

**In The Matter Of:**

*ITMO: Wilmington Education Improvement Commission*

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*Information Session*

*December 14, 2015*

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IN THE MATTER OF:

WILMINGTON EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT COMMISSION  
Redistricting In the City of Wilmington and  
New Castle County: A Transition, Resource,  
and Implementation Plan

INFORMATION SESSION

Wilmington City Council Chambers  
Louis L. Redding City/County Building  
800 N. French Street  
Wilmington, Delaware

Monday, December 14, 2015  
6:32 p.m.

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1 DR. ALLEN: Good evening,  
2 everybody. My name is Tony Allen. I chair  
3 the Wilmington Education Improvement  
4 Commission. I'm very pleased to see so many  
5 faces here tonight. I do want to first thank  
6 Wilmington City Council President Theo Gregory  
7 for giving us the chambers tonight.

8 And I also see several councilmen  
9 with us, Councilman Hanifa Shabazz, Councilman  
10 Justen Wright. Thank you all for being here  
11 and for lending your continued support. I  
12 would also like to recognize New Castle County  
13 Councilman Jea Street, who I see in the  
14 building as well. Thank you for being here,  
15 sir.

16 And State Representative Charles  
17 Potter, who's in the back and also represents  
18 the Wilmington Education Improvement  
19 Commission. I might also add former City  
20 Council President Norman Griffiths is also  
21 present. So thank you all for being here.

22 I'd also like to recognize  
23 several commission members. With me tonight  
24 is Tizzy Lockman to my left, who is our



1 vice-chair, a Red Clay parent, and director of  
2 the PACE program at Christina Cultural Arts  
3 Center; Dr. Dan Rich, who is our policy  
4 director for the commission; Harrie Ellen  
5 Minnehan, who is the president of the  
6 Christina School District, if you just raise  
7 your hand; Michelle Taylor of the United Way  
8 is also in the back and chairs our Meeting the  
9 Needs of Students in Poverty along with the  
10 education czar for the city, Jackie Jenkins;  
11 and my good friend Dr. Adriana Bohm, who is  
12 also on the Red Clay School Board but was a  
13 member of the Wilmington Education Advisory  
14 Committee, the predecessor group to  
15 improvement commission.

16           Tonight is a real opportunity for  
17 us to give you very quickly an abbreviated  
18 summary of our plans with respect to school  
19 governance.

20           I should say at the top, and I  
21 think I've said this many times, but I would  
22 like to say it again, we all know that simply  
23 redrawing the lines is not the only answer to  
24 student achievement, and in fact if that's all



1 we did, we know we would not be accomplishing  
2 much.

3           But we do think this is a first  
4 step. In many respects we believe it's the  
5 price of admission to the more substantive  
6 issues relative to education for Wilmington  
7 city children.

8           I might also add we will take  
9 question and answer. This is separate from  
10 the public hearing period, which will occur  
11 immediately following this presentation. We  
12 will have Q and A.

13           Elizabeth Burland, who is in the  
14 audience, will be going around with sign-up  
15 sheets, so as you think of questions as we go  
16 through this presentation, just go to  
17 Elizabeth, and she will certainly, certainly  
18 be able to put you on the sign-up sheet, and  
19 hopefully we'll have a robust discussion.

20           I've also seen Councilman Trippi  
21 Congo just walk in the room as well as  
22 Councilman Darius Brown. Again, thank you all  
23 for joining us.

24           I normally start these



1 presentations back in 1954 with the Brown  
2 versus Board of Education decision. I do that  
3 because I believe that was the initial moment  
4 for public education reform in Delaware.

5 I think all of you may know that  
6 in 1954 there were several cases in the  
7 Supreme Court ruling that were from Delaware  
8 and in Delaware. Those were the only cases  
9 where the court ruled in favor of the  
10 plaintiff. I like to say Delaware set the  
11 precedent for Brown in Delaware.

12 Unfortunately, though, Delaware  
13 did not implement any parts of Brown for 20  
14 years after the Supreme Court ruling, and when  
15 they did implement, it was only by federal  
16 court order, which has been the history of  
17 public education reform in Delaware.

18 Very little if anything at all  
19 from Delaware General Assembly or the governor  
20 and lots of court mandated intervention from  
21 the federal courts.

22 Next slide. These are the  
23 numbers I'd like to leave you with tonight.  
24 There are 135,000 public schoolchildren across



1 the state of Delaware, 135,000. 11,500 of  
2 them are in the City of Wilmington. That's  
3 less than 10 percent. If you have a  
4 calculator, it's actually 8 percent.

5 23 different governing units  
6 trying to manage the 11,500 City of Wilmington  
7 children. Four traditional school districts,  
8 one vo-tech district, thirteen charters, the  
9 state board of education, the Department of  
10 Education, and several other units, 23.

11 The number zero means zero  
12 unified plans for educating those children.  
13 Zero unified plans for educating those  
14 children, which has been the history of  
15 fragmentation and dysfunction for Wilmington  
16 city kids in particular.

17 Next slide. This chart just  
18 tells you by one measure, but I would argue by  
19 any measure you can think of here's the deal:  
20 There are a set of performance measures by  
21 district that include all kids in public  
22 schools. They perform at one level.  
23 Low-income kids across all districts across  
24 the state perform at another level. City of



1 Wilmington kids perform at a lower level.

2 Low-income City of Wilmington kids perform at  
3 the lowest level.

4 I would argue that measure --  
5 this is potentially -- excuse me, specifically  
6 performance measures by test scores. I would  
7 argue you could find that index regardless of  
8 any measure you looked at. It's problematic,  
9 significant, and systemic in public education  
10 reform in Delaware generally and Wilmington in  
11 particular.

12 Next slide. This is the history  
13 of public education reform in the City of  
14 Wilmington. It starts in 1897. I won't go  
15 through this. In fact, I'm sure you can't  
16 even see all of the things that happened here.  
17 But just note again 1954 ruling.

18 1974 the U.S. District Court  
19 decides to implement an Education Advancement  
20 Act that they declare unconstitutional. 1978  
21 busing is implemented, and de facto or de jure  
22 that is the law of the land for the last four  
23 years. There have been other moments in time.

24 I might add that 1995 was the





1 advent of charter schools and also a  
2 significant court case in the Coalition to  
3 Save Our Children. 1999/2001 was the  
4 Neighborhood Schools Act, which suggested that  
5 kids should go to schools close to their home  
6 and had significant implications for racial  
7 segregation in that regard.

8 From 2001 till now there have  
9 been five reports, five reports that are  
10 dealing or attempting to deal with Wilmington  
11 education. I would argue that none of those  
12 reports are all that different from one  
13 another, including the one that we produced  
14 last April.

15 The difference, though, is there  
16 had been no action on any of those reports in  
17 those intervening 15 years until the last  
18 general assembly, when the Delaware General  
19 Assembly passed two significant bills. The  
20 first was Senate Bill 122, which was a  
21 redistricting bill, and the second was HB 148,  
22 which is the establishment of the commission,  
23 both of which I'll talk about here  
24 momentarily.



1           Next slide. As we started this  
2 work last September with the Wilmington  
3 Education Advisory Committee, one of the  
4 things we noticed early was a salient point.  
5 Many people think low income and immediately  
6 think City of Wilmington. Here's the fact:  
7 51 percent of all public schoolchildren in the  
8 state of Delaware are low income.

9           I'll repeat that. 51 percent of  
10 all public schoolchildren this the state of  
11 Delaware are low income. So while there is an  
12 acute problem in the City of Wilmington, it's  
13 not exclusive to Wilmington, and in fact there  
14 are many parts of New Castle County, the  
15 western parts of Sussex, Dover, and other  
16 areas that are significantly beleaguered by  
17 that problem.

18           This is just another index that  
19 we think is relevant. So I told you that the  
20 problem is not acute to Wilmington. We have  
21 this laid out by both county and the city. So  
22 the incidence of childhood poverty across the  
23 state, you'll see 33.7 percent in Wilmington,  
24 but Dover's not far behind. If you break that



1 out by county, the highest incidence of  
2 childhood poverty is actually in Sussex  
3 County.

4 We believe that our  
5 recommendations, while specific to Wilmington,  
6 are not exclusive to Wilmington, and we  
7 believe that dealing with low-income children  
8 by providing the resources that they deserve  
9 is a statewide problem that needs to be  
10 attended to.

11 The challenge of governance I'm  
12 sure is not surprising to you. I said we had  
13 four traditional school districts and one  
14 vo-tech district in the City of Wilmington.

15 Christina School District is one  
16 out of four of 14,000 in the country that are  
17 discontinuous, which effectively means it  
18 starts in one area, is divided by 16 or  
19 20 miles of highway, and then begins again in  
20 the City of Wilmington. Again, it is one of  
21 four out of 14,000 in the country that are  
22 that way.

23 Colonial School District has  
24 about 400 or so City of Wilmington students,



1 200 of which choice to other school districts  
2 or charter schools. The 178 or so that are  
3 remaining actually have their closest school  
4 6 miles and a waterway away.

5 So Colonial School District, no  
6 schools in the city and very little City of  
7 Wilmington children; and Christina School  
8 District, one of four out of 14,000 that are  
9 divided this way.

10 This is our commission. Again, I  
11 said House Bill 148 established this  
12 commission last summer. You'll see that it is  
13 made up of a very diverse set of educators,  
14 community leaders, parents, and even a couple  
15 of students.

16 I would add that this is just the  
17 commission. We have five other committees.  
18 Those committee comprise upwards of about 100  
19 citizens across our community.

20 I would say here that since we've  
21 been operating both as Wilmington Education  
22 Advisory Committee and Wilmington Education  
23 Improvement Commission, we believe we've been  
24 the most transparent civic organization in a



1 generation around here.

2 We have 2,000 members on our  
3 Facebook page. We've had dozens of town halls  
4 where Rich and I have met with literally  
5 hundreds of leaders across this community, and  
6 we continue to do so in these kind of forums.

7 As I said, we have five  
8 committees on the commission. First is the  
9 Redistricting Committee. That is chaired by  
10 Dr. Henry Harper, who was a former  
11 superintendent of Appoquinimink School  
12 District; and Dr. Joe Pika, who's the former  
13 president of the state board of education.

14 We have a Charter and District  
15 Collaboration Committee. That's chaired by  
16 Aretha Miller, who's the CEO at Community  
17 Education Building, and Dr. Eve Buckley.

18 Funding Student Success is  
19 chaired by Jill Floore, who's the CFO of the  
20 Red Clay Consolidated School District, and  
21 Mike Jackson, who's the deputy comptroller for  
22 the Office of Management and Budget.

23 Meeting the Needs of Low-Income  
24 Students, that's chaired, as I said earlier,



1 by Michelle Taylor, who's the present CEO of  
2 United Way; the former chief judge of the  
3 Family Court, Chandlee Kuhn; and, as I said,  
4 the Education Czar for the City of Wilmington,  
5 Dr. Jackie Jenkins.

6 And then our Parent, Educator,  
7 and Community Engagement Committee is chaired  
8 by Yvonne Johnson, a very active Red Clay  
9 parent and a member of the National Board of  
10 PTA; and Chandra Pitts, who is present CEO of  
11 One Village Alliance.

12 Here are our deadlines. We have  
13 talked specifically and you've heard a lot of  
14 reporting about redistricting. We released  
15 our draft, that I hope all of you have, on  
16 November 19th, and we plan to submit pending  
17 approval from the commission that draft to the  
18 state board of education on December 17th,  
19 2015, which is Thursday.

20 The state board has said they  
21 will act on our plan as a package. That's  
22 important to note. We will present a full  
23 package around school governance to the state  
24 board of education, and they will have to vote



1 that package up or down, which is to say they  
2 cannot disaggregate that package. They have  
3 to vote it as a package.

4 If in fact they vote it down,  
5 they have said to us they will give us reasons  
6 why and give us an opportunity to resubmit.  
7 We would hope to do that in two to three weeks  
8 after that vote.

9 And it's important to note this  
10 last date, which is the authority of the state  
11 board under the provisions of SB 122 to  
12 terminate. So effectively the state board has  
13 the opportunity to redraw the lines until  
14 March 31, 2016, and then that authority goes  
15 away.

16 If in fact they vote it up, it is  
17 still subject to a joint resolution by the  
18 Delaware General Assembly and the governor,  
19 and what we believe will be a significant  
20 number of fiscal notes attached to  
21 implementing.

22 Our recommendations. We believe  
23 that schools and students served by Christina  
24 in the City of Wilmington should be assigned



1 to Red Clay. It is worth noting that both  
2 school boards, both Red Clay and Christina,  
3 support this action.

4 It's also worth noting by so  
5 doing more than 50 percent of all students in  
6 the City of Wilmington would be in Red Clay,  
7 making Red Clay a significant metropolitan  
8 district.

9 Second, all students can choose  
10 to remain in their district, in their  
11 2017/2018 school until their program is  
12 complete. So we try to do this with little  
13 disruption to students and families.

14 The Christina and Red Clay School  
15 Districts will continue to collaborate on  
16 transition planning, and there is a plan set  
17 forth. Many people believe that if this goes  
18 forward it would be implemented immediately.  
19 There's actually a three-year transition plan  
20 for that implementation.

21 The Brandywine, Colonial, and New  
22 Castle County Vo-tech School Districts will  
23 continue to serve City of Wilmington students.  
24 And I'm sure that will be a topic of





1 conversation tonight.

2           The only thing I would say is  
3 we've asked both Brandywine and Colonial to  
4 express a specific strategic interest in  
5 serving their city kids that would be included  
6 in our plan.

7           So you see 2016/2017 is meant to  
8 be a planning stage for us. It will include  
9 some test and learning, particularly around  
10 funding. We would like to change the unit  
11 count to reflect schools with high  
12 concentrations of students in poverty and  
13 English language learners in the affected  
14 districts and then move that out across the  
15 New Castle County districts and ultimately  
16 statewide.

17           You'll see that there's a  
18 transition stage in 2017/2018, and then  
19 implementation, again, begins in the fall of  
20 2018 if this is approved.

21           Our funding recommendations. I  
22 talked a little bit about this. We are one of  
23 five states in the country that don't account  
24 for any funding allocation for English



1 language learners even though those learners  
2 are the fastest-growing student population in  
3 the state.

4 And we are one of 15 that don't  
5 account for weighted funding for low-income  
6 students. It's important, we believe, that  
7 this is a part of our strategy. In fact,  
8 we've said publicly that if no funding is  
9 provided, we would not go forward with this  
10 plan.

11 We also asked for some transition  
12 funding to do some necessary assessments as we  
13 go forward. We believe that we need to  
14 continue to sustain an investment in  
15 accelerated improvements in early childhood  
16 education and we need to strengthen the  
17 revenue base supporting public education at  
18 both the state and local levels.

19 That includes reassessing the tax  
20 pools, property reassessment in New Castle  
21 County since 1983 and Kent since 1986 and  
22 Sussex since 1972, and continuing to do that  
23 in a thoughtful way. In fact, we believe that  
24 there are many Delawareans, many Delawareans



1 that are paying more than their fair share  
2 now.

3 The punch line question here is  
4 will redistricting be implemented even if the  
5 necessary funding is not provided. The answer  
6 is no.

7 If the necessary funding is not  
8 provided as confirmed by the commission in  
9 consultation with the affected districts at  
10 each milestone, I've told you about the three  
11 years of implementation, then the state board  
12 shall suspend a timetable for implementing  
13 until the resources are provided.

14 It's worth noting that we have  
15 outlined in our plan that that suspension goes  
16 away in the fall of 2018, so it's important  
17 that the funding come or nothing else will go  
18 forward.

19 What are our measures for  
20 success? Many people have asked us what this  
21 all means. And, as I've said, redistricting  
22 is not our only issue. It is our first issue,  
23 I would argue our entry point for other more  
24 salient issues.



1           Just as a point of clarity, Dan  
2 Rich from the University of Delaware's  
3 Institute of Public Administration for the  
4 first time disaggregated student performance  
5 by geography.

6           So for many years, many years,  
7 generations, the Department of Education was  
8 unable and/or unwilling to disaggregate  
9 student information by geography, which means  
10 we knew how low-income students were doing,  
11 but had no idea how City of Wilmington  
12 students were doing.

13           We plan to offer that evaluation  
14 every year based on measures that we determine  
15 to help the commission and other affected  
16 community members.

17           It's also worth noting that in  
18 addition to improving student output, which I  
19 think is important to all of us, we want to  
20 look at increased rates of attendance, reduced  
21 disciplinary incidents, increased graduation  
22 rates, college and workforce readiness, and  
23 improved rates of successful employment for  
24 City of Wilmington students.



1           I will say here that these aren't  
2 qualitative standards. Those are all  
3 quantitative that we will be producing an  
4 annual report that will be submitted to the  
5 state board, the general assembly, and  
6 governor as well as our entire community.

7           This is our logic model. Again,  
8 if you think we're emphasizing that  
9 redistricting is not our whole plan, you're  
10 right. The intention for us is to make sure  
11 folks know that we are very focused on meeting  
12 Wilmington student needs of funding student  
13 success. You'll see the inputs noted therein  
14 and the outcomes that we hope come forward in  
15 the blue.

16           The commission is up and running  
17 by law until 2021, so hopefully you will see  
18 one of many plans each year focused on all of  
19 these things that come with legislative  
20 priorities that will be academic as well as  
21 funding supports as appropriate.

22           Resources. I said we've been  
23 fairly deliberate in trying to gain citizen  
24 input. We can never do enough, so I would



1     urge you if you have places where you think  
2     this presentation would be helpful, to call  
3     us. We come at request at any time.

4                     You can monitor our progress on  
5     solutionsfordelawareschools.com. You can  
6     contact us at  
7     Solutionsfordelawareschools@gmail.com, or you  
8     can call us at (302)385-6206. We also said  
9     that we have a Facebook page that is 2,000  
10    members strong, and that Facebook page is  
11    Solutions for Wilmington Schools.

12                    So with that, we're happy to take  
13    some questions for the next 40 minutes or so,  
14    and then we'll have our formal public hearing.  
15    Thank you.

16                    MS. LOCKMAN: So we're going to  
17    call you by name. And when we call you by  
18    name, come up to this podium here to our left,  
19    state your question into the mic.

20                    I believe we have Beatrice Dixon  
21    has a question.

22                    MS. DIXON: I am here tonight  
23    after having been here quite a few times, and  
24    I can only quote the sister of Louis L.



1 Redding, whose statue stands outside, in  
2 saying for the parents and citizens of the  
3 City of Wilmington, our souls cry out.

4 I am not sure that this  
5 reiteration of the several reiterations that  
6 we've had in educational reform is going to be  
7 any better than the last because I am not sure  
8 that there is the political will to make this  
9 situation right. And until that happens, we  
10 are going to continue to go through this  
11 revolving door of yet another commission.

12 But my two questions are  
13 governance. Should this plan go through, how  
14 would then the board structure work, one?

15 And, two, most critical, we  
16 currently have a PPST system to qualify  
17 teachers, and for 37 years those teachers who  
18 have done -- passed the PPST have produced  
19 these low-income, nonperforming, academic  
20 students.

21 So will the PPST be reviewed as  
22 to its efficacy for providing teachers who are  
23 reaching the students that we are now talking  
24 about transferring into yet another governance



1 structure?

2 DR. ALLEN: Dr. Rich, I'll ask  
3 you to take the second question. I'll take  
4 the first question.

5 DR. RICH: So I think we hear  
6 very strongly that the most critical factor in  
7 the schools is the quality of the teachers,  
8 supported effectively by the other kinds of  
9 resources that are needed for them to engage  
10 the students in learning. We do not believe  
11 this exists now. There's no disagreement.

12 MS. DIXON: So the PPST in  
13 your --

14 DR. RICH: So we have to change  
15 that structure. And to do it we need to  
16 create both the centers and the support, the  
17 resources to make sure that we allow the  
18 districts, enable them as well as charters, I  
19 mean, they're all Wilmington kids, to not only  
20 attract, but as you I'm sure well know, retain  
21 top-quality teachers in the schools in which  
22 our students need them most.

23 We have a tremendous turnover  
24 rate, a burnout rate of teachers in schools.





1 So it's one thing to say we need to bring them  
2 in. The other is we needs to provide the  
3 supports that good teachers require because  
4 they're committed to their students.

5 MS. DIXON: Well, I'm talking  
6 more about not necessarily culturally  
7 competent. I'm talking about we had Future  
8 Teachers of America when I was in high school.  
9 What about the young teachers or the young  
10 people who are currently in school who want to  
11 become teachers? What kind of support are  
12 they being provided so that they can be  
13 channeled into the system?

14 We keep talking about reform. My  
15 perception is that the answer to this problem,  
16 we've already had the answer. And if anyone  
17 will go back to see the Howard High School of  
18 1867 and 1927 that Pierre du Pont provided and  
19 the quality of the teachers who were -- didn't  
20 have to be culturally competent because they  
21 knew the children.

22 They lived in the community with  
23 the children. They went to church with the  
24 children. They shopped with the children. We



1 put in -- we had the most competent and  
2 qualified teachers in all the 17 districts  
3 from Wilmington.

4 Those teachers had to sit out at  
5 the inception of this process three years  
6 while everyone else was leveled up in salary,  
7 everyone who didn't have the classroom  
8 management experience, everyone who didn't  
9 have the educational degrees that they had,  
10 everyone who didn't have the empathy for the  
11 students that they had, got their salaries.

12 And as soon as those salaries  
13 were leveled up, all four systems began to  
14 push those culturally competent, relevant, and  
15 also successful teachers out of the system.  
16 So maybe if we go back and grab what we had in  
17 the past, we can repeat some of the futures  
18 for children that those teachers were able to  
19 give the students of the past.

20 Now, the governance issue?

21 DR. ALLEN: Two things on that.

22 In the Wilmington Education Advisory  
23 Committee's initial report we talk about  
24 governance in two ways. First, we believe



1 that there should be more Wilmington  
2 representation on any school board serving the  
3 City of Wilmington. We haven't prescribed  
4 that directly in our report, but we're  
5 certainly advocating for it.

6 Second, the most important  
7 probably is, again, in our report we recommend  
8 that the Office of Public Policy and Education  
9 be formed in the City of Wilmington and that  
10 our commission recommended that that would be  
11 a city-run, city-operated office that will be  
12 able to do a couple things, one, we believe  
13 engage parents in a much more meaningful way  
14 than they are today in school, and also try to  
15 hold both the traditional and the charters  
16 more accountable for integrating one unified  
17 plan.

18 So we have not reflected that in  
19 this particular report, which is the first of  
20 many, but they are in our initial  
21 comprehensive report and recommendation that  
22 the board take over in the next five years.

23 MS. DIXON: Well, if you keep the  
24 current leveling structure of seven board



1 members and expect that only one seat would be  
2 lodged in Wilmington and Wilmington has to  
3 surrender its children to that system, which  
4 has been very ineffective in the past, I think  
5 you can really not expect to get a lot of  
6 parental participation because we have to pay  
7 the taxes but we have no representation in the  
8 process.

9           The process has historically kept  
10 City of Wilmington residents out of the  
11 decision-making process. And now we surrender  
12 to them more students and we're not expected  
13 to get a larger degree of control within that  
14 governing body?

15           DR. ALLEN: Just to be clear, we  
16 don't disagree with that point. We think  
17 there should be more local control, both as  
18 relates to board representation and its  
19 development of the Office of Public Policy and  
20 Education. But both those things we believe  
21 are important in this process.

22           MS. DIXON: Those are my  
23 questions. Thank you.

24           MS. LOCKMAN: Just a reminder if



1 anyone has just come in, to see our staff  
2 person Elizabeth if you would like to sign in  
3 and ask a question during the Q and A.

4 Next we have Councilman Jea  
5 Street with a question.

6 MR. STREET: I'd like to ask  
7 questions as relate to what's recommended in  
8 Colonial. Is the commission or those who  
9 agreed on the report familiar with the  
10 Neighborhood Schools Act?

11 DR. ALLEN: Yes.

12 MR. STREET: Is the commission  
13 familiar with the matter Christina v. The City  
14 of Wilmington wherein the Chancery Court found  
15 that Christina's efforts to close schools in  
16 the city and transport them out of the city  
17 was a violation of the Neighborhood Schools  
18 Act?

19 DR. ALLEN: Yes.

20 MR. STREET: So why, then, will  
21 it be acceptable and why would you as a  
22 commission recommend that something that you  
23 should know full well is probably a violation  
24 of the law, why would that be included in this



1 recommendation and that's not consistent with  
2 the book that you put out in April 2015 prior  
3 to legislation being sponsored and passed?

4 DR. ALLEN: Question, Councilman  
5 Street, again?

6 MR. STREET: The question is:  
7 Why will those who made the final  
8 recommendation support and recommend something  
9 that you should know full well is probably in  
10 violation of existing state law?

11 DR. ALLEN: I'd start this way:  
12 The Colonial matter has been a tough one for  
13 us. The Colonial School District voted  
14 unanimously -- yeah, unanimously to keep their  
15 kids in the City of Wilmington. We disagree  
16 with that assertion, had several meetings with  
17 them as to why we thought that was  
18 inappropriate. They did not relent.

19 We came to an agreement that if  
20 they decided to keep those kids, they would  
21 have to show more than good faith in serving  
22 them in a different way than they have in the  
23 past.

24 I would also say that the final



1 recommendations are to be voted on tomorrow,  
2 so the commission has not yet formally voted,  
3 but the draft does recommend the current  
4 situation.

5 MR. STREET: That being the case,  
6 then, doesn't that make Colonial, who only  
7 serves 178 city children in charge of or quasi  
8 in charge of the education of all city  
9 children?

10 DR. ALLEN: No. That's not what  
11 I believe.

12 MR. STREET: And you don't have  
13 any concern that the commission may move  
14 forward tomorrow and pass something that is  
15 probably in violation of the law in spirit, in  
16 intention, and been tried successfully by the  
17 City in court?

18 DR. ALLEN: I have significant  
19 concern about Colonial's decision, but we have  
20 gone forward with this based on what we  
21 believe is a good faith effort that we'll  
22 monitor consistently over the life of the  
23 commission.

24 MR. STREET: Is the commission



1 aware that over the last 30 years Colonial has  
2 received over \$100 million from the other  
3 three school districts to educate  
4 approximately 200 kids a year?

5 DR. ALLEN: We're not aware of  
6 that specific figure, no. We do believe  
7 they're a net provider.

8 MR. STREET: If you take 34 years  
9 times \$3 million a year, it comes out to a  
10 little over \$100 million, my point being the  
11 children -- would you agree with me that even  
12 with that \$100 million, Colonial has yet to do  
13 anything of substance as relates to improving  
14 the educational success of the 178 to 200  
15 children it serves in Riverside?

16 DR. ALLEN: I would agree with  
17 that, and with this caveat, that I don't  
18 believe any district is any better than any  
19 other in that regard in the City of  
20 Wilmington.

21 MR. STREET: Isn't it a fact,  
22 though, that the other districts have given  
23 Colonial \$1 million a year that they could  
24 have otherwise spent on their own children,





1 and Colonial yet still \$100 million later  
2 hasn't been any more successful, and yet they  
3 want to continue and continue in violation of  
4 the Neighborhood Schools Act?

5 Let me cut straight to the chase.  
6 If you think that it's going to be okay to  
7 continue to bus those children out of the City  
8 of Wilmington past schools in Christina now  
9 and Red Clay in the future without a legal  
10 challenge, you're sadly mistaken.

11 DR. ALLEN: Thank you,  
12 Councilman.

13 MS. LOCKMAN: Next up is Jerry  
14 Velazquez.

15 MR. VELAZQUEZ: Good evening,  
16 everybody. The report states every district  
17 must be accompanied by resources needed to  
18 better serve students and specifically that  
19 the resources needed to fully address the need  
20 of low-income students, English language  
21 learners, and students at risk.

22 While the report states that  
23 initial funding should be provided in the Red  
24 Clay District and to Wilmington schools within



1 the Christina School District, there was no  
2 mention of charter schools in the City of  
3 Wilmington, yet in 2012 Delaware ranked among  
4 the third in the state the percentage of  
5 public -- percentage of students in charter  
6 schools.

7           There are over 11,500 students in  
8 Wilmington. 73 percent of them go to  
9 traditional schools. 21 percent go to charter  
10 schools. When you look at English and math  
11 scores of traditional public schools, they  
12 have about 67 and 62 percent proficiency.  
13 Charter schools have 68 and 65 percent  
14 proficiencies.

15           When you look at low income, the  
16 traditional schools are producing about 54 and  
17 48 percent proficiencies for English and math.  
18 Charter schools are producing 63 and 59  
19 percent. For low-income students it's 42 and  
20 37 percent in English and math. Charter  
21 schools are at 56 and 53 percent on the  
22 average proficiency.

23           So I guess my question is this:  
24 Why wouldn't charter schools be included in



1 this report?

2 DR. ALLEN: I'll turn it over to  
3 Dr. Rich in a second. But I'd say  
4 redistricting first was our first foray, and  
5 it was meant to deal with traditional schools  
6 first.

7 On your funding point we do  
8 believe that and are recommending that over  
9 time the unit counts for English language  
10 learners and schools of high concentrations of  
11 poverty not only be extended to the other  
12 districts but also to charter schools. We're  
13 just taking a phasing in approach in that  
14 regard.

15 MR. VELAZQUEZ: But when you look  
16 at even the funding issues now, when you look  
17 at the fact that the House Bill 30 and House  
18 Bill 117 have right now been tabled, it raises  
19 a level of concern that almost mirrors what's  
20 been happening historically with the way the  
21 State of Delaware has been managing education,  
22 which we as a state have been slowest to adopt  
23 best practices.

24 So, again, how do we in the



1 public arena help to support a report that, A,  
2 doesn't include 20 percent of the educational  
3 system that's out there, does not address the  
4 fact that here is a plan that has no funding  
5 in place right now?

6 I would suggest -- I would offer  
7 to you that any plan needs stakeholder support  
8 and approval, needs resources, and needs an  
9 executable plan. I'm just concerned whether  
10 this plan has all of that embodied in it. And  
11 if it doesn't, then wouldn't you consider the  
12 plan to be less than a good plan to go  
13 forward?

14 DR. ALLEN: I would agree with  
15 you, but on balance I have said many times  
16 that if the funding is not provided, that the  
17 plan should not go forward. And that is not  
18 only rhetorical flourish, that is actually in  
19 the resolution we'll provide to the state  
20 board.

21 DR. RICH: If I can just add to  
22 that a couple things.

23 MR. VELAZQUEZ: Sure.

24 DR. RICH: First of all, the



1 plan, the overall framework is in the  
2 Wilmington Education Advisory Committee's  
3 proposal on strengthening Wilmington  
4 education.

5 And the framework that is  
6 described there is the same framework, as you  
7 can see, all of you, in the executive summary.  
8 And as you will recognize, redistricting is  
9 simply one component of that framework.

10 So this one component requires a  
11 comprehensive transition resource and  
12 implementation plan. We have that. It's  
13 about 200 pages and maybe 700 pages in  
14 appendices. Now, that's one piece. That's  
15 the first four months of the work of the  
16 commission, which goes on for five years.

17 And it's clear from the advisory  
18 committee that charter schools are very  
19 important, both to the issue and the challenge  
20 we face and also to meeting that, meeting that  
21 challenge. So everything that Tony Allen  
22 mentioned I think is true.

23 Let me also say that I think that  
24 just as we disaggregated for districts with



1 regard to Wilmington students, we should  
2 disaggregate for charters.

3           And when you disaggregate for  
4 charters, the picture is different for  
5 Wilmington students, just as it is for  
6 districts. There are some doing better than  
7 others. So taking the averages doesn't really  
8 apply. So we do both. We need to apply the  
9 same standard.

10           So in the redistricting plan, our  
11 case, the two other pieces, our case is that  
12 the rollout of support should surround the  
13 initiative that you're proposing to undertake  
14 initially, which is this redistricting  
15 process, and then roll out as rapidly as you  
16 can to all schools, not only in New Castle  
17 County, but through the state.

18           In fact, what we propose is that  
19 this funding has to happen next year to get us  
20 started on the process, even though the actual  
21 movement of schools and students may not take  
22 place until September 2018. So at the time at  
23 which it does take place, it will impact all  
24 districts and the charters that you're



1       referencing.

2                     Can I just add one other piece?

3                     MR. VELAZQUEZ:   Yes, sir.

4                     DR. RICH:   I do want to point out  
5       that in 60 years, more than 60 years now,  
6       since Brown, that last summer was the first  
7       time that government officials in the State of  
8       Delaware at the state level took any action to  
9       strengthen Wilmington education.

10                    So if you ask why we're a bit  
11       hopeful, we believe there is a commitment and  
12       momentum now that has not been present for  
13       more than half a century.

14                    MR. VELAZQUEZ:   And I'm not sure  
15       how we would gauge their commitment, but,  
16       again, I'm just concerned about the fact that  
17       here is a report that stands on three legs.  
18       It's talking about we need to -- we need to  
19       meet Wilmington student needs.   We need to  
20       have student -- appropriate student funding,  
21       and we need to create a governance, as you're  
22       saying.

23                    So here we are in the City of  
24       Wilmington divided among three school



1 districts, quite a few charter schools, as you  
2 clearly have pointed out here, 23 governing  
3 authorities, and yet we have no collaboration  
4 among them.

5           So how does putting together a  
6 plan that excludes 20 percent of the  
7 educational system in the City of Wilmington  
8 foster anything else but a plan that again  
9 goes to foster the historical presence that  
10 has happened where the district arrangements  
11 have been less than favorable to the education  
12 of black students?

13           DR. ALLEN: I hear you. I hear  
14 your point. It's well taken. I would just  
15 say that we're not excluding. And if you read  
16 the Strengthening Wilmington Education full  
17 report that we issued in April, we have a  
18 full-throated analysis on charter schools.

19           We call for deeper collaboration  
20 with them and have been called to question in  
21 that regard, are certainly promoting the  
22 Office of Public Policy and Education in the  
23 City of Wilmington, and that they would have  
24 some responsibility for both integration





1 within charter and from charter to district.

2           So while this is one -- again,  
3 this is one of many plans over the next five  
4 years. We believe this is the first pass, and  
5 I think you will see ongoing plans,  
6 legislative priorities, and related fiscal  
7 notes that will occur right through 2021. So  
8 we don't believe we're excluding charter  
9 schools.

10           MR. VELAZQUEZ: I'm just going to  
11 say the following also: When you look at  
12 these timelines, we only have but so many  
13 years in which to take students from K to 8,  
14 okay, to develop them. K through 3 are the  
15 most critical. 4 through 8 for high school to  
16 college.

17           So when we start talking about  
18 plans that take four or five years to develop,  
19 we are losing an entire generation of  
20 students. I'm concerned that this report,  
21 while I think it was a great exercise in what  
22 you put together, I think it's a great plan, I  
23 think the timetable is a quite elongated in a  
24 state that has a history of over 40 years of



1 failing the students most in need. I would  
2 like to see compression forthwith.

3 DR. RICH: So let me answer the  
4 question of compression. If this compression  
5 was approved this year through all the stages,  
6 then the school districts involved would have  
7 less than three months to make critical  
8 decisions on the configuration of schools, the  
9 supports, the identification of the  
10 principals, the instructional programs that  
11 would be in those schools.

12 We don't believe that's enough  
13 time for us to actually identify what's needed  
14 to make a difference in the schools going  
15 forward as compared to what we've had in the  
16 past. That was the rationale for the  
17 extension.

18 We need to really do things that  
19 are different for our students and not simply  
20 change the sign on the door from one district  
21 to another and consider that we're making  
22 progress. So we can't have it both ways. We  
23 need to get to the substance of the matter.

24 We have said, you heard Tony say



1 it tonight, that if all we did was change  
2 district boundaries, we've said it's not worth  
3 doing. You need to make these other changes  
4 as well. And that does take time in order to  
5 do it in a way that's not disruptive to  
6 children, to their parents, and to educators.

7 MR. VELAZQUEZ: When you look at  
8 corporate America and their ability to turn on  
9 a dime, that is something that the educational  
10 system also has to do. And it's been  
11 demonstrated time and time again that that  
12 system that cannot turn on a dime is scheduled  
13 to continue to do the same inadequate job that  
14 it's doing currently.

15 DR. ALLEN: Your points are well  
16 taken. Thank you.

17 MS. LOCKMAN: So we're going to  
18 have to switch gears in about ten minutes. So  
19 three more questions.

20 Matthew Meyer.

21 DR. ALLEN: Can I just do a  
22 question check? Are there any other questions  
23 out there?

24 MS. LOCKMAN: Okay.



1 MR. MEYER: Good evening. My  
2 name is Matthew Meyer. I'm a resident of the  
3 City of Wilmington. I also am a former  
4 attorney at the Educational Opportunity  
5 Section of the Civil Rights Division of the  
6 U.S. Department of Justice and a former  
7 teacher at Prestige Academy right here in  
8 Wilmington. I'm a certified middle school  
9 math teacher.

10 There are three characteristics  
11 that consistently -- data shows consistently  
12 produce higher-quality outcomes for low-income  
13 students. Number one is the recruitment,  
14 training, or retention of school leaders.  
15 Number two is the recruitment, training, and  
16 retention of high-quality teachers. And  
17 number three is kids going to integrated  
18 schools.

19 My question is about the third  
20 point, that what I don't see in any of the  
21 materials you produced, and I haven't read  
22 every single word, so it may be in there, but  
23 has anyone looked at what impact this plan  
24 would have in terms of children in the City of



1 Wilmington going to integrated schools?

2           This whole process started, as  
3 you said, in 1954, and the main driver of the  
4 policies was the desegregation of schools,  
5 making sure our kids went to desegregated  
6 schools.

7           And I know that the political  
8 winds have turned against busing and some of  
9 the tools used to make schools desegregated  
10 and integrate them, but I was wondering if  
11 there was any look at how this whole thing  
12 would impact that.

13           DR. ALLEN: Again I'll let  
14 Dr. Rich answer in a moment. But if you do  
15 peruse the April report, you'll note that we  
16 projected what the changes would be racially,  
17 by English language learners, and special  
18 education needs. The differences are marginal  
19 in that regard.

20           And it goes to several points.  
21 The first is too many people equate  
22 low-income and African American, Latino with  
23 the City of Wilmington. There are large  
24 pockets of African American and Latino



1 students throughout New Castle County, as I'm  
2 sure you know.

3 In fact, in Delaware a large  
4 proportion of African Americans are not in the  
5 city. So the demographics have changed since  
6 1954 quite considerably. And if you overlay  
7 that with the proportion of low-income  
8 students across the state, it's not surprising  
9 to me that the demographics haven't changed  
10 substantively in that regard.

11 DR. RICH: So one of the reasons  
12 we are advocating for the development and  
13 extension of a large metropolitan district  
14 into a leadership role as the next step, not  
15 the end point, but as the next step, is  
16 precisely because it would be more expansive  
17 and more diverse in its composition.

18 The test, of course, will be in  
19 regard to the actual configuration of schools,  
20 patterns, and attendance patterns. That will  
21 be determined next year, as it always is  
22 determined by the districts. The commission  
23 will work with them to do that. So it's  
24 absolutely a fair question.



1           What we do know based on what you  
2           referenced is that in fact that the structure  
3           put in place to achieve a certain integration  
4           of schools through busing has failed to meet  
5           that standard consistently.

6           In fact, we've moved away from  
7           that standard, and only state policies that  
8           they've taken instead of reenforcing it have  
9           actually diluted that standard over time,  
10          including some that we've referenced this  
11          evening. So you're absolutely right. It's a  
12          challenge. We know that that does make a  
13          difference.

14          The first two items also make a  
15          critical difference, and we're hoping that the  
16          changes will be helpful in that regard. But  
17          we certainly need to look through the process  
18          at each stage and evaluate whether we're  
19          really making progress and not just assume  
20          that because we started it that it produces  
21          the outcomes.

22                 MR. MEYER: I mean, as is often  
23                 the case in education reform, the outcomes are  
24                 not always predictable from the outset. So



1 things like charter schools and closing --

2 DR. RICH: Absolutely.

3 MR. MEYER: -- dramatic impact.

4 DR. RICH: Absolutely.

5 DR. ALLEN: Thanks for your  
6 question.

7 MS. LOCKMAN: Alethea  
8 Smith-Tucker.

9 MS. SMITH-TUCKER: Hello,  
10 everyone. My name is Alethea Smith-Tucker.  
11 I'm a community member and a parent of two  
12 City of Wilmington children. Hi.

13 Dr. Allen, you specifically said  
14 that redistricting is the price of admission.  
15 I would like to know why that was the specific  
16 approach to -- as a benchmark for moving  
17 forward. Why that model?

18 DR. ALLEN: That's your question?

19 MS. SMITH-TUCKER: That's my  
20 question.

21 DR. ALLEN: My sense is if you  
22 look at what's happening in public education  
23 reform over the last 60 years, very little has  
24 been able to be put forward. And we think





1 that redrawing the lines is much more, in  
2 regards to the concerns, is much more a simple  
3 matter than it is a complex matter.

4 And our bet has been if we can  
5 get over that simple matter with respect to  
6 redrawing the lines and making it more clear,  
7 that we can hold folks accountable for the  
8 large proportions of low-income students in  
9 the City of Wilmington. We would be much more  
10 successful in substantive issues as we outline  
11 in our report.

12 MS. SMITH-TUCKER: So if I  
13 understand, to echo what you're saying, are  
14 you saying that just to have a more  
15 streamlined governing body for Wilmington  
16 makes it easier to then enact change? Is that  
17 the bottom line?

18 DR. ALLEN: My sense is at the  
19 district level, and I would argue at the  
20 charter level to the a lesser degree, but  
21 significantly the motto has been we're all  
22 accountable, which in our view means no one is  
23 accountable.

24 So our ability to put the



1 majority of City of Wilmington students in one  
2 place and begin to hold that district, in  
3 particular Red Clay, more accountable for  
4 meeting our student needs is an important  
5 step.

6 MS. SMITH-TUCKER: And I also  
7 wanted to know what about this plan as it  
8 stands right now would motivate people to,  
9 specifically the State governing body, to sign  
10 off on this plan because I don't really see  
11 any substance in regards to specifically how  
12 education is going to change at the student  
13 and at the school level.

14 And basically you're talking  
15 about logistics and governing bodies, and so I  
16 don't -- can you convince me? It's possible.  
17 It's possible.

18 Listen, I want to say I  
19 appreciate all the work that's being done, but  
20 I really want to understand what are the  
21 specific details that would motivate the State  
22 to sign off on this when there has been a  
23 history of so much negligence and avoidance of  
24 education, period. I want to know where's the



1 meat.

2 DR. ALLEN: And, again, I would  
3 argue the meat is largely in our report that  
4 we issued in April.

5 And more clearly, with respect to  
6 political will of the State, while we'll see  
7 what happens in the next session of the  
8 General Assembly, the fact that they did  
9 approve two significant bills around this  
10 issue for the first time in 60 years and there  
11 were only three no votes in the passage of  
12 those bills, we believe gives us hope that  
13 something can be done for the first time in a  
14 very long, long time. Again, we have never  
15 gotten as far as passing law on this issue.

16 MS. SMITH-TUCKER: Okay. One  
17 last question. You had mentioned measures of  
18 success, and they were very high-level  
19 measures of success that I'm sure I could find  
20 on any of the district websites, parent  
21 engagement, graduation success. I mean, that  
22 is no different than any other plan that I've  
23 seen on any other website regarding school  
24 education.



1                   Specifically what are some of the  
2 things that are outcomes from those other  
3 committees that will help advance those  
4 measures?

5                   DR. ALLEN: Say it one more time.  
6 I'm sorry. Say it one more time. I'm sorry.

7                   MS. SMITH-TUCKER: So during this  
8 whole commission there were several  
9 committees, parent engagement.

10                  DR. ALLEN: Okay.

11                  MS. SMITH-TUCKER: So what are  
12 those --

13                  DR. RICH: They're in there. If  
14 you look at the Milestones and Measures of  
15 Success section of the plan, you won't  
16 appreciate it from the --

17                  MS. SMITH-TUCKER: I didn't see  
18 any specifics.

19                  DR. RICH: Well, there's a whole  
20 section on it. And basically what it does is  
21 it reflects the dimensions that would really  
22 come from other committees because it starts  
23 really in early childhood and the readiness to  
24 learn of children when they arrive.



1 I mean, we've said that that's a  
2 critical need. It works through not only what  
3 they do with regard to academic achievement  
4 but also social, emotional growth.

5 We have said that what we need to  
6 be adopting in our state, we don't have it  
7 now, it's another issue related to the lack of  
8 will, is we don't have a developmental model  
9 for children driving the arrangement of the  
10 supports and even the expenditure of the funds  
11 that we make. We spend a lot of money, but we  
12 don't spend it necessarily in this way.

13 All of those are milestones and  
14 measures of progress that relate not only to  
15 the reduction of outcomes we don't want like  
16 suspensions and expulsions, but also  
17 dimensions that we do want, which is that  
18 individual children can make progress and be  
19 supported and surrounded by the kinds of  
20 services and individuals that they need at  
21 each stage.

22 A lot of the work that will be  
23 needed in this hearing will be from these  
24 other committees. That's exactly the case.



1 DR. ALLEN: The only thing I'd  
2 add is I want to dispel the notion that our  
3 work ends March 31st. Our work ends June 30,  
4 2021.

5 It isn't that there were  
6 committees. There are committees that are  
7 working very hard on all these issues and, I  
8 might add, will be reporting every year on the  
9 progress of Wilmington city children for the  
10 first time in our state's history.

11 So I think there's going to be  
12 lots of opportunity for us to evolve and learn  
13 in this process. That's why I think your  
14 input is really valuable. And we do believe  
15 that our measure of success will hold not only  
16 the schools accountable, but also hold the  
17 commission accountable.

18 MS. SMITH-TUCKER: You did  
19 mention transparency, and what I would like to  
20 say in regards to those committees is ongoing,  
21 is that we would like a YouTube channel of all  
22 the things that's happening.

23 MS. LOCKMAN: Okay. Two more  
24 questions. We don't want to hold up the



1 hearing. We've got Timothy Crawl-Bey.

2 MR. CRAWL-BEY: Good evening.  
3 Some of the questions I had were kind of  
4 addressed through the charter school question  
5 and the previous person who came up. But I  
6 want to ask some questions specific to the  
7 Brandywine School District.

8 One of the concerns I've had  
9 throughout the process is that while it's  
10 called the Wilmington Education Improvement  
11 Committee or whatnot, it seems like the  
12 Brandywine School District for whatever reason  
13 is kind of on the outside looking in when  
14 you're talking about the actual reforms being  
15 made, although that district I believe has  
16 around 30 to 40 percent of city students  
17 within that district.

18 So I guess my first question is  
19 why isn't the Brandywine School District a  
20 more substantive part of the reforms that are  
21 being created, particularly since there seems  
22 to be an emphasis on just streamlining some of  
23 the districts or having a lot of the city kids  
24 within one district, Red Clay. Why hasn't



1 Brandywine been included, it seems like?

2 DR. ALLEN: I appreciate your  
3 question, Mr. Crawl-Bey. I would say the  
4 question is more clearly directed to  
5 Brandywine, but I'll give it an answer. We  
6 have asked Brandywine to play a more  
7 significant role in the process. They are at  
8 the table.

9 The president of the Brandywine  
10 School Board is a commissioner, the  
11 superintendent is very involved, and we have  
12 active working committees of Brandywine  
13 officials. But they have resolved for the  
14 moment, particularly on governance, I want to  
15 be clear here, specifically through  
16 governance, to retain their current  
17 boundaries.

18 So we did not outline a  
19 recommendation for them to do anything  
20 different in the report, but we've always  
21 wanted them to take more of a visible role in  
22 that regard.

23 And I would argue that particular  
24 conversation, the same way we've had with





1 Colonial, is likely not over, but it's certain  
2 that's something that we are continuing to  
3 press on. But to your point about them being  
4 more involved in all the other reforms noted  
5 in the agenda, they are at the table, and I  
6 would argue that significantly.

7 MR. CRAWL-BEY: Notwithstanding  
8 what you said about the district  
9 superintendent being involved, one of your  
10 first comments was that's really on  
11 Brandywine, which suggested to me that they've  
12 taken a position not to be as engaged.

13 DR. ALLEN: With respect to  
14 redistricting.

15 MR. CRAWL-BEY: Right. So,  
16 again, I guess in terms of the committee's  
17 role, independent of the district to what they  
18 want or what their desires are, I guess why  
19 the committee didn't just take the position if  
20 this is what's best for city students, it  
21 seems to me the committee -- my question is  
22 why wouldn't the committee take a more  
23 independent position from what that district  
24 has desired if in fact the belief is that



1 these things are to help city kids.

2 DR. ALLEN: And I'll respond more  
3 clearly here, but we deliberated on the issue  
4 at length both with respect to Brandywine and  
5 Colonial and ultimately decided that in order  
6 to move this forward, which is important to  
7 begin a process that has not begun for the  
8 last 60 years, we would take this approach,  
9 and to the extent we would come back to it at  
10 a later time, we would.

11 DR. RICH: I would just add that  
12 the step that is been proposed as the initial  
13 step, not the only step, but the initial step,  
14 is quite a major change.

15 At the result, at the outcome of  
16 the redistricting, we're proposing there will  
17 for the first time be a school district with a  
18 primary responsibility for the majority of  
19 public education students in the City of  
20 Wilmington. That's a large step. It's not  
21 the end step.

22 Second is that we -- back when we  
23 were working on the report for the advisory  
24 committee and before the commission was



1 established, we affirmed that we expected  
2 Brandywine to remain a part of the educational  
3 process within the city, that it would be one  
4 of the core districts.

5 And so a key element here now is  
6 how Brandywine will work with Red Clay and to  
7 the extent that Colonial stays and with  
8 charter schools because we need to work out  
9 not only just the streamlining, but also the  
10 kind of collaboration across.

11 They've committed to us that  
12 they're engaged and willing to participate in  
13 that process, and that's what we're going to  
14 work on.

15 MR. CRAWL-BEY: One other quick  
16 question. You had the chart at the beginning  
17 that talked about the number of the students  
18 in the 23 districts down to zero. So my  
19 question, it relates to charter schools.

20 I mean, I think there's a general  
21 consensus that one of the benefits of some of  
22 the charter schools, particularly local ones  
23 who have had some higher test scores, is that  
24 they do have more freedom, that they're able



1 to implement some things from an academic  
2 standpoint that some of the public schools  
3 haven't.

4           So I just wanted to, if you could  
5 just maybe clarify or articulate a little bit  
6 more about the collaboration that you want.  
7 Not that you want, but what you envision as  
8 far -- what the committee envisions as far as  
9 that collaboration because my concern would  
10 be, again -- ran a charter school in  
11 Philadelphia.

12           You know, again, the benefits  
13 they have is that they aren't like the public  
14 schools in some of the things that they can  
15 do. And so how do you -- maybe your vision is  
16 just something broader. I just want you to  
17 speak more about what you see as the  
18 relationship in terms of a plan or the like.

19           DR. ALLEN: That's a good  
20 question. Two factoids. First, the National  
21 Association of Charter School Authorizers,  
22 which is sort of the gold standard for charter  
23 schools, suggested all charters should be  
24 authorized by local school districts. And in



1 fact 90 percent of all charters across the  
2 country are authorized by local school  
3 districts.

4 In Delaware it's completely the  
5 opposite. 90 percent are authorized by the  
6 State. We believe that creates friction  
7 between districts and charters, natural  
8 friction, you might posit.

9 The other thing I think is  
10 important to note in that regard is when the  
11 charter law was introduced in Delaware, the  
12 idea was that there would be these petri dish  
13 learning environments where you would share  
14 best practices between charters and between  
15 the districts so that you could scale up those  
16 best practices throughout the system.

17 That scaling up is the thing that  
18 has not taken place, and we believe that has a  
19 lot to do with the fact that many districts  
20 don't see charters -- do see charters as  
21 competition and competition that is unwanted  
22 in that regard, and many charters themselves  
23 between charters don't work all that  
24 effectively together. There are pockets where



1 that happens, but it's not universal.

2 The other piece I believe is  
3 chomping at the bit to add on, the other thing  
4 I think is important here, when you think  
5 about the success of charters, they vary in  
6 their success, and there, in my view, is not a  
7 particularly collaborative nature, when one  
8 fails that everybody else comes running to  
9 their support, which I think is significant.

10 The last factoid I'd say is  
11 charters are important in our work. You will  
12 see that in a full-throated way next year.  
13 And they're important if for no other reason  
14 but this: We project that in the next five  
15 years 60 percent of all City of Wilmington  
16 students could actually be in charter schools.

17 So it's not something that we're  
18 leaving on the table relative to best practice  
19 scaling and collaboration.

20 DR. RICH: We have a fractured  
21 public education system. We have three  
22 systems. There are parts of it that operate  
23 largely independently from one another. One  
24 segment is traditional districts. We've got



1 four of those working. We've got a vo-tech  
2 district that operates in a world of its own.  
3 And then we've got, depending on what we  
4 count, we've got 12, 13 charter schools in  
5 Wilmington and others, and they are another  
6 system.

7                   So we've got two problems. One  
8 is that the units within each of these systems  
9 don't work so well with each other. They  
10 don't. They don't scale up. When we have  
11 successes, we don't scale up the success. As  
12 Tony said, that was the whole idea of  
13 innovation. And they don't connect with each  
14 other.

15                   So we've got all of this to do.  
16 Streamlining districts is just one piece. We  
17 propose that we had to overcome this  
18 fracturing. We need one public education  
19 system that serves all the kids and does so in  
20 terms of being able to improve their  
21 performance.

22                   Of all the charters that serve  
23 the City of Wilmington, the charters  
24 statewide, there are two or three that have



1 performances that are above the state average  
2 for traditional schools. That's not an  
3 indictment of charters. It's not an  
4 indictment of traditional schools.

5           These are challenging conditions,  
6 and at this point in time it's fair that we  
7 believe none of the system is really up to the  
8 standards that we want them to be in terms of  
9 generating the outcomes for the students. So  
10 we're with you. We need to get the players to  
11 work with each other.

12           But we have had decades and  
13 decades where they have been actually  
14 facilitated to operate separately,  
15 independently, without much collaboration, and  
16 with no unified plan.

17           MS. LOCKMAN: Thank you. We have  
18 one more question from Marsha Carter. Then  
19 we'll switch gears.

20           DR. ALLEN: While Ms. Carter is  
21 coming up, I just want to recognize Councilman  
22 Sherry Dorsey, who wasn't here at the top of  
23 the hour, and also Red Clay Superintendent  
24 Merv Daugherty.





1 MS. CARTER: I had just my  
2 question is what plan is there that you have  
3 in place to address the school principals or  
4 the school staff that has already had a  
5 history of failing the students?

6 So, for example, let's just do  
7 Warner for example, where two out of ten of  
8 the kids are not doing well in reading or in  
9 math, haven't met the state standards, so --  
10 or, excuse me, only two out of ten have met  
11 the state standards for reading and math for  
12 third graders.

13 So when you look at that, what  
14 plan do you have in place to address the  
15 school administration to have -- or, excuse  
16 me, that has historically failed the students?

17 DR. ALLEN: I'll start this way:  
18 It's our intention -- it's not our intention,  
19 actually, to take over the work of the  
20 districts themselves.

21 We think they need to be held to  
22 a higher standard, which is why we're taking  
23 the three years before we actually implement  
24 to make sure that Red Clay, Brandywine, and



1 Colonial are up to meeting that standard as we  
2 go into what could potentially be a new  
3 paradigm.

4                   So we're very thoughtful about  
5 that because the notion that we would come in,  
6 make some declarations about what educational  
7 leaders will do in their schools, we don't  
8 think would be of benefit to actually making  
9 the true change that we need.

10                   What we do think, though, is if  
11 there is one significant metropolitan district  
12 that we can hold accountable across measures  
13 that we all agree on, we can move that needle  
14 for the very fact that it has not been  
15 evaluated as such.

16                   MS. CARTER: So is there power  
17 within the commission that's -- administrative  
18 power that going to allow you to address the  
19 teachers and administrators that people feel  
20 like are not effective?

21                   DR. ALLEN: Our only power has  
22 been our ability to convene around the issues,  
23 to advocate as appropriate both legislatively  
24 and at a grassroots level, and to continue to



1 make recommendations and evaluate our success  
2 over time. We are not advocating for any more  
3 power than that. We think there is power in  
4 all the aspects.

5 DR. RICH: The authority that  
6 you've describing falls between the  
7 Department of Education and the school  
8 districts. And that's the way it operates.

9 There is one factor I think  
10 that's worth pointing out. The timeline we  
11 proposed was in part intended to allow the  
12 district's impact -- that's not only Red Clay.  
13 It's also Christina because when they make  
14 this change in boundaries, they're going to be  
15 significantly impacted, and that may -- I  
16 would expect that in both cases you're going  
17 to see a change in the configuration of the  
18 schools and the feeder patterns, and that will  
19 mean a review of what the leadership should  
20 be, which schools would be performing what  
21 functions for kids, and then how the staff  
22 will go forward.

23 We wanted to make sure that that  
24 would be done in a very careful and thoughtful



1 way in terms of configurations that might best  
2 address the needs of the students and then the  
3 matching of the leaders of those schools and  
4 the educators to the demands and needs that  
5 arise.

6           If we had truncated the decision  
7 process, more compressed it, that would have  
8 been virtually impossible. They would have  
9 had, like, three months to make some of these  
10 initial decisions, and what you would see  
11 would be as you would expect. They would  
12 actually continue to apply.

13           So if we want to make change and  
14 we want to look at change, we need to give  
15 this timeline a little different framework,  
16 and we've extended it.

17           MS. CARTER: Do you have -- have  
18 you considered that reality that even if we do  
19 the change, we make these changes and all the  
20 teachers and the leaders still look the same,  
21 how will they then under new leadership --  
22 under new redistricting, how would that change  
23 the actual outcomes delivered to the children?

24           DR. RICH: Well, I don't think



1 there's anything we're proposing that we  
2 believe should remain the same, so that's not  
3 it. But I think your question poses the very  
4 seriousness of the challenge, and we would not  
5 dismiss it in any regard.

6 Many things need to happen for  
7 this change to have the impacts that we all  
8 want them to have for student outcomes. We  
9 need to get started. What we are clear about  
10 is that we've got 60 years of experience with  
11 doing things the way we've been doing it  
12 without making any changes, and we know what  
13 those outcomes are.

14 So what we do know for sure are  
15 the costs of doing nothing. If we do nothing,  
16 we can pretty well predict the outcomes  
17 because we can see them. We can count them.  
18 We can document them. But there's no  
19 guarantee, I agree with you completely, that  
20 if we start this process that every other  
21 piece. We have to be very careful.

22 That's why Tony said we need to  
23 evaluate this on a continuing basis. We have  
24 to hold ourselves and everyone else



1     accountable.

2                     MS. CARTER: I want to be fair,  
3     so I'll stop there. But I do want to say very  
4     quickly, I think it's a very dangerous  
5     territory if you don't consider that reality  
6     and are willing to address the impact of the  
7     teachers and administrators at the school  
8     level after this change takes place.

9                     DR. ALLEN: Thanks for the  
10    opportunity. We're going to go into a public  
11    hearing session momentarily.

12                    I would just add I hope you've  
13    heard that we don't believe that redrawing the  
14    lines or adding funding is the silver bullet  
15    to this solution. But we do believe we have  
16    to begin. We do believe we haven't begun.

17                    And we're hoping that regardless  
18    of the side that you're on that you're willing  
19    to participate aggressively in the process,  
20    hold us accountable, and I'd say more  
21    importantly hold the districts accountable for  
22    properly educating those kids.

23                    And you can count on us to  
24    continue to be completely transparent and open



1 throughout the process. So thanks once again.

2 (Session concluded at 7:43 p.m.)

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## 1 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

2  
3 I, SUSAN ARNOLD YODER, Registered  
4 Professional Reporter and Notary Public, do  
5 hereby certify that the foregoing record,  
6 pages 1 through 70 inclusive, is a true and  
7 accurate transcript of my stenographic notes  
8 taken on December 14, 2015, in the  
9 above-captioned matter.

10 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set  
11 my hand and seal this 19th day of December,  
12 2015, at Wilmington.

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16 *Susan A. Yoder*  
17

SUSAN ARNOLD YODER, RPR

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