

Wilmington Education Improvement Commission  
Parent, Educator, and Community Engagement Committee  
November 14, 2016  
Bayard Middle School  
Meeting Minutes

**Tizzy Lockman, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm.**

### **Approval of Minutes**

The committee postponed consideration of meeting minutes because a quorum was not present.

### **Commission Updates**

Kelsey Mensch provided updates from the October commission meeting. She updated the committee on the annual report, which will outline the work of the commission over the past year, provide legislative updates, and provide some baseline Wilmington education data. K. Mensch added that the second half of the commission meeting focused on what the commission's new priorities should be. She shared the top three priority areas from the meeting: weighing in on large statewide initiatives like ESSA, establishing a statewide alliance beyond Wilmington, and developing a program platform where the committees can make direct impacts.

### **Presentation on Engagement Opportunities**

#### *Parent Engagement Survey*

Lauren Bailes, Assistant Professor in the Education Department at the University of Delaware, presented to the committee on the possibility of conducting a parent engagement survey in Wilmington. L. Bailes first provided background information on her prior research experience and academic background. She then shared with the committee her interest in conducting the first study of parent political efficacy. L. Bailes stated that the survey would be developed in collaboration with the committee and could involve serious conversations about what mediates political efficacy and parent engagement. Survey questions could include information about what schools are doing to welcome parents in and could include both quantitative and qualitative research. L. Bailes remarked that she has applied for a grant to fund this research, and the grant would provide a two-year time frame for completing the project.

Committee members provided feedback and questions on the research presentation.

Topics of discussion included:

- The survey could obtain information both from school contacts and within the community setting. Committee members emphasized the importance of engaging parents that are not currently active in the school ecosystem.
- L. Bailes expressed interest in attending community events to distribute the survey as well as through social media analysis.
- L. Bailes provided some additional details on how the survey process is typically conducted. She stated that cognitive interviews and field testing are typically conducted first to ensure construct unity. Then, researchers would decide what

- they want on the scantron survey. She added that she would like to include raffle prizes as an incentive to increase response rates.
- Survey data collection will most likely take nine months to a year, but analysis will have a quicker turnaround.
  - Committee members commented that working in conjunction with an experienced researcher would be advantageous to the committee. Committee members acknowledged that the survey should capture who, if not the teacher, parents interact with within the school ecosystem.
  - This parent engagement survey would be the first of its kind and would provide insight into parent engagement barriers within the Delaware context.
  - The possibility of conducting a survey in Wilmington and then expanding out into other areas of Delaware was discussed.
  - Committee members highlighted the important of sharing survey results with the right people.

Committee members stressed that the survey could take place while working on other strategic objectives. The possibility of finishing the survey process earlier than two years was also discussed as well as the possibility of reporting preliminary findings before the complete analysis is finished.

#### *My Very Own Library*

Orrin White from the United Way of Delaware spoke about the “My Very Own Library” initiative, which aims to improve early literacy. The piloted program is in eight schools and has given away 30,000 books to 3,000 students. Now, the initiative is officially statewide. Students have the opportunity to pick their own books, which makes them more excited about reading. The program specifically targets schools with a below 50% ELA percentage. Family engagement nights are a key part of the initiative. O. White expressed that there are opportunities for synergy with the PEaCE committee on parent engagement nights.

Committee members briefly discussed the possibility of surveying parents at parent engagement nights. Another idea included making a presentation on parent support at the meeting, including topics like how to ask the right questions to promote literacy.

#### **Subgroup Discussion Groups**

The committee decided to break into two subgroups: one focused on community outreach and the other on parent engagement research.

The research committee will dig deeper into the research questions, defining parent engagement, community engagement, and understanding what national best practices would work in the Delaware context. The community engagement subcommittee will

work on community outreach strategies, including collaborating with Lauren on the parent engagement survey.

T. Lockman called roll and asked committee members to select one subcommittee to be a part of.

K. Mensch promised to send out a document of who is on each subcommittee after contacting each committee member.

K. Mensch also shared that the December PEaCE meeting will be a joint meeting with the Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty Committee on December 7 from 4-6pm. The meeting will address the overlap between the two committees' work.

The meeting adjourned at 7:08 pm.

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**Meeting Attendance**

**PEaCE Committee Members**

Tizzy Lockman, Chair  
Alexis Andrianopoulos  
Kevin Dolan  
Daphne Evans  
Devon Hynson  
Orrin White

**Members of the Public**

Lauren Bailes

**Institute for Public Administration Staff**

Kelly Sherretz  
Kelsey Mensch  
Taylor Hawk  
Melissa Micek  
Asha Chintala