

GLOSSARY OF EDUCATION TERMS

Academic Progress: Growth in English Language Arts (ELA) and math (grades 4-8); includes growth of the lowest and highest performing students in a school

Accountability: People (e.g., students or teachers) or an organization (e.g., a school, school district, or state department of education) are held responsible for improving student achievement and are rewarded or sanctioned for their success or lack of success in doing so.

Achievement Gap: Observed difference on educational measures between the
ACT: One of two commonly used tests (SAT is the other) designed to assess high school students' general educational development and their ability to complete college-level work in four skill areas: English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning.

Balanced Assessment: Delaware's state-based testing which provides school-level academic results.

Bilingual Education: A school program for students whose first language is not English or who have limited English skills; includes Dual Language Education, English as a Second Language, and Immersion Education

Budgets : There are three main categories of spending (school budgets may not use these terms)

1. **Instructional Spending** – money that is allocated to the direct interactions between teachers and students and impacts improving student outcomes.
2. **Operational/Administrative** – money that is necessary to some degree for maintenance, utilities, etc.
3. **Discretionary** – no impact on improving student outcomes

Career-Technical Education (CTE): Also known as vocational education, CTE focuses on preparing students for the workforce through coursework at the K-12 or postsecondary level. These programs provide students with industry credentials or direct experiences working with businesses.

Charter School: A public, nonreligious school that provides free public elementary and/or secondary education to students via a lottery process under a specific charter

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granted by the local school board. Charter schools are subject to state and federal anti-discrimination laws. Educational programs, pupil performance standards and curriculum must meet or exceed the Standards of Quality.

Chronic Absenteeism: Defined generally as a student missing 10 percent or more of school over the course of the school year for any reason, including excused and unexcused absences.

Content Standards: Standards that describe what students should know and be able to do in core academic subjects at each grade level.

Core Curriculum: The body of knowledge that all students are expected to learn in the subjects of English, mathematics, history/social science and science.

Curriculum: A plan or document that a school or school division uses to define what will be taught and the methods that will be used to educate and assess students.

Early Childhood Education: The education of young children, especially under the age of five.

Economically Disadvantaged: A student is economically disadvantaged if the student:

- is eligible for Free/Reduced Meals,
- receives Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or
- is eligible for Medicaid.

If the student is identified as experiencing homelessness or becomes identified as a migrant at any point during the school year, the student is automatically identified as economically disadvantaged.

Education: Learning and teaching specific knowledge, skills, and beliefs, as defined by the social sciences.

English as a Second Language (ESL): A program of instruction and services for non-English-speaking students.

English-Language Learner (ELL): A student who is not proficient enough in the English language to succeed in the school's regular instructional programs and who qualifies for extra help.

Enrichment: Additional courses outside those required for graduation.

Equity: The belief that state governments have an obligation to equalize students' access to educational opportunities and thus life chances. During the 1970s and 1980s, many state courts found great disparities in base per-pupil spending between high- and low property-wealth districts. They

mandated that these funding disparities be eradicated. In placing districts on a level playing field, the courts often invoked equal protection clauses in state constitutions.

FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act): A federal law in the United States of America that guards the privacy of educational records for students from elementary school to college and university. FERPA, which applies to schools that have obtained funding from the Department of Education, serves several functions, including providing students with the right to review and request changes to their education records, as well as controlling how their personal information is disclosed to outside entities.

Graduation Rates: The percentage of students receiving a high school diploma, which attests that these students can read and compute at a 12th grade level. (This rate is not a measure of whether students are academically prepared to be successful after high school.)

High-Quality Curriculum: Delaware Dept of Education defines it as materials that “include a full year’s worth of teacher materials (e.g., syllabi, lesson plans) and student materials (e.g., books, assignments, tests) that support student mastery of grade-level material; are fully aligned to Delaware’s standards for what students should know and be able to do at the end of each school year; and achieved a ‘green’ rating on EdReports.

Inclusion: A philosophy that ensures every student learns alongside their peers in a safe, welcoming, and respectful environment. It values diversity, provides appropriate support for each child’s needs, and fosters belonging, achievement, and participation for all regardless of background, ability, or identity.

Individual Education Program (IEP): A written plan created for a student with learning disabilities by the student’s teachers, parents or guardians, the school administrator, and other interested parties. The plan is tailored to the student’s specific needs and abilities, and outlines goals for the student to reach. The IEP should be reviewed at least once a year.

Language Arts: Another term for English curriculum, focused on reading, speaking, listening, and writing skills.

Media Literacy: The ability to apply critical thinking to analyze and understand media messages. In a world dominated by media and advertising, media literacy is a key skill students must develop to uncover misinformation and develop their own understanding of messages presented to them.

Multi-Tiered System of Support, or MTSS: A comprehensive framework used in education to ensure all students receive appropriate academic, behavioral, and social-emotional support through increasingly targeted interventions across three levels (tiers) of intensity: 1) universal support for all students, 2) supplemental services for students who require more academic or behavioral assistance and 3) individualized help for those with the greatest needs.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP): Also known as the Nation's Report Card, this national assessment of student achievement measures by samplings of reading and math performance for fourth and eight grades. NAEP results are considered the gold standard for comparing state-level data and judging the validity of state efforts to raise student achievement. The tests are given every two years.

The **National Assessment Governing Board** defines 3 achievement levels:

- **Basic:** partial mastery of the knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at a given grade. Below Basic means less than partial mastery of fundamental knowledge and skills.
- **Proficient:** evidence that the student demonstrated the skills and knowledge defined in the Standards of Learning for the grade level and subject. This includes subject matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter.
- **Advanced:** mastery of the NAEP Basic and Proficient levels and represents superior academic performance.

Pedagogy: Instructional methods, practices, techniques and strategies.

Professional Development: Programs that help teachers or administrators acquire the knowledge and skills they need to perform their jobs successfully.

Proficiency: Mastery or ability to do something at grade level. A state goal is for all students to score at least a basic level on state achievement tests and the national proficiency level is considered mastering basic academic subjects (math, reading, science, civics).

Pupil-Teacher Ratio: The total student enrollment divided by the number of full-time equivalent teachers. The pupil-teacher ratio is the most common statistic for comparing data across states; it is usually smaller than average class size because some teachers work outside the classroom.

Return on Investment (ROI): The level of spending divided by the level of academic achievement over time to evaluate whether the money spent delivers a desired outcome at a reasonable cost.

School Board: A locally elected group, usually between three and seven members, who set fiscal, personnel, instructional, and student-related policies. The number of board members relates to the size of the district. A school district governing board also provides direction for the district, hires and fires the district superintendent, and approves the budget and contracts with employee unions.

School District: A local education agency directed by an elected local board of education that exists primarily to operate public schools.

Science of Reading: Research is clear about what matters to teach in early literacy instruction: phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, fluency, vocabulary and oral language comprehension, and text comprehension.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL): A pedagogy where students are encouraged to comprehend their emotions and demonstrate empathy for their peers.

Socioeconomically Disadvantaged: Students who participate in the federally funded free/ reduced price meal program because of low family income or whose parents do not have a high school diploma.

Special Education: Special instruction provided for students with educational, emotional or physical disabilities, tailored to each student's needs and learning style. Also known as Students with Disabilities (SWD).

Spending Per Student: The base amount of money spent on each student in a school, district or state plus extra funds from local and federal sources such as supporting low-income, special education or English language learners. It is a key component of taxpayer return on investment (ROI). The amount of money spent on education by a school district or the state, divided by the number of students educated.

Standards: The minimum grade-level and subject-matter educational objectives, described as the knowledge and skills "necessary for success in school and for preparation for life," that students are expected to meet.

Standardized Test (standards-referenced tests or standards-based assessments): A test that is in the same format for all who take it. It often relies on multiple-choice questions and the testing conditions—including instructions, time limits, and scoring rubrics—are the same for all students, though sometimes accommodations on time limits and instructions are made for students with disabilities.

Student Outcomes: Measures of what students know or are able to do. Academically prepared to be successful after high school.

Title I: A federal program that provides supplemental funds for at-risk and low-income students to ensure they have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at minimum, proficiency on state academic achievement standards and assessments.

Title I School: A school with a high percentage of disadvantaged students making it eligible for participation in federal Title I programs.

Title I School-Wide Assistance: Title I schools with 40 percent or greater high-poverty, student population may use federal funding to meet the needs of all students at the school.

Title VI: Title VI, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq., was enacted as part of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964. It prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.

Title IX: A landmark federal civil rights law in the United States that was enacted as part (Title IX) of the Education Amendments of 1972. It prohibits sex-based discrimination in any school or any other education program that receives funding from the federal government.

Whole Child Approach: Emphasizes a holistic view of a child's development, focusing on their academic, social, emotional, physical, and mental well-being. This approach recognizes that children are not just learners but individuals with diverse needs, backgrounds, and experiences that influence their learning and growth.

Wrap-Around Services: A philosophy of care with defined planning process used to build constructive relationships and support networks among students and their families, which includes both physical and mental health supports. It addresses both academic

and non-academic needs, is community-based, culturally relevant, individualized, strength based, and family-centered.

Don't see a term that you wanted define, email us at info@citizens4delawareschools.org with the name and we'll add it to our glossary.