

Good evening Colonial Nation and for those of you visiting our district for this Town Hall meeting, welcome to William Penn. My name is Emily Falcon and I am the Chief Financial Officer for Colonial as well as a member of the Funding Student Success committee. I would like to register my comments on financial portion of the draft plan.

For clarification, while I have shared these comments with the Colonial Board of Education, the following views are my own and reflective of my experiences on the committee, not of any official position or opinion of the School Board.

While I agree with most of the concepts captured in this plan, I have concerns that the report, as currently written, is not an accurate reflection of the committee's discussions and recommendations.

The following areas are where I believe the report should be modified to better reflect the discussions of the committee:

-The recommendation to initially provide weighed units for low income and ELL students to only those districts impacted by redistricting was not agreed upon by the committee. As the draft report points out several times, concentrated student poverty is a statewide issue and the committee agreed that it should be recognized and funded as such and that pilot funding among a subset of districts was not desirable.

-While there was not consensus, there was broad agreement among members of the committee that changing our resource allocation system to a weighted student model, as recommended by WEAC, is not necessary to achieve improvements in student success. The current unit structure certainly needs to be enhanced in the ways described to provide resources more equitably but it is inaccurate to leave readers with the impression that the committee agreed that abandoning the current structure in favor of a weighted student funding model was the desired future state.

-The section detailing the fiscal impact of redistricting on local revenues should also reflect the following:

- The allocation factor used for distributing revenues among the districts in the New Castle County tax pool is outdated and ineffective because it has not been updated to reflect changes in how special education units are used and funded. It has been frozen since 2012 because of this disparity so the revenues are not following the shifts in student population. This mechanism must be fixed if the tax pool is to remain in existence.
- Making changes to the New Castle County Tax pool, including redistricting, will impact all 4 districts in the pool since allocating the pooled revenues among the 4 districts is a



zero sum game; for one district to gain revenue, another district must lose it. Any changes being recommended to the tax pool should first examine the effects on all four districts to ensure that there are no unintended impacts.

- The districts in the tax pool are also treated identically for Equalization funding. So despite the variations in the relative property wealth among the four districts in the tax pool, all of us receive the same per unit funding for Equalization. Any changes made to the tax pool and to the Equalization funding formula must also account for this.

-Additionally, there are several references to enhancing funding for programs in early childhood care and education as well as college and career readiness. I agree that these are areas worthy of additional investment; however, these topics were not discussed in any detail by the funding committee so I do not believe that the report should reflect the committee's endorsement of these concepts.

In closing, the work of the funding committee produced some solid recommendations on how additional investments can be targeted to address concentrated poverty and other factors that inhibit student success but it generated more questions than answers on how this funding can be provided in a sustainable, equitable manner at both the State and local levels.