

Race, Poverty and the Funding of Delaware Public Education

November 25, 2019

League of Women Voters

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Premise

Public education funding should provide sufficient and appropriate resources to meet the learning needs of all students.

**Based on student learning
and funding needs, Delaware
has two public education systems.**

System One

- Serves middle class students, from stable families, living in safe communities, with positive family experiences with and expectations of education.
- Delaware (and U.S.) public education is designed and funded to meet the needs of these students.
- These students are mostly white, and most of these students succeed academically.

System Two

- Serves students in poverty, from less stable families, living in communities at risk, with little positive experiences with or expectations of public education.
- Delaware (and U.S.) public education was never designed or funded to meet the needs of these students.
- These students are mostly black and brown and many of these students do not succeed academically.

Delaware Education Policy

Largely treats students as if they are alike

AND

Funds schools as if they are alike

Delaware's Two Systems of Public Education are a Product of 120 Years of Policy History

Delaware Education at a Glance

139,144 students enrolled
in public schools

15,882 in charter schools

18,847 in private schools

9,102 teachers

19 school districts

22 charter schools

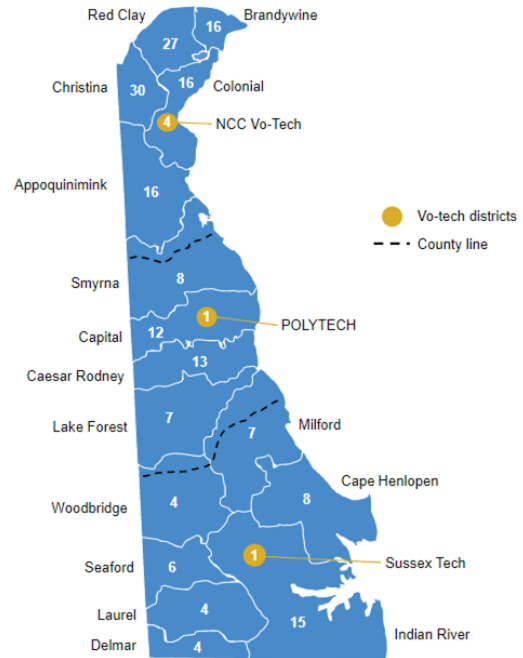


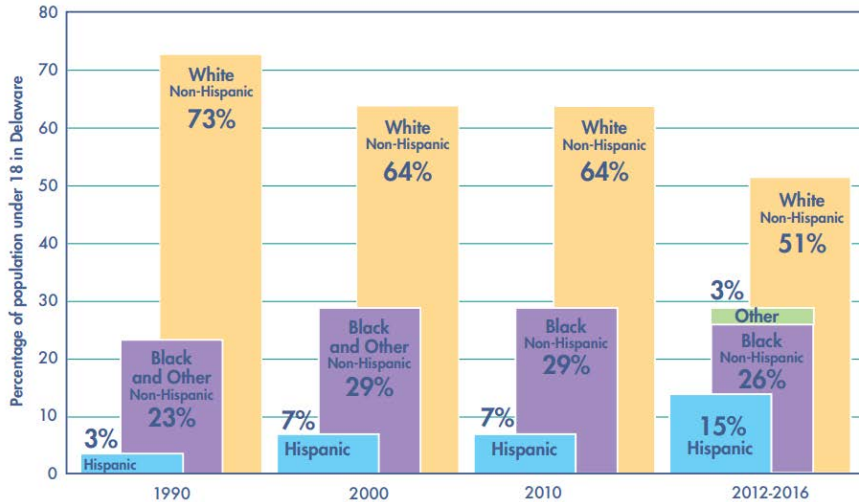
Photo Source: <http://www.rodelfoundationde.org/ataglance/>

Source: Delaware Department of Education, (2017) School Profiles

Student Diversity and Poverty

The Changing Face of Delaware's Children

Children under 18 by Race/Hispanic Origin, Delaware



Note: Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

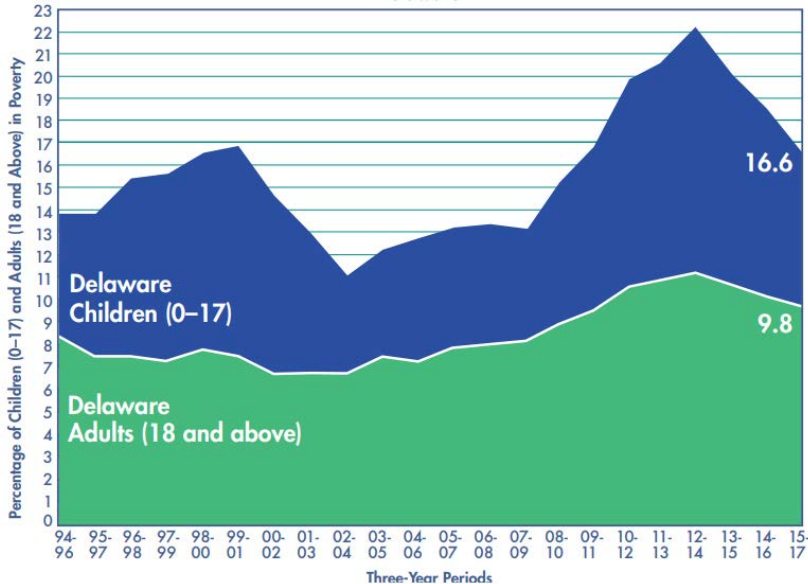
**Delaware
student
diversity is
growing.**

Source: KIDS COUNT in Delaware, 2018

**Poverty is the dominant force
limiting the educational achievement
of Delaware children.**

Children and Adults in Poverty

Delaware

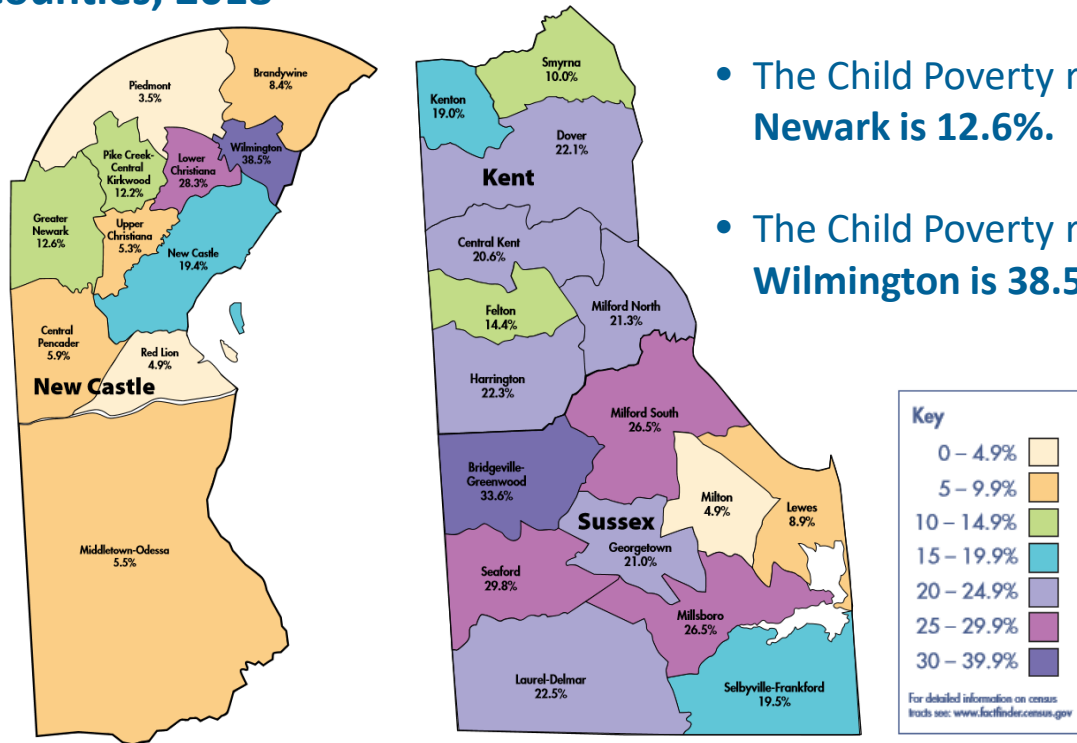


Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware

Number of children in poverty has increased since 2009.

Source: KIDS COUNT in Delaware, 2018

Percent of Children in Poverty, New Castle, Kent, and Sussex Counties, 2018



- The Child Poverty rate in Newark is 12.6%.
- The Child Poverty rate in Wilmington is 38.5%

Sources: <http://udspace.udel.edu/handle/19716/21316>, <http://udspace.udel.edu/handle/19716/23129>

Increasing Demands on Public Education

English Learners

Number and Percent of Delaware Students who are English Learners



English Learners
have risen by
300% since 2001.



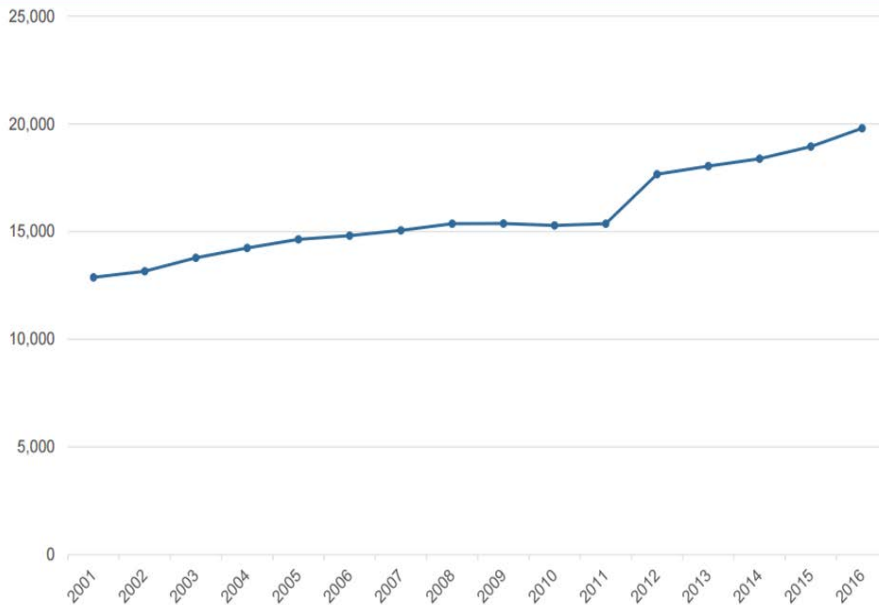
2018: 12,790 (9%)

Source: DOE Report Card

Source: <http://udspace.udel.edu/handle/19716/21316>

Demands on Public Education

Special Education Enrollment in Delaware



2018: 21,309 (15%)

Source: DOE Report Card

Source: Delaware Department of Education, Enrollment Trends for Strategic Plan for Specialized Education Opportunities, October 2016

*In 2011 Delaware began funding preK statewide, and preK special ed students were added to this count.

Demands on Public Education

2018: 1,447 (1.04%)

Source: DOE Report Card



Source: Delaware Department of Education

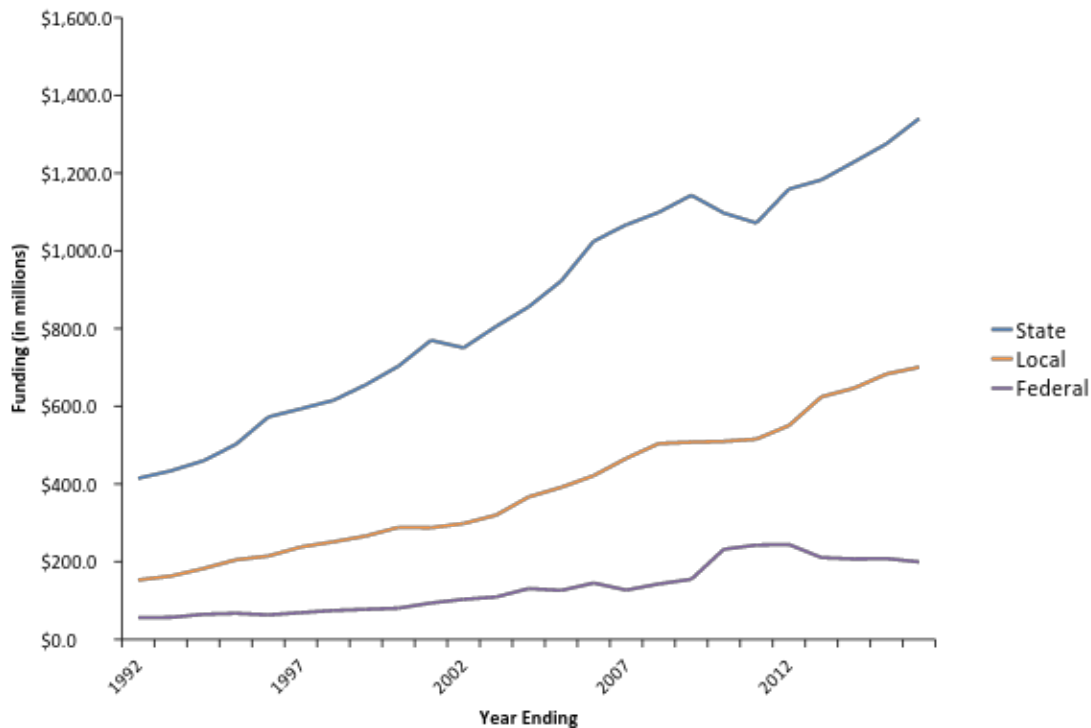
Source: KIDS COUNT in Delaware, 2018

Delaware Public Education

- Enrollment: 139,144
- Percent Low-Income: 35.4%
- Percent English Learner: 9.19%
- Percent Students with Disabilities: 15.6%
- Percent White/Caucasian: 43.5%

Increasing Cost of Public Education

Delaware Public Education Funding 1992–2016



Source: Delaware Department of Education, DE Educational Statistics Reports

Delaware schools spend about \$15K per student and most of those funds come from the state.

Source: Vision Coalition of Delaware 2019/DOE Delaware School Report Card

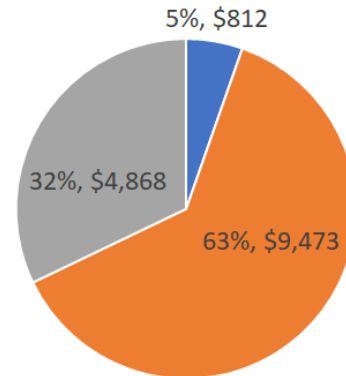
In 2018, Delaware schools



spent an average of

\$15,153 per student.

Per-Pupil Expenditures by Source of Funds



■ Federal ■ State ■ Local

Funding Overview

- **State funding** is primarily allocated through a unit system.
 - Districts earn Division I units (staff) based off the number of students in their schools at the time of the 9/30 enrollment count.
- **Local funding** consists of 4 primary components; each constitutes a tax rate applied to the assessed value of real estate within the district.
 - Current expense
 - Debt Service
 - Match Tax
 - Tuition
- **Federal funding** allocated yearly through Consolidated Application Process.

Source: Chris Kelly, UD Institute for Public Administration

Cost of Delaware Public Education is Growing

- Total cost is about \$2.4 billion (state, local, and federal) (Delaware Department of Education).
- Public Education Funding is about 34% of the total budget of the State of Delaware (Delaware OMB).
- 80% or more of public education funding is for salaries and benefits for educators, administrators and other staff (DE Report Card).

Funding Issues

State Funding Issues

- Unit Allocation not Student Need Allocation
- One of 15 states with no state allocation for low-income students
- One of 4 states with no state allocation for English Language Learners
- Limited flexibility in the use of state allocated funds: 98% must be used in the schools that generate the units.
- Charters funded through home school district (applies to local share as well)
- Weak and variable state revenue support for public education

Local Funding Issues

- Weak local revenue base: property tax
- Lag in Property Assessment
- Increased dependence on referenda for operating funds
- Limited success of local referendums
- Complex allocation of local funds through NCC tax district and through statewide equalization
- Limited public knowledge about public education funding in general and local funding in particular.

Recent Developments

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- **In January 2018**, the ACLU, NAACP and others filed suit in DE Chancery Court alleging the State's funding system creates unequal opportunities for poor students, students with disabilities and English language learners.
- **In October 2018**, Vice Chancellor Laster decided to prepare a separate case on the issue of delayed property reassessment, distinct from the issue of funding.
- **In November 2018**, the State of Delaware requested dismissal of the suit. Vice Chancellor Laster turned down this request and stated the claims should be decided at trial.
- **July 17, 2019**, trial conducted on property reassessment case
- **Pending 2020**: trial on state education funding system

Source: https://www.aclu-de.org/sites/default/files/field_documents/deo_v_carney_complaint_final.pdf

Recent Developments

\$60 Million in Opportunity Funding

- **Governor Carney proposed and the Delaware General Assembly approved a three-year, \$60 million opportunity fund to target resources towards low-income and ELL students.** The money will be distributed in installments of \$20 million, annually, over the three-year period.
- ***The fund will send \$500 for each English Language Learner and \$300 for each low-income student directly to school districts and charter schools.*** District schools and charter schools must submit spending plans to DOE and the plans must directly benefit low-income and English learner students.
- **DOE website** includes proposals for how districts and charters plan to use these funds: <https://www.doe.k12.de.us/domain/587>

Source: <https://www.delawareonline.com/story/opinion/contributors/2019/01/17/opinion-wilmington-schools-struggle-continues/259496002/>
Source: <https://news.delaware.gov/2019/01/15/opportunity-funding/>

Recent Developments

Redding Consortium

- **In June 2019**, the Delaware General Assembly created the Redding Consortium for Educational Equity with bipartisan support in both houses.
- Redding Consortium will recommend **policies and practices** to achieve educational equity and improve educational outcomes for all Pre-K to grade 12 students in the City of Wilmington and northern New Castle County, Delaware.
- The Redding Consortium will develop a **plan for redistricting** that will be submitted to the State Board of Education in January 2021.

Resources

To keep informed, please visit
www.solutionsfordelawareschools.com

Questions may be sent to:
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