

**Wilmington Education
Improvement Commission**
Solutions for Delaware Schools

March 9, 2016

Dear Commission Members,

On March 1, I resubmitted the Commission's plan to the State Board of Education as approved by the Commission on February 24th. On Thursday, March 3, 2016, Governor Markell convened a meeting to discuss a path forward for the Commission's redistricting plan. The meeting was called because the Governor was concerned that we had reached an impasse between the State Board and the Commission, and because time is running out to overcome that impasse.

In attendance were Dr. Teri Gray, President of the Delaware State Board of Education; Kenny Rivera, President of the Red Clay School Board; Harrie Ellen Minnehan, President of the Christina School Board; Dr. Steven Godowsky, Secretary of Education; Elizabeth Lockman, Commission Vice-chair; Dr. Dan Rich, Commission Policy Director; and myself along with the Governor's chief of staff, Mike Barlow and his newly appointed education advisor, Meghan Wallace.

Harrie Ellen Minnehan and Secretary Godowsky confirmed that the Christina School District and the Department of Education were in agreement on the arrangements for funding the district's priority schools plan. Yesterday, Dr. Godowsky sent me confirmation that he had signed the statement of agreement that will initiate funding. This means that the first condition stipulated by the State Board for approval of the Commission's plan has been met.

With regard to the second condition, after some discussion it was clear that the Commission's plan as resubmitted on February 24th was unlikely to be approved, since the language in the Redistricting Resolution was not changed as requested by the State Board. The Commission's leadership reaffirmed that the language change requested by the State Board is unacceptable. The Governor led the consideration of alternative language for the Redistricting Resolution that might be satisfactory to all parties.

The attached letter from the Governor requests that the Commission consider the alternative language. The alternative language would remove any role for the State Board of Education in the suspension of the timetable for implementation of redistricting, further strengthening the Commission's and the districts' control over the implementation process, or its suspension. The alternative language is below.

If the necessary and sufficient funding and transition supports, as laid out in the compendium dated February 11, 2016, are not provided by the conclusion of each stage and in the manner proposed, the Commission after consulting with the affected districts, shall suspend the timetable for implementation until the resources and supports are provided.

The alternative language ensures that the Commission in consultation with the districts shall have the authority and obligation to suspend the timetable for implementation if the necessary and sufficient funding and transitions support are not provided. It also clarifies that the necessary and sufficient resources are those specified in the compendium to the Commission's plan submitted on February 11, 2016. I believe that the alternative language strengthens the assurances needed to move forward with the redistricting process.

In response to Governor's request, I am calling an emergency meeting of the Commission on Monday, March, 14, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. at the Warner School library to take action on this language in time for consideration by the State Board of Education at their meeting on March 17, 2016.

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Prior to voting on the alternative language for the resolution, I anticipate several resolutions which would clarify how the Commission and the affected districts would work together on determining if a suspension of the timetable is necessary and what such a suspension of the timetable would mean in terms of the overall implementation of redistricting. This will further strengthen our collaboration in carrying out the redistricting plan.

Our Monday meeting is of critical importance to the success of our efforts. I hope you will make every effort to join us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Tony Allen', written in a cursive style.

Tony Allen, Ph.D.
Chairman

cc: Wilmington Education Improvement Commission
Jack Markell, Governor
Teri Gray, President, State Board of Education

Attachments: Governor Markell's Letter of March 9, 2016
Secretary Godowsky's Letter of March 8, 2016 on Christina Priority Schools Approval



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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March 8, 2016

Mr. Tony Allen
Chairman
Wilmington Education Improvement Commission
2305 Baynard Blvd.
Wilmington, DE 19802

RE: Christina Priority Schools

Dear Mr. Allen:

On March 4, 2016 the Christina School District and the Department of Education entered into an agreement for the District's three designated Priority Schools. The three schools include: Bancroft Elementary, Stubbs Elementary and Bayard Middle.

After a thorough review, I approved the Statement of Agreement signed by Acting Superintendent Andrzejewski and expect that funding for those schools will be made available shortly, consistent with provisions outlined in Delaware Code and conditions set forth in ESEA regulations.

Do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions regarding the Statement of Agreement addressing Christina's three Priority Schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven H. Godowsky".

Steven H. Godowsky
Secretary of Education
DE Department of Education

Cc: Teri Quinn Gray
Jorge Melendez
Gregory Coverdale, Jr.
Patrick Heffernan
Nina Lou Bunting
Barbara Rutt
Terry Whittaker
Donna Johnson