

Wilmington Education Improvement Commission
Charter District Collaboration Committee
Community Education Building
Meeting Minutes - December 8, 2016

Eve Buckley, co-chair, called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

Approval of Agenda

The Committee voted to amend the agenda for the December 8, 2016 meeting to include discussion about a unity day among schools.

Co-Chair Update

Eve Buckley, co-chair of the Charter District Collaboration Committee stated that collaboration strategies should be highlighted for the incoming administration, to gather support.

The committee discussed the opportunity to provide feedback on Governor-Elect Carney's Transition team on the official website: transition.delaware.gov.

E. Buckley also noted the next Commission meeting on December 13, 2016 will be an opportunity to further discuss feedback for the incoming administration. It will also be an opportunity to deliver suggestions for collaboration for tangible wins, to increase visibility and support the overall work of the Commission.

Memorandum on Collaboration

Overview

The committee reviewed the memorandum, which was drafted by the designated subcommittee. The memorandum serves to solicit the Governor-Elect's assistance in helping advance the work of the committee. To make the case, the memorandum highlighted barriers to collaboration, proposed opportunities, and outline desired outcomes for collaboration.

Discussions

E. Buckley opened up the floor to committee members to discuss the memorandum. The committee discussed that the desired outcome is for schools to perceive and engage in shared responsibility for all students. The committee discussed the second question in the memorandum, "What programmatic and policy proposals could be recommended to create and sustain collaboration?"

It was noted that the platform of the incoming governor administration is missing the word "Charter" in the entire document.

Bill Doolittle, committee member, stated that there should be efforts to remove financial barriers so that money truly follows the child. He also stated that the September 30th lockdown date disallows for cases that occur within the school year. The committee discussed examples of students transferring within the school year and acknowledged unique cases.

There was discussion about building greater transparency and accountability rather than changing the funding formula. The committee discussed building upon a spirit of inclusivity, open mindedness, and the necessity to foster diverse environments in education. It was agreed that we must change the mindset to encourage shared responsibility for all students rather than animosity.

The committee discussed the combination of stressors, such as standards and accountability, that foster competition, create a two-tiered system, and inhibit collaboration.

- Standards and accountability foster competition and have created a two-tiered system;
- Title I was established to address disparities using federal monies. However, there are no **state** funding allocations for low-income and ELL students;
- There is no design to support students in highest-needs categories, such as students in juvenile detention center;
- DOE functions as a managerial agency rather than a support agency. It would be helpful to create shared resources based on community needs through a state support agency; and,
- The state has no cohesive plan on how Vo-tech, charter, and district public schools should work together.

The committee discussed how ESSA promotes state flexibility for accountability and could potentially help change the current adversarial tone amongst schools.

- It was discussed that the schools that serve large concentrations of high-needs students (low-income and ELL students) are at a greater risk of not meeting proficiency standards. More importantly, there was concern that these schools are then compared to those that do not serve a similar population; thus, making the comparison unfair and unjustified;
- For better collaboration, there should be recognition of student growth in addition to proficiency; and,
- There is currently no measurement or acknowledgement of the progress made by students who are below grade-level.

Lastly, the committee discussed how difficult it is to change mindsets. Educators should embrace a shared, community-mindset rather than an individual school mindset.

- Meeting community needs should not fall solely on the school administration. This barrier connects to the Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty Committee's work to coordinate community efforts to help high-risk students.
- It was discussed that these wellness centers should be utilized by local communities; however, there is a concern over funding if wellness centers services are expanded.
- There should be an integration of local clinics, social workers, pediatricians, judges for court-involvement, probation officers, and leadership from different agencies that touch children with significant needs. Family Crisis Therapists in Delaware are not utilized consistently to provide therapy in times of severe crisis.
- There is a disconnect in expectations between schools and programs such as the Boys & Girls Club and school curriculums.
 - o Teacher-run after-school programs have the benefit of providing high-quality curriculum, but creates the possibility of teacher burn-out.

- There is opportunity for collaboration to streamline efforts to fund programs via purchase of care and provide high-quality instructors

Shared professional development and a Charter-District Compact are two programmatic proposals the committee will recommend to the Commission. It was discussed that shared professional development would include schools opening up their professional development days to provide personalized learning for educators and broaden opportunities to network and collaborate. There was also a conversation about utilizing teacher resource centers to allow collaborative learning.

Next Action Items

E. Buckley asked committee members to gather comments, provide feedback, and compile thoughts before the Commission meeting.

Next steps include having a joint meeting with the Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty Committee, tentatively in February.

The committee also discussed determining concrete steps after seeing the incoming administration's actions. Therefore, the next meeting will review examples of Charter District Compacts. Additionally, the committee discussed meeting with Sarah Yatsko from the Center for Reinventing Public Education.

Approval of Minutes

E. Buckley, co-chair, seeing that quorum was present, moved to approve the meeting minutes from November 10, 2016. The motion was so moved; minutes from November 10, 2016 were approved.

“Day of Unity” Proposal

M. Lopez Waite proposed that in the wake of negativity during the most recent national political campaigns, schools have the opportunity to promote positivity, tolerance, and collaboration through a day of unity. This proposal includes students, faculty, and staff join in-hand and form a circle around their school during the school day. She also suggested that schools facilitate an after-school resource expo to provide information about community resources for families.

M. Lopez Waite stated that details are being ironed out, including a location to host and possible sponsorship by WEIC. The committee discussed the opportunity to promote collaboration through social media.

The committee was supportive of the proposed “Day of Unity.” More information will follow.

Public Comment

Bill Doolittle stated that there is progress on the special education middle-level collaboration, which provides great possibility for a new level of collaboration.

Meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

Wilmington Education Improvement Commission
Charter District Collaboration Committee
Meeting Attendance
December 8, 2016

Charter District Collaboration Committee Members

Aretha Miller, Co-Chair
Eve Buckley, Co-Chair
Bill Doolittle
Equetta Jones
Byron Murphy
Margie Lopez-Waite
Cora Scott
David Davis

Institute for Public Administration Staff

Kelly Sherretz
Kelsey Mensch
Melissa Micek