

## How Parents Can Help

### Educational Accountability

**I. Educational accountability is a comprehensive approach to ensuring a quality education for all of Delaware's students.** It is the result of more than ten years of research and a plan that is outlined in State law. Several improvements have been made since the first legislation passed in 1997.

**II. A standards-based education is the foundation for a strong accountability system.** Content standards provide a framework for setting high expectations for our students. They define what students should know and be able to do as they move from grade to grade. They also help teachers improve curriculum and teaching methods. Our job is to ensure that all students strive for the highest academic performance possible.

**III. A program that tests students is vital to measuring our progress.** The Delaware Student Testing Program (DSTP) is helping us measure how well students are performing against the standards we set. Results help us identify student strengths and individual learning needs. They guide teachers and administrators as they enhance instruction. DSTP results also help districts determine student promotion from grade to grade. Students in grades 2 through 10 are tested in reading and mathematics. Students in grades 5, 8, and 10 are tested in writing – stand-alone and text-based. Grades 4, 6, 8 and 11 are tested in science and social studies.

### Importance of Student Self-Esteem

Students are expected to put both mind and heart into their education. The more each individual puts into learning, the more opportunity for success he or she will have. To help students achieve their highest potential, they need to be accountable to themselves. This means, in part, attending school every day, participating in class, doing homework, and being prepared to take tests that will help them assess how they are doing so they can improve along the way. Reading is considered to be the most important skill students need to have to be successful in school. If students are good readers, they are able to perform well in other subjects. Mathematics is also important; students should begin in early years to develop math skills.

### *How Parents Can Help*

***Q: How can parents help students succeed?***

**A:** In two words: be involved. Parents play a crucial part in helping accountability work to improve students' academic performance. Along with schools, administration, teachers, and community partners, parents need to be aware and take part in the education of their children.

***Q: What does parental involvement include?***

**A:** Research and experience show that there are specific things parents can do to help their children succeed in school. Be sure your child is in school every day unless he/she is ill. Check homework. Help as much as you can and encourage students to do their best every day. Answer teacher phone calls and call the school if you have questions or need help. Set high expectations, just as our schools and teachers must do. Praise children often and help them establish good learning habits. Help children develop a positive attitude toward learning early on by referring to school as a place where they will learn things that are interesting, important, fun, and necessary.

***Q: Should parents interact with teachers?***

**A:** Absolutely. Parents should talk with their children's teachers often to find out what is happening at school and to learn what to expect their children to be doing. Teachers are also there to give advice, if asked. They know about child development and they spend a lot of time with the children. Parents also should let teachers know about things that may be happening in their children's lives that may affect schoolwork, such as a divorce or the death of a pet.

***Q: Can parents participate in the classroom?***

**A:** Yes. Volunteering is essential to improving education. Parents are encouraged to find out the many different ways they can volunteer in the schools from mentoring individual students to chaperoning events.

The Delaware Department of Education welcomes your questions. If you want to know more about the Accountability System or the DSTP, please call 1-877-DSTP (3787), or you can reach us on the web at [www.doe.k12.de.us](http://www.doe.k12.de.us)

For specific questions about your child's performance on the DSTP, please contact your local school.