

Preparing special education leaders

Eileen Baker, an elementary interventionist in [Cape Henlopen School District](#), has a doctorate, a decade in Delaware schools and a national certification as a school psychologist. However, she says, that wasn't enough to give her "the necessary expertise, knowledge and leadership [experience]" to comfortably take a more senior special education role.

Before 2020, she would not have had a clear way to fix that. Says [Debby Boyer](#), CDS's [School-age unit](#) director: "The primary track for leadership certification had no option for people who wanted to aim specifically for special education."

That changed when CDS, the [Delaware Department of Education](#) and other UD education centers created the [Special Education Administrative Leadership \(SEAL\) program](#).

Funded by a five-year, \$1 million grant from the [U.S. Department of Education](#), SEAL will offer 55 Delaware special education leaders classroom learning on special education topics, leadership training, mentoring, research opportunities and internships.

Baker is a member of the inaugural group of SEAL participants. "It's one thing to have the credits," she says, "but something else to feel prepared mentally and in your heart."



Debby Boyer coordinates the Special Education Administrative Leadership (SEAL) program for CDS and its partners.