

Wilmington Education Improvement Commission

William Penn High School

Minutes – September 15, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chairman Dr. Tony Allen. Dr. Allen asked each of the committee co-chairs to give an update.

Parent, Educator, and Community Engagement Committee

Co-chairs Yvonne Johnson and Chandra Pitts gave an update about the Town Hall meetings. They have hosted a few successful town halls and are working to set up town halls in each district. These meetings have been successful at maintaining community engagement. The Commission will post minutes from each committee meeting on the website www.solutionsfordelawareschools.org. The emphasized the importance of hearing all voices. They reminded everyone that their first meeting would be held immediately after the Commission meeting.

Charter District Collaboration Committee

The first meeting of the Charter and District Collaboration Committee will be on Wednesday, September 23 from 5:30-7:30 at the Community Education Building. The Co-chairs had met with Dr. Dan Rich already. Dr. Rich explained to the committee what their role should be in the redistricting process. Dr. Rich concluded that more members would be added to this committee.

Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty Committee

The committee co-chairs had been meeting to discuss the direction. They had a meeting before the Commission meeting to discuss potential funding options. The Committee will meet on September 28 from 4-6 p.m. at United Way to discuss the direction. The committee concluded that they might add additional executive meetings in order to complete all the work that is needed.

Funding Student Success Committee

Co-chairs Jill Floore and Mike Jackson said that the committee had their first meeting before the Commission meeting. They went over an ambitious agenda. This was an organizational meeting where a work plan was discussed. The dates for the meetings had changed and the new dates will be posted.

Redistricting Committee

This committee met Thursday, September 10 to established organization within the committee. They also reviewed the history of redistricting in Delaware. Since there is a lot of work and not

much time, the committee hopes to develop a plan that will meet their deadlines in the following meeting. The committee will review some of the data, maps, and the guiding principles established by the WEAC report at the next meeting.

Redistricting Plan Timeline (DRAFT)

Dr. Rich reviewed the draft Redistricting Plan outline and timeline. The draft includes a set of steps that have to be taken in the redistricting process; it also includes a timeline. The timeline has been reviewed by legal counsel. This plan was reviewed with the Redistricting Committee on Thursday. During the Commission meeting, Dr. Rich stated that this plan is consistent with House Bill 148 and Senate Bill 122.

A member of the Commission asked what would happen if the State Board does not approve the plan. Dr. Rich responded that if the State Board does not approve, they must explain why. WEIC then has 60 days to resubmit a plan. If the State Board of Education approves the plan, the General Assembly can confirm by Joint Resolution. It would then go to the Governor for signature. It was made clear that neither the State Board, General Assembly nor the Governor can make changes to the recommendation package. The recommendations are either accepted, or not, as a package. The State Board has the same understanding, and this will be made clear.

The timeline and the outline that were reviewed are available on the website, www.solutionsfordelawareschools.com.

Dr. Allen Opened the Discussion to Questions from the Commission.

A question was asked about whether or not there were common questions being asked at the Town Hall meetings. There have been, some of the most common include:

- What does this mean for my taxes?
- What does this mean for my child, where will my child go to school?
- What is the role of charter schools?
- There has been general concern about the timeline

One Commissioner stated that the Commission should start developing answers to these questions.

A question was asked about whether there are different concerns from each district. Yes, each district has had slightly different concerns depending on their particular situation.

There were concerns raised about being mindful of the nuances for each community affected by these changes. There may be the same question with a different point of view, and it is important to be mindful of that.

Questions were raised about the money necessary for this proposal.

It is important that Commissioners be informing the community about the recommendations. The Commission will continue to have town hall meetings in each of the districts. Because of the hard work of the Funding Committee, the Commission will likely have more answers about funding by the end of October and early November.

Delaware School Finance 101—Presentation by Mike Johnson

Presentation is available at www.solutionsfordelawareschools.com

A question was asked about the New Castle County Tax Pool. Jill Floore clarified for the Commission what the tax pool is what that means for the districts. The CFOs from a few districts, all on the Funding Committee, clarified this point.

A question was asked about charter school funding flexibility. It was clarified that while they may have greater flexibility, they also are held more accountable because they have the possibility of being shut down if they do not perform well.

One comment that was made was about the potential decrease in transportation costs because of the redistricting plan.

A point was also raised about the allocation of funds currently, and the importance of understanding that process.

Conclusion

Dr. Allen reminded everyone in the room that the Commission opens its doors to anyone who wants to become involved.

The meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

**Wilmington Education Improvement Commission
Redistricting Committee
Attendance at the 9/10 Meeting**

Commission Members

Ralph Ackerman	Aretha Miller
Tony Allen	Harrie Ellen Minnehan
Eve Buckley	Joe Pika
The Honorable Nnamdi Chukwuocha	Chandra Pitts
Karen Eller	Kenny Rivera
Frederika Jenner	Vicki Seifred
Yvonne Johnson	David Sokola
Joseph T. Laws	Michelle Taylor
Margie Lopez Waite	Breyonna Williams

Present Via Telephone

Rosa Colon-Kolacko
Chandlee Kuhn
Meredith Griffin

Members of the Public

Jill Floore	Arleen Vargas
Mike Jackson	Kendall Massett
Elizabeth Lewis	Henry Clampitt
Brian Erskine	Tom Driscoll
Cora Scott	Andrew Wilson
Katey Sumnel	Mark DiMaio

Andrew Hegedus

Laura Nash

Bob Silber

John Young

Emily Falcon

Dusty Blakey

Katrina Cowart (for Senator Marshall)

Donato C. Rufo

Mike Matthews

Mike Wilson

Shanika Perry

Representative David Bentz

Representative Kim Williams

Meghan Wallace

Donna Marshall

Orrin White

Mervin Daugherty

Pati Nash

Harold S. Brady

Carlton L. Cannon Jr.

Institute for Public Administration Staff

Elizabeth Burland

Neil Kirschling

Kelly Sherretz

Kervin Zamora

Dan Rich