

Wilmington Education Improvement Commission
Charter District Collaboration Committee
June 12, 2017 5-7pm
John Dickinson High School

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Eve Buckley at 5:07 p.m.

Approval of Agenda

The Committee approved the agenda with no changes.

Chairs' Updates

E. Buckley provided an update about the Compact Proposal presentation from the Commission meeting on May 23rd. She encouraged the Committee to have a discussion of positive steps forward based on the feedback received by the Commission.

Compact Proposal Discussion

Based on the Commission meeting on May 23rd, the Committee discussed that it must ensure that they are working parallel, not in opposition, with existing efforts for collaboration. The Committee discussed there is a willingness to be open with partnerships for collaboration among charter and traditional public schools.

The committee discussed opportunities for the compact proposal. Committee members discussed the need for greater efforts to reach out to parents. It was noted that there are some open houses, but it is unrealistic that the city families would be able to travel the distance and she concluded with the concept that the efforts should be brought to the families. This is an issue that affects districts and charters alike, in which families end up with limited choices. There is a great opportunity to have a win-win for all stakeholders to be aware of the process. The Committee was reminded to not reinvent the wheel, but build upon and strengthen the existing efforts, such as the Charter School Expo.

The committee then discussed ways to communicate the work of collaboration. It was suggested that there is a perception that schools are a marketing entity; however this is not the purpose of a school. The purpose of the school should be to invest in the successful outcomes of students. Committee members noted that part of the conversation charter school authorization, and the current charter school law sets the landscape for a lack of coordination. There should be stronger efforts to collaborate where it makes sense.

Another committee member mentioned school transportation is a key example of an opportunity to collaborate. A committee member noted that as it stands right now, traditional public schools do not get to save the money they are able to save. This does not create any incentive for schools to save money.

Committee Membership and Next Steps

E. Buckley asked the Committee members to think about the next steps for the upcoming year. The main task of the Committee will be to be the driving force behind the Compact, so it is important to ensure that key stakeholders are involved.

Committee members discussed key entities that they feel will need to be a part of the effort moving forward. Proposed stakeholders included: district representatives and school board representatives from all districts in New Castle County, civil rights advocates, representatives from community organizations and non-profits such as the Vision Coalition, more charter leaders from both within and outside of the city, and parent representatives. A committee member reminded the committee to ensure the parents reflect the student population that live in the City of Wilmington. It was noted that PACE could be a good resource.

The committee also noted Wilmington city government as a stakeholder. They discussed that while the Mayor does not have direct control over education in the city, a conversation about collaboration would keep all parties informed, especially because it would directly impact those citizens within the city districts.

The Committee discussed the possibility of having a private-public partnership and reaching out to businesses that would have an interest in education. It was also mentioned that there ought to be someone from Department of Education. The Committee also discussed reaching out to the Secretary of Education for her support on the Compact. It was mentioned that Secretary Bunting genuinely supports collaboration and there is hope to continue with positive conversations.

Approval of Minutes

E. Buckley motioned to approve the minutes from March 2017, April 2017, and May 2017. The motion was seconded; minutes from March, April, and May were approved.

Strategic Planning

School Year 2017-18

The committee then discussed its role in the coming year. It was noted that there will be a reorganization of the Committee and hopefully some new members added to the Committee to help move the work forward and support the development of a compact.

Kelsey Mensch, University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration, reminded the Committee that although they are the driving force behind the Compact, they are not creating it. She reminded the Committee to use time effectively and strategically ask those that will be volunteers on the Compact or be a part of the Committee, but not both.

Aretha Miller, co-chair, reminded the Committee that based on previous conversations, the Committee is currently in phase three and will be doing substantial work in the upcoming year. She applauded the Committee for the work that has been accomplished to propose a Compact. She asked the Committee what is needed to maintain the momentum, especially in light of the budget, what can the Committee do to move forward.

K. Mensch asked the Committee where the Committee would like to host meetings next year. She stated that she will send out a Doodle Poll to put in tentative meetings and that can be reevaluated in the fall. It was suggested that the Committee takes time to visit each other's schools in order to help build relationships. The Committee agreed this was a good plan.

The Committee also discussed creating a work plan and schedule over the summer that would provide a framework to move forward in support of the compact.

The Committee discussed the importance of having an honest, clear and concise message about the committee work and the value and benefit of collaboration. This included the key areas of work, research, outreach, and proposals. Committee members were reminded to keep the focus on the needs of children in poverty and ELL students throughout the development of the compact.

The Committee also discussed the necessity for the committee to be accessible for parents from all parts of the city. There was discussions about holding meetings along the bus route and during non-dinner hours to be accessible to parents. The Committee discussed how providing childcare and dinner entices parents to come to meetings in the evening.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Meeting adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

Wilmington Education Improvement Commission
Charter District Collaboration Committee
June 12, 2017 5-7pm
Meeting Attendance

Committee Members

Eve Buckley, Co-Chair
Aretha Miller, Co-Chair
Bill Doolittle
Byron Murphy
Margie Lopez Waite
Harrie Ellen Minnehan
David Davis
Equetta Jones
Yvonne Johnson

IPA Support Staff

Kelsey Mensch
Melissa Micek