

**Wilmington Education Improvement Commission  
Charter and District Collaboration Committee**

June 22, 2016

Community Education Building

Meeting Minutes

Aretha Miller called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

The committee debriefed on the joint meeting with the Redistricting Committee the previous month.

- Was good to see the conversation from a different angle and to hear different perspectives. Liked the idea that came from some of the other committee's members about community focused collaboration
- Some concerns were raised about too much focus being on the social services rather than academic achievement
  - A suggestion was made to focus on academic achievement within the social services challenges at the community level
  - Recognizing the social services challenge as a barrier to cope with in order to achieve academic excellence, these challenges cannot be ignored

The committee discussed some problems surrounding academic achievement, recognizing that the school cannot accommodate all the needs of each student.

- Individual teacher makes a lot of difference when it comes to the ability to overcome outside challenges facing students
- The districts need to be more often held accountable for actions
  - This is a place where it is possible to build from the ground up, getting school boards to hold districts accountable

The committee discussed a platform for collaboration.

- PLCs were discussed, though these are no longer required and are used at varying degrees across schools and districts, there is no consistency
- Lateral planning, rather than working in silos
- Conversations around "hot topics" in education to bring teachers together around issues
- Getting the union involved as a platform for collaboration
- Arranging student schedules so that teachers have time to work and collaborating

The committee discussed the role of the union with teachers, schools, and districts. They dispelled some assumptions about the union but acknowledged the limitation of the union's role.

The committee discussed some other challenges facing collaboration, and the current governance structure.

- Community members are disengaged with the districts because the schools are not associated with each community. E.g. City of Newark does not feel connected at all with the Christina School District. This affects school board elections as well as involvement in the schools and referenda.
- Too many organizations and units exist, which makes the system fractured and not enough quality people to run for boards.
- Conversations about the school boards holding the districts accountable is missing to some extent, and there is little cohesion between the district and the board.
- Collaboration has to be bigger than just the districts and schools, must include the teacher's unions, school boards, administrator associations, and business partners.

The committee discussed the role of foundations in education reform in Delaware.

- Foundations are mostly concerned with school quality. They recognize that chartering everything is not a sustainable solution and are looking for value.
- Generally they look towards un-unionized, which is why charter schools have gotten more foundation attention.
- Sustainability of people is important, people willing to stay and see through the changes.

The committee will review proposals for a New Castle County professional development day and for data analysis that will group educators by census tract of the students they teach for better community-based collaboration.

Jennifer Nagourney announced that this would be her last committee meeting, as she will be leaving the Delaware DOE. The committee members and the chairs thanked Jenn for her work on the committee, she was a true asset and everyone hoped they could keep in touch to continue to receive her input through the process. The committee discussed criteria for her replacement on the committee.

The committee will meet again on August 10, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. at the Community Education Building. The Institute for Public Administration Staff will send a doodle poll to collect information about the fall meeting schedule.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

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Meeting Attendance

**Committee Members**

Eve Buckley, Co-chair

Aretha Miller, Co-chair

David Davis

Jennifer Nagourney

**Institute for Public Administration Staff**

Elizabeth Burland

Melissa Micek