

SECURING A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION FOR EVERY CHILD IN DELAWARE (A) and (B)

Teaching Note

Overview

Between 1990 and 2004, Delaware's Department of Education undertook a variety of initiatives aimed at sweeping educational reform. This included developing content standards specifying what students should know and be able to do, arranging statewide in-services to introduce teachers and administrators to the standards, using the standards to create the Delaware Student Testing Program, passing accountability legislation, and supporting all of these measures through increased professional development and improved credentialing and evaluation systems. Secretary of Education Valerie Woodruff presided over two capstone efforts: a 5-year "strategic plan" in March of 2004, and a far-looking report entitled *Vision 2015* in October of 2006. Challenges remained, though, such as improving the quality of middle and high school education, making public schools more competitive in the face of competing educational entities, and providing better assistance to at-risk students across the state. Secretary Woodruff knew that no substantial headway could be made on any of the issues without a high level of cooperation between the state and local school systems. But even though Delaware was a state with only 19 school districts, she knew that each district had its own particular concerns and wondered what it would take to actually get them to all pull together. In the (A) case students learn about the concerns of specific Delaware school districts and the challenges Valerie Woodruff faced with regard to aligning state and local improvement efforts.

The (B) case details Woodruff's plan to align the various units of the Delaware Department of Education with the new education agenda. This involved the implementation of the Balanced Scorecard and Project Management Oversight Committee (PMOC). Woodruff next would try to convince district superintendents to embrace these tools, which she believed would lead to greater coordination between the Department of Education and the 19 school districts and ultimately to improvements in student achievement. Classroom discussion helps students understand the challenges that accompany intra-organizational alignment as well as the process of implementing the Balanced Scorecard.

Topical Areas

This case provides students with an example of leading change in a large organization. Issues present in the case include change implementation, management skills, organizational change, organizational problems, and turnaround leadership.

Objectives

- Explore the processes of intra- and inter-organizational alignment
- See how leaders come to make sense of and execute planning processes, with specific emphasis on the Balanced Scorecard

Student Assignment

Reading

Securing a High Quality Education for Every Child in Delaware (A)

Securing a High Quality Education for Every Child in Delaware (B)

Study Questions (A)

1. What are some likely challenges of inter-organizational alignment? Is aligning schools to a district different or more difficult than aligning districts to a state? If so, how?
2. Which will take hold more quickly throughout an organization—a new mission or a new vision? Why?
3. What steps could Valerie Woodruff take to ensure that the strategic plan and *Vision 2015* are carried through after she leaves her post as Secretary of Education?

Study Questions (B)

1. What are some likely challenges of intra-organizational alignment? Are different challenges present at the district level when compared with the state level?
2. What are some of the Balanced Scorecard's strengths and weaknesses? In what ways would you amend it for your own district or state?
3. How would you convince your School Board that the elements found in the Balanced Scorecard should be included in the district's school improvement plan?

Time Allocation for 60-minute session

5 minutes Introduction to case

25 minutes Address Study Questions (A)

25 minutes Address Study Questions (B)

5 minutes Update on Valerie Woodruff and the Delaware Department of Education