

Wilmington Education Improvement Commission—Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty Committee

United Way of Delaware Board Room

Minutes—December 14, 2015

Committee Co-Chair Michelle Taylor called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m. and introduced two new members of the committee.

Dawn Alexander requested the addition of her name to the previous week's minutes.

The Committee passed a motion to approve minutes from the last meeting with the added correction.

Michelle Taylor explained the structure and topics of discussion for the breakout groups.

New Castle County Councilman Jea Street submitted several documents to be included in the record. He wanted to remind the group that many plans existed from previous committees. What we need is action. Michelle thanked Jea.

Michelle Taylor then divided the Committee into breakout groups for targeted discussion.

Breakout Groups Report Out

Michelle Taylor called all members back to the table to share committee report-outs.

Committee Co-Chair Chandlee Kuhn reported on the In-School Support and Support Services group's discussion. The WEAC report stated that the Governor should create a coordinated plan to strengthen education from early childhood to college access. The group stated the need to review the early childhood action plan. The group also called for comprehensive alignment and training at all levels of education to mitigate gaps and a clear disconnect. They suggested the inclusion of cultural competency training and trauma-informed teaching strategies.

Michelle Taylor reported that Out of School Community Supports and Services group restated the need to keep Wilmington students as the focus of all action plans. The group also discussed the documents submitted by Councilman Jea Street for the record, and emphasized the need to develop a plan with tangible outcomes and metrics for success. The group also reiterated the need for parent and community involvement at every step of the process. The group called for DOE to conduct an equity assessment of current programs, culminating in a report of findings and resource allocation. The group agreed on the need to establish a partnership between the P20 council and WEIC, establish cultural competency and risk indicator standards, and develop a firm response plan to students meeting these indicators.

The group concurred that assessment and data analysis is needed to understand how student needs are addressed both in schools and through outside support services.

Committee Co-Chair Jackie Jenkins reported on the Early Childhood (Birth-5) Group. They discussed Title I allocation and called for a program assessment. They discussed parent training, coordinating, and collaboration. For school readiness, districts should take a greater role in early childhood education. Districts should participate more in transition plans. Home care centers should participate in STARS; incentivize full-day pre-k education. We should invest in high quality pre-k programs into cities. Wraparound services should be included; pre-k programs in public schools should also have access to wraparound services. Acknowledge that services are needed prior to beginning k-12 education. Education and outreach- there should be more of a concerted effort to reach out to parents, especially in non-traditional ways. Child development should be discussed in schools and home visits should be expanded in a culturally appropriate, non-judgmental way. Mandate no purchase of care for low quality programs for those on assistance.

Public Comment

Michelle Taylor opened the meeting up to public comment. Seeing none, she encouraged committee members to share thoughts on breakout group discussion.

Members commended the work accomplished at the meeting.

Adriana Bohm encouraged the committee to take a stance on concentrated poverty.

Melissa Froemming responded that concentrated poverty has been discussed in other committees as well. She also states that the new ESSA law allows wraparound services to be funded through Title I. She suggested that schools with a certain proportion of low-income students have a mandated site coordinator.

The committee agreed to reevaluate perceptions and definitions of community engagement. Members noted that models should be realigned to meet the needs of urban parents and families, and parent involvement must be contextualized. Gaps must be narrowed between home and school life, beginning with schools reaching out to the parents and community. Schools must provide opportunities for parents to engage outside of schools as well (examples include sending home activities to encourage engagement and interaction, adapting programs like Parents as Teachers and ICare). Members agreed to add cultural competency training as a goal for the next year's plan.

The committee discussed practical issues concerning home visits, including safety.

Councilman Jea Street stated that he has never observed a safety issue during home visits during his career in public service.

Members restated the need to change home visits to fit the students, parents, and communities.

Councilman Jea Street stated to Michelle Taylor that his hope is she will continue this group's efforts regardless of what the outcome of WEIC.

Co-Chair Michelle Taylor adjourned the meeting at 5:59 p.m.

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Students in Poverty Committee**
Attendance—December 14, 2015

Committee Members

Madeleine Bayard
Adriana Bohm
Vi Cade
Nikki Castle
Rosa Colon-Kolacko
Melissa Froemming
Jackie Jenkins
Chandlee Kuhn
Kenny Oates

Susan Perry Manning
Gwendolyn Sanders
Jae Street
Michelle Taylor
Monique Taylor-Gibbs
Burtie Watson
Gloria Grantham
Patricia Belle-Scruggs
Dawn Alexander

Members of the Public

Peggy Geisler
Tyrone Jones

Orrin White

Institute for Public Administration Staff

Kelly Sherretz
Saran Singh