



# Analytics

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**RE:** Time to stop talking and to do something

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Delaware Lt. Governor Matt Denn released a report recognizing the wide variance in administrative costs among school districts in the state. Dr. Tony Marchio, superintendent of the Appoquinimink school district, has labeled this data “misleading and deceptive” based upon a report from the Center for American Progress (“Return on Education Investment”). This discussion is simply continuing to spin the wheels rather than putting the vehicle in gear.

Data from the National Center for Education Statistics has long shown Delaware to be first in the nation in administrative overhead spending per public school student (most recently reported by the Caesar Rodney Institute last year). The excellent and comprehensive LEAD report on Delaware public education by the Boston Consulting Group demonstrated that after exempting public schools from the state’s prevailing wage, the largest area where money could readily be saved in Delaware public education would be through consolidation and scale benefits in administration and central support.

The CAP report cited by Dr. Marchio concludes, among other things, that “the nation’s least-productive districts spend more on administration” and that “without controls on how additional school dollars are spent, more education spending will not automatically improve student outcomes.” The report acknowledges that there is no research literature that shows a positive and statistically significant relationship between school performance and spending per pupil.

As an example of effective administrative spending, Dr. Marchio also mentions Appoquinimink’s early childhood centers. While such centers may benefit already advanced youngsters, the summary research on programs such as Head Start shows clearly that the positive effectives of early education unfortunately dissipate by the end of first grade.

The Caesar Rodney Institute welcomes the Lt. Governor’s efforts to redirect scarce public education funds from administrative overhead back into the classroom.

**Dr. John E. Stapleford, Director**  
Center for Economic Policy and Analysis