

Diane Donohue decides not to seek second term as DSEA President

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November 22, 2011, Dover, DE.... Diane Donohue told the DSEA Executive Board, local association presidents and staff late last week that she will not be seeking a second term as president of the organization.

“I’m at a point in my life where I need to consider all my options. I am fortunate because I have several intriguing avenues to pursue. I want to think about these opportunities and decide which direction I will take. I cannot do that and be president of DSEA for another three-year term,” she told them. Donohue added that she is committed to keeping focused on the work at hand until her term ends on August 31, 2011.

DSEA members will know on January 6 who is running to succeed Donohue. Online secret balloting will take place in February, with results known in early March. Any DSEA member who has been a member for at least one year may run.

Donohue’s term as president of the state’s teacher’s union is marked by the Association’s role in developing Delaware’s education goals in collaboration with the Markell Administration. One year into her term, the election of Gov. Jack Markell, President Barack Obama, and the appointment of Lillian Lowery as Delaware’s secretary of education occurred, allowing for DSEA to be in on the ground floor of the new administration in Delaware.

When Delaware received a first-round \$119 million Race to the Top grant from the federal government, her role in not only bringing DSEA to the table, but also impacting the content of the state's education strategic plan became apparent. It brought her a level of notoriety across the country among education think tanks and other state teachers unions.

Significantly for DSEA and Donohue, districts and the state must collaborate with DSEA and its local associations while developing their plans to implement the changes included in the state's Race to the Top application. Underpinning that requirement is the fact that, unlike in some states, Delaware's teacher contracts remain in place. Any changes, including any changes for individual school buildings, must be negotiated. "At every step of the way, teachers and other school employees must be part of developing the plans since they will be carrying them through with their students."

"We're very proud of the fact that our participation led to a better Race to the Top application which includes certain requirements that teachers believe are necessary to improve student achievement," Donohue adds. "These include finding time for collaboration amongst instructional teams; developing parental outreach strategies to better include all families in the life of the school; coaches for administrators so that they will be able to evaluate teacher performance effectively; job-embedded professional development; and data coaches to help teachers analyze test results so that they can better reach their students."

Donohue told local association presidents last Friday, "I could not have asked for a more rewarding experience than serving as your President. This job has given me many amazing,

once-in-a-lifetime experiences that I will always treasure. The term has been challenging, exciting, at times frustrating, but extremely satisfying. I've been honored to serve all of you."

With 8,000 members, DSEA represents the states K-12 teachers in the 19 school districts; about 2,000 education support professionals in the public schools (secretaries, paraprofessionals, custodians, food service workers and bus drives); the teachers who work for the Kids Dept.; and 100 of the state's public health nurses.

