

Wilmington Education Improvement Commission  
Charter District Collaboration Committee  
Community Education Building, Wilmington, DE  
Meeting Minutes – January 12, 2017

**Co-Chair Eve Buckley called the meeting to order at 5:08 p.m.**

**Approval of Agenda**

The Committee tabled approval of the agenda for the January 12<sup>th</sup> meeting until quorum is present.

**Approval of Minutes**

The Committee tabled the approval of the minutes for the meeting held on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016 until quorum is present.

**Co-Chair Update**

Aretha Miller notified the committee that she will be leaving her position at the Community Education Building but will continue serving on the Charter District Committee until the summer.

There was conversation about the need to have more charter representation on the committee. Members discussed inviting individuals who have experience in both charter and traditional schools to participate on the committee, in an effort to increase charter participation and leverage their knowledge and expertise to ensure greater, more effective collaboration.

The committee discussed sharing the memorandum on collaboration with the Commission in order to highlight the importance of collaboration among charter and district schools and the work being done by the committee.

A. Miller announced that the Gates Foundation, supporter of District-Charter Compacts, will be hosting a three-day conference in Camden, New Jersey on February 8-10<sup>th</sup> 2017. She will be attending this event. This event will be an opportunity for us to learn how different cities that are doing this work are making district/charter collaboration a reality for all their stakeholder groups.

The Committee discussed rescheduling the February 9<sup>th</sup> Committee meeting. Kelsey Mensch, University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration, stated she will send out a poll to evaluate when the committee can meet. The Committee highlighted that attendance is important at the February 28<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting to hear from Governor Carney and the future Delaware Secretary of Education, Susan Bunting.

**Unity Day Update**

Margie Lopez-Waite updated the Committee that on Friday, January 20, Las Américas ASPIRA Academy will host a Day of Unity in conjunction with MLK week and Inauguration day, to create a positive atmosphere. The goal of this event is to display the strength and importance of community throughout the day.

The event will begin with the theme of unity during morning meetings. Then students, faculty, and staff will join in a circle of unity around the school. Teachers will incorporate the theme of unity in assignments, for example using the writing prompt, “What is your dream?” There will also be interactive exercises to expand friendships throughout the school, to highlight unity.

The school will host a family-oriented event in the evening at 6 p.m. While the children are being entertained with a movie and popcorn, their parents will have the opportunity to attend workshops. Lawyers will volunteer their time to speak about immigration, Fresh Start for Females will be promoting a scholarship for continuing education for women, and there will be an informal open discussion with parents. At the end of this event, there will be another circle of unity.

M. Lopez Waite asked individuals to support the event, share the post on their Facebook page, and join in the spirit of the event through the #dayofunity01202017. She issued an open invitation to all for the event but recommended that individuals who are interested in participating RSVP due to limited space.

### **Action Items for Spring**

#### *Upcoming Presentations*

- Meet in person or virtual skype meeting with Sarah Yatsko, Senior Research Analyst at the Center on Reinventing Public Education (CRPE) in February (Eve and Aretha, initially).
- Susan Haberstroh and David Blowman will present on the Strategic Plan for Specialized Education Opportunities at the March committee meeting. Committee members were asked to review Strategic Plan and submit comments to A. Miller and Eve Buckley.

#### *Upcoming Meetings*

- There will be a possible joint meeting with the Meeting the Needs Committee in April. This might entail a subgroup, due to the size of each committee.
- Possibly send the Committee’s memo to political leaders or invite political leaders to a Committee meeting to strategically gain support for charter-district collaboration.
  - Be forward-thinking about strategies to align with and promote the Commission’s goals and action agenda.
  - Complete deliverables, such as a Compact draft or a hybrid model that meets the unique education needs of Wilmington’s students and collaboration structure.

#### *Subcommittee on Compacts*

A Charter District Subcommittee will look at existing resources on compacts to increase the group’s depth of knowledge about related work that is happening in other cities. The members will report back with one or two examples of model Compacts and some recommendations for moving forward. The larger committee will then discuss drafting a proposal for what a Compact could look like in Wilmington or Delaware. The subcommittee can communicate flexibly through email. The subcommittee will consist of the following members: Eve Buckley, Margie Lopez-Waite, Yvonne Johnson, and Bill Doolittle.

M. Lopez-Waite stated that one opportunity for collaboration would be in the expansion of bilingual programs. Las Américas ASPIRA Academy is K-8 and has no feeder high school with a bilingual program. One solution would be to form a bilingual program pathway within existing high schools. The student-focused goal would be to graduate more bilingual students. The Committee discussed a similar situation with expanding Chinese immersion programs in district schools that do not yet have any continuation beyond middle school.

Given the many opportunities for collaboration in Wilmington, the Committee acknowledged that in order for this work to be sustained in the long term, key obstacles will have to be addressed. For example, leadership turnover at either district or charter schools or school board lack of buy-in and support are some of the biggest challenges to collaboration.

The Committee discussed the value of advocating for collaboration and the need to build strategic relationships to assist with partnerships. The Committee discussed the important role of the Teachers' Union in supporting such an effort. The committee also acknowledged that Parents must play an important role in advancing the work of district/charter collaboration—but in order for this to happen we must take the time to educate them about issues that are impending this work.

### **Public Comment**

There was not public comment.

**Wilmington Education Improvement Commission**  
**Charter District Collaboration Committee**  
Meeting Attendance  
January 12, 2017

**Charter District Collaboration Committee Members**

Aretha Miller, Co-Chair  
Eve Buckley, Co-Chair  
Bill Doolittle  
Yvonne Johnson  
Margie Lopez-Waite

**Institute for Public Administration Staff**

Kelsey Mensch  
Melissa Micek

**Members of the Public**