Aspiring Principal Program.

According to an independent study conducted by the Institute for Education and Social Policy at New York University, NYCLA has demonstrated the capacity to reverse the decline of low-performing schools and narrow the gaps with higher-performing peer schools in elementary and middle-school English language arts and math.

Delaware Leadership Project will utilize a project-based learning curriculum and year-long residency to prepare aspiring principals for the challenges of leading a high-needs school. The 14-month program consists of four phases beginning with a five-week summer intensive, followed by a 10-month school-based residency working side-by-side with a mentor principal.

At the end of that school year, a planning summer assists graduates as they transition into school leadership roles. They are supported in their new roles by two years of ongoing coaching. Each aspiring principal will be required to commit to three years of working as a Delaware principal or assistant principal in Delaware's high-need schools.

To learn more about the program visit www.innovativeschools.org/dlp