

Education Secretary Mark Murphy to Leave Administration after Successful Tenure Marked by Improved Student Achievement

Governor nominates long-time Delaware superintendent and leader in state's schools to build on tremendous progress

Dover, DE – Education Secretary Mark Murphy announced today that he will end his tenure in the coming months to pursue other opportunities, concluding a term marked by record-high graduation rates, more students enrolling in college, and better opportunities than ever for Delaware students to successfully prepare for the workplace.

Governor Markell will nominate Dr. Steven Godowsky, a long-time Delaware administrator and former superintendent of the New Castle County Vo-Tech School District, to succeed Murphy and continue the Department's work to support progress made by students and educators throughout the state. Murphy remains in discussions about his next position, but he and the Governor agreed that it would be beneficial to announce the upcoming change, as well as the nomination of a new Secretary, prior to the start of the coming school year.

Markell will submit his nomination to the State Senate for consideration during a special session on October 28, but Godowsky will assume an interim role before that time, after Secretary Murphy officially steps down this fall, on a date still to be determined.

"The work to prepare all of our students for college, career, and life in today's changing world is incredibly rewarding,

but it's also not easy," said Markell. "Mark has addressed every challenge with a remarkable determination to support the hard work happening in our schools and find solutions that best serve our youth. We have made tremendous strides in the past few years, while laying the groundwork for more progress in our never-ending mission to ensure every Delaware child receives the best possible education. I am thankful for Mark's service to our state."

During Secretary Murphy's tenure, the accomplishments of Delaware students and schools include:

- The state's graduation rate has reached a high of 84.4 percent, a 4.5 percent increase in just the past year and more than three percent above the national rate.
- For the last two years every college-ready senior has applied and enrolled in college [with support from the Department's Getting to Zero program](#); previously, as many as one in five did not.
- The number of students taking dual enrollment, college-level, classes for credit [more than doubled between 2013 and 2014](#), while the number of students taking and passing Advanced Placement tests [has also increased substantially](#).
- More than 2,200 students at 16 schools will be taking half of their classes in Mandarin Chinese or Spanish this fall as a result of continued growth of the [state's world language immersion initiative](#), begun during the Markell Administration to give students the chance to gain a significant advantage in an increasingly global economy.
- The launch of [Pathways to Prosperity](#) over the past year is creating partnerships with Delaware employers, universities, and school districts to prepare students for a bright future in high-demand fields and careers, such as computer science, culinary arts, IT, and advanced manufacturing, giving them a head start on

getting a job and/or earning a degree.

Murphy also oversaw the implementation of higher standards in Delaware's classrooms, working with teachers and administrators to put in place the Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards, both designed to ensure that students are on track to learn the skills most valued in colleges and the workplace in an era when good jobs demand a higher level of education and training than ever.

The state's voluntary [Common Ground program](#) supported educators in the transition, with teachers working on new techniques and strategies to help students meet higher expectations and hundreds of them coming together to demonstrate lessons. In addition, [Delaware's leading science teachers](#) revised their lessons and teaching styles to give their students more opportunities to work like scientists and create models accessible to teachers across the state.

"I'm grateful to Governor Markell for this opportunity to serve the children of our state," said Murphy. "We should all applaud the efforts of our educators as they improve the lives of our young people each and every day. In many schools, we see students making incredible strides forward. To achieve the promise of great educational opportunities for all children in the coming years, continued courage and leadership will be needed by all."

Since joining the Department of Education in 2012, Murphy has led the state in improving educator preparation programs to better ensure new teachers have the skills and experience to succeed from their first day on the job, and he has overseen the strengthening of the state's charter school law to improve school accountability and support.

His time in office has also coincided with critical steps in implementing the state's Race to the Top plan, which won federal funding to improve Delaware schools. Key parts of that

work will continue to be funded by the state as federal funding ends. Through those efforts, Delaware has:

- Established a vastly improved data system to better track student progress and identify student needs;
- Supported successful efforts by high-need schools to boost performance of struggling students; and
- Created the initiatives that catalyzed the state's successes in improving college access and supporting teachers in the transition to higher standards.

Markell Nominates Former NCCVT Superintendent

While maintaining and improving upon the state's progress, the new Secretary will have the opportunity to shepherd initiatives that have gained momentum over the past year. The Administration continues to press for changes to the state's teacher compensation system in line with [recommendations supported by legislation passed in June](#). In addition, last week, [Governor Markell signed laws that allows for the redrawing of district boundaries](#) in Wilmington as part of an effort to transform educational opportunities in the city, particularly for our most at-risk children.

In choosing his nominee to help lead these efforts, the Governor praised Godowsky's career-long commitment to strengthening educational opportunities for Delaware children.

"During his forty plus years of work in Delaware's schools, Steve has established himself as a respected leader with the ability to work productively with teachers, administrators, and, most importantly, our students to get the most out of their schools," said Markell. "We have more work to do and, with the Senate's confirmation, I am confident that he will help everyone in our system build on our progress."

Godowsky led the New Castle County Vo-Tech District for eight years beginning in 2003. That followed two decades working in the district as an assistant principal at Delcastle Tech,

principal at Hodgson Vo-Tech, and assistant superintendent. During his time as superintendent, he served a term as President of the Delaware Chief School Officers Association for the 2007-08 school year. He also spent time earlier in his career as a special education teacher in the Alfred I. DuPont School District.

“I am honored to accept this opportunity to support the outstanding work of our educators and continue the Administration’s commitment to give our students the best opportunity to learn and achieve,” said Godowsky. “If I’m fortunate enough to be confirmed by the Senate, I look forward to successfully continuing the Governor’s priorities, while building on the critically important relationships among school districts and charters, teacher groups, parents, legislators, and community leaders for the benefit of our students.”

###