

Wilmington Education Improvement Commission
Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty Committee
United Way of Delaware
Meeting Minutes
May 23, 2016

Dr. Jackie Jenkins, Co-chair, called the meeting to order at 4:09 p.m.

Dr. Jenkins welcomed everyone to the meeting. Because the committee had not yet reached quorum, Dr. Jenkins skipped items II and III of the agenda until quorum was met.

Dr. Jenkins gave an update on the Commission meeting on April 26. The primary focus of that meeting was on updates from the committees and discussion of the legislative process for the redistricting plan. House Joint Resolution 12 was released from House Education Committee last week, but there is a long road ahead. There will be a funding battle.

Early childhood advocacy day was on May 4 at Legislative Hall. Mary Kate Mouser gave an update. The Readiness Teams started the day by giving an update on the work going on across the state. They went to Dover, gave testimonials, and heard the proclamation read. There was a lot of support. There is money in the Governor's proposed budget for early learning, but cuts are always feared. Dr. Jenkins mentioned the importance of the City having an education funding agenda for the state budget, which it does not currently have, to make sure the priorities are not conflicting.

Each of the subcommittees gave updates.

Early Childhood

The subcommittee wants to work with Project Launch to give a presentation to the committee. Caitlin Gleason explained that she is working with Project Launch on this.

Out-of-School Supports

This committee shared a presentation on the results of a survey taken at the April 30 event. That presentation is attached to the minutes. The attendance at this event was light. They also surveyed people at the Readiness Teams event on May 21, and expect to survey people at several upcoming events, including "My Very Own Library" event on June 2.

In-School-Supports

This committee updated that they are having monthly calls to work through their goals. The first task is to look at the "Tell Delaware" survey results from 2003. The committee will review this and other available research before developing a survey to be sent in the fall.

The committee is also reviewing Montgomery County, MD work on cultural competency to develop recommendations for teacher and leader trainings in this area. Deb Stevens noted that the Policy and Practice Institute conference on June 22 will have a session put on by Montgomery County, MD about cultural competency. Registration will be \$75 per person.

The discussion of this conference led to a discussion about how to provide funding for parents to attend events like this that cost a significant amount of money.

Elizabeth Burland, Institute for Public Administration, gave an update on the research work being conducted for the committee.

The United Way of Delaware is working with the Institute for Public Administration, KIDS COUNT in Delaware, and faculty from the UD College of Education and Human Development to conduct several pieces of research. These include a policy and fiscal inventory, an asset map, and an assessment of best practices. The timeline for the first stage of the policy inventory:

- Now: KIDS COUNT review of the 2009 recommendations from the Child Poverty Task Force.
- June 2016: More detailed policy inventory will begin.
- September 2016: Inventory analysis will begin.
- October 2016: Report of KIDS COUNT findings will be available to the committee for review.

The committee members discussed possible overlap with other work being done, and the importance of doing a search to avoid duplication. This was noted by the research team. The team working on the asset mapping will work with the committee and other resources to identify and avoid potential overlap, noting places where collaboration and coordination are possible.

Dr. Jenkins gave an update on a program for middle school students.

The City of Wilmington, in partnership with the Red Clay Consolidated School District, is providing a “6th Grade Transitional Academy” this summer for incoming middle school students. The program will serve 100 youth that are City of Wilmington residents and will be attending H.B. duPont Middle, A.I. duPont Middle, Skyline Middle, and Stanton Middle Schools in the fall. This three week program is being advertised by distribution to teachers to distribute to students who will be attending those middle schools.

Monique Taylor-Gibbs, fifth grade teacher, raised concerns that she had not yet seen the flyer that was supposed to be distributed by fifth grade teachers. Adriana Bohm, also raised the same concern as a member of the Red Clay school board. This began a discussion by the committee about concerns related to dissemination of information and the breakdown of communication.

Dr. Jenkins agreed to send Monique Taylor-Gibbs the flyer to distribute to the fifth graders in her building.

Melissa Froemming suggested to the group that the surfacing of these issues is an opportunity for the committee to make recommendations for improvements. She suggested that for these types of opportunities, it might make sense to have teachers make recommendations for students that might best take advantage of the opportunity but might not seek them out on their own.

The committee discussed the importance of holding the districts and school leaders accountable. The community members and parents often recognize the breakdowns in communication, and WEIC has the opportunity to hold districts accountable. There has not yet been a case that WEIC will hold Red Clay accountable for improvements in service to City students and this is an important component to success for this work.

Other committee members raised similar concerns about participation of district and school leaders, and accountability.

The committee also raised concerns about how information is fed up to the larger Commission and out.

Adriana Bohm noted the disconnect and the importance of the Commission holding Red Clay in particular accountable for improvements and solving this breakdown of communication. She also noted that the Commission is not representative of the community so it is important that information get fed up from the committees.

Dr. Jenkins noted that at each Commission meeting, committee co-chairs give an update, which is an opportunity to raise these concerns as discussed in the committee meetings.

Melissa Froemming suggested that the committee hear from someone at the state about the allocation of Title I funding. She also noted the importance of developing a knowledge of ESSA and the options available to schools and districts.

Gloria Grantham noted the allocation for professional development and for parent resources that should be used for that purpose.

The co-chairs asked that Melissa Froemming follow up about who should be brought in so the co-chairs can plan.

Quorum was met. The minutes from April were approved.

A motion was made not to change the name, keeping it as “Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty.” The motion was seconded. The co-chairs opened the topic up for discussion.

Gloria Grantham raised concerns about the use of the term “poverty” and what is meant by it. She is looking for something more broad that does not exclude any students.

Dr. Jenkins asked everyone to remember the charge of the committee, which is to focus on Wilmington students in poverty. She also reminded the group that focusing on children in poverty should benefit all students, but that initial focus should still be there.

Melissa Froemming urged the group to think less about the terminology, and more about the purpose and the services provided. She explained that sometimes it is important to acknowledge that something is an ugly topic, not to ignore it, but acknowledge it and work to do something about it. She also noted that a year into the work, they might want to keep the same name for recognition purposes.

The Honorable Chandlee Kuhn, co-chair, noted the significance of the first part of the title “Meeting the Needs” and the absence of the word “education” meaning that their focus would be on all of the needs.

Gloria Grantham noted her concerns with continuing to equate poor children with poor outcomes, and giving people excuses for poor performance.

Monique Taylor-Gibbs suggested that if the name remains the same, cultural competency would be important for the committee to observe. That would mean keeping in mind the sensitive nature of the phrase “students in poverty.”

Discussion concluded. Chandlee Kuhn asked for a vote. Motion passed by a vote of 7 Yes, 5 No, 1 Abstain.

Dr. Jenkins noted two other important events to receive feedback from youth.

- Summer employment event
- Summer camp programs

Dr. Jenkins discussed next steps on collaboration opportunities

As the committee notes upcoming events, it is important to keep in mind opportunities to survey and to work on alignment and collective impact. She noted that as events come up, all committee members should feel free to share with this group.

The co-chairs opened the meeting for public comment.

Bill Doolittle explained Title I funding is on a different cycle so they should not rule out possible opportunities for the use for parent participation in events. He explained that while district leaders often think they are doing what is best, he has seen instances in which they were open to criticism and recognized that there were things they needed to work on. He noted that Red Clay’s strategic planning initiative is going on and they are taking public feedback. The next school board meeting is on June 15 at 7 p.m. at Warner. It is always the third Wednesday of the month.

The Co-chairs asked if any committee members had anything to share.

Dawn Alexander shared a document with the committee on the Heckman Equation, noting the importance of early childhood education. She asked the committee members to share broadly. Dawn Alexander also invited the committee members to the mayoral debate that happened the evening of the meeting at 6:30 at Trinity Church.

Gwendolyn Sanders noted that on May 12 they had a meeting of the early childhood providers to celebrate what they do for children. She thanked all those who participated.

Caitlin Gleason added that the Empowered Parents Conference was on Saturday, they had about 120 parents registered but only 50 or so came. They provided free transportation to participants. She noted the importance to reflect on this as a part of the larger discussion about disseminating information and attendance at future events.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

**Wilmington Education Improvement Commission
Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty
Meeting Attendance
May 23, 2015**

Committee Members

Dr. Jackie Jenkins, Co-chair
The Honorable Chandlee Kuhn, Co-chair
Dawn Alexander
Madeleine Bayard
Adriana Bohm
Nikki Castle
Melissa Froemming

Caitlin Gleason
Gloria Grantham
Mary Kate Mouser
Gwendolyn Sanders
Deb Stevens
Monique Taylor-Gibbs

Members of the Public

Gwen Angalet
Faith Scheibe

Bill Doolittle
Orrin White

Institute for Public Administration Staff

Kelly Sherretz
Kelsey Mensch
Elizabeth Burland