

**2003 INNOVATIONS AWARDS PROGRAM  
Application Form**

1. Program Name: **Models of Excellence in Education**
2. Administering Agency: **Office of the Lt. Governor**
3. Contact Person (Name & Title): **Doug Gramiak, Exec. Asst. to the Lt. Governor**
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8. Please provide a two-sentence description of the program.

**The purpose of the Models of Excellence in Education initiative is to identify the achievements of a group of Delaware schools, to learn from their success in improving student achievement – a major goal of education reform in Delaware – and to recognize and share their “best practices” with other schools, teachers and parents. Subsequently, the initiative will foster the development of a statewide education network designed to promote best practice and improve the performance of all schools.**

9. How long has this program been operational (month and year)?

**September 2001**

10. Why was the program created? (What problem[s] or issue[s] was it designed to address?)

**There were two issues the Models of Excellence in Education initiative was created to address. After several years of introducing the Delaware State Testing Program to students, the test results held real consequences for the first time in 2002. In previous years, the chatter and press coverage surrounding the test results had mostly centered on those schools whose students did not meet or exceed state standards. Lt. Governor Carney knew from his travels around Delaware that there were many innovative and effective programs that were having a positive effect on student achievement. He wanted to develop a program that would celebrate those programs that were working.**

**He also wanted to make those programs available to other schools that were looking for new and innovative programs to address student performance. This was a piece that was missing from education reform, which had been debated for more than 10 years in Delaware. In order to narrow the scope and establish a method for selecting the Models of Excellence in Education each year, a steering committee was put together and included members of government, the business community, community organizations, school administrators, teachers and consultants. After the setting the structure for the program, this steering committee migrated to a selection committee in the second year.**

11. Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order.

**Each year, a list of preliminary candidates is selected based on two factors: 1) the absolute scores in the Delaware Student Testing Program and 2) improvement over time (school accountability improvement ratings)**

**The resulting list is sent to the superintendents of each school district and ranking officer of each charter school. They are asked to nominate a listed school from their district that employs a practice or program they believe has had a measurable effect on students' performance on the DSTP. They are asked to provide a rationale for the choice, including details of the practice and anecdotal or other data. A school that is not on the list may be nominated as long as a rigorous defense of the choice is provided. That defense should include a rationale for why the practice did not result in high absolute DSTP scores and significant improvement.**

**Nominations are then considered by a selection committee, which narrows the pool and chooses finalists. Smaller groups of the selection committee conduct site visits at each of the finalist schools. Reports on each of those visits are presented to the full selection committee and final selections are made.**

**The schools honored each year receive a financial award and participate in a statewide forum where they present and share these practices.**

12. Why is the program a new and creative approach or method?

**Education reform has been debated in Delaware for more than a decade. The system that has evolved is a good one and should place the state in good register with the federal No Child Left Behind standards. However, the idea of shining a light on those practices that have raised student achievement and making other schools aware of them has not been done in an organized way in Delaware. The Models of Excellence in Education initiative is an effort to fill that void and create dialogue between schools across the state.**

13. What were the program's start-up costs? (Provide detail about specific purchases for this program, staffing needs and other financial expenditures, as well as existing materials, technology and staff already in place.)

**The time of staff and the volunteer steering committee members, along with incidental postage and copying were the only start-up costs.**

14. What are the program's annual operational costs?

**The schools selected each year are given a cash award. The six schools selected in the first year were awarded \$5,000 each. Additional costs were limited to incidental costs for postage, in-house copying and about \$200 for food at the forum.**

15. How is the program funded?

**In the first year, \$25,000 came from the state budget, while \$20,000 was raised through private funds from the MBNA Education Foundation and the Rodel Charitable Foundation of Delaware. With the state budget extremely tight, we anticipate relying on private funding this year.**

16. Did this program require the passage of legislation, executive order or regulations? If YES, please indicate the citation number.

**No.**

17. What equipment, technology and software are used to operate and administer this program?

**Basic computer software and applications are used for administrative purposes. In order to facilitate the sharing between schools and districts that the initiative is intended to foster, we are currently developing a web site that would make information about the initiative and the schools and practices honored readily available to schools and the public. This will be done through the state Department of Technology and Information and the Government Information Center.**

18. To the best of your knowledge, did this program originate in your state? If YES, please indicate the innovator's name, present address and telephone number.

**Yes, although it is based in both the common search for "best practices" and the available literature on the "characteristics of unusually successful schools."**

**The innovator was Lt. Governor John C. Carney, Jr.; address is as listed above.**

19. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ?

**None specifically like this initiative. There are other states that recognize effective education practices and make them available to other schools, including Sharing Success which is the New York State Education Department's statewide system for identifying and disseminating successful educational programs and practices**

20. Has the program been fully implemented? If NO, what actions remain to be taken?

**No. It is the belief of the selection committee that it will take a few years to institutionalize the initiative. The number of administrators, curriculum directors, principals and teachers who attend and participate in the program should grow. Also, the web presence should grow as more programs are honored.**

21. Briefly evaluate (pro and con) the program's effectiveness in addressing the defined problem[s] or issue[s]. Provide tangible examples.

**Because the issue of raising student achievement is a broad one that covers different schools, different levels of schools, different subjects**

22. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?

**The initiative is still in its early stages, but we anticipate growth in several ways over the next few years. As previously stated, there is a certain institutionalization that must take place for this program to used to an effective level.**

**Additionally, changing the focus of the program each year has been discussed. For instance, feedback from the 2002 Models of Excellence in Education forum pointed to a particular concern about raising student achievement in middle schools. The selection committee has agreed to consider narrowing the focus of the initiative in future years. For instance, one year's focus may be on middle schools programs, while the next year might be math programs.**

23. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter if they attempt to adopt this program?

**Because Delaware is a small state and the state plays such a large role in the 19 school districts and various charter schools, it is easier to communicate with, work with and gather schools. Other states may find the process a little longer.**

**Raising money can also be an obstacle, although the initiative does not have huge overhead costs. We do believe the financial award given to those schools that are selected is important. Not only is it an incentive for schools to participate if nominated, it is legitimate compensation for the time and effort they dedicate throughout the process, particular for the statewide forum.**

**Finally, because Delaware has its statewide testing program, there is a uniform measure to base decisions on. Although it may not be an issue for most states, the process would be much more difficult without some solid measure to use.**

Add space as appropriate to this form. When complete, return to:

**CSG Innovations Awards 2003**

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**DEADLINE:** All original applications must be postmarked or e-mailed by April 11, 2003, to be considered for an Innovations Award for 2003.