

HOWARD HIGH SCHOOL OF TECHNOLOGY SELECTED AS A PARTNERSHIP ZONE SCHOOL

A Message from Steven H. Godowsky Superintendent of NCC Vo-Tech School District

On August 30th, State Secretary of Education Lillian Lowery informed me that Howard High School of Technology was selected to be in the “Partnership Zone” with three other schools as part of the State’s \$119 million Race To The Top Grant award. Delaware was one of only two states initially winning that significant grant. The selection of Howard was primarily based on its 10th grade reading and math state test scores (DSTP).

The NCC Vo-Tech School District has 75 days to choose one of four reform strategies that the Board of Education, local education association, and the Department of Education can agree upon. The four options are defined below. Howard will receive over \$1.4 million to implement that plan for the benefit of its students.

We are optimistic that the resources and supports made available to the school as a result of this Partnership Zone designation will help to accelerate the progress our students are making on their academic achievement.

Below we have provided information about the Partnership Zone, prepared by the Delaware Department of Education. We have also included a question and answer response, and we will continue to add information about the process as more details become available.

What does this mean for Howard and for the NCC Vo-Tech School District?

It means that school leaders will have more flexibility to make staffing, scheduling, curriculum, services, and salary decisions. In return, the school will be expected to demonstrate dramatic student achievement gains within two years.

What is the first step?

The school district’s Board of Education, administration, and the local educator association has 75 days to agree on one of four reform options outlined under federal Race To The Top guidelines. Educators will work with students, parents, and other stakeholders to review the options.

What are the four options?

- Closure -- shutting down the school
- Restart -- handing over management to a private company or turning it into a charter school
- Turnaround -- replacing the principal and at least half the teachers

- Transformation -- replacing the principal and increasing school leader effectiveness, instructional reforms, increasing learning time and creating community-oriented schools with operational flexibility.

What reform model will Howard choose?

The Superintendent and Board of Education has made clear that closing the school will not be an option. Selection of one of the remaining three options will be dependent on input and decisions from the school community. Whichever option is selected, it must be approved by the State Department of Education.

What kinds of change could happen once the plan is adopted?

Depending on the model selected, the school may have the opportunity to implement any of (but not limited to) the following:

- Changes to school calendar and school day to increase instructional time and opportunities for professional development
- Retention and employment incentives
- Flexibility in staffing decisions with a focus on student achievement
- Changes to the instructional program
- Socio-economic and community-oriented supports
- Increased use of instructional technology

When would changes begin?

No major adjustments to the school calendar, school day, student class schedules, or school teaching staff would occur during this school year. Any future adjustments would be well communicated in advance of the next school year. New instructional initiatives and professional development for teachers are already happening.