

**Wilmington Education Improvement Commission**  
**Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty**  
**April 25, 2016**  
**United Way of Delaware, Wilmington, DE**

Michelle Taylor, Co-chair, called the meeting to order at 4:09pm.

Michelle Taylor introduced the agenda. She discussed some group collaborations across the State of Delaware. In addition, she said that the committee would have conversations with the leaders of these groups to learn from their work.

Michelle Taylor also mentioned the April 30 Education Symposium at Warner School. She talked about how the committee had been preparing some materials for the event, including a bingo game.

Michelle Taylor asked the committee to approve all previous committee meetings' minutes. All the minutes were approved and can now be posted online for the public.

Michelle Taylor explained that the Institute for Public Administration (IPA) at the University of Delaware is coordinating research with United Way and other researchers at the University of Delaware Center for Community Research and Service, is conducting research and collecting data on the in-school and out-of-school services and programs being provided to children and their families in the City from low-income communities, on best practices on better in-school and out-of-school support systems, and a policy and fiscal inventory for low-income students in the City of Wilmington. By the fall, a draft of the plan would be put together. The Committee will be asked for feedback during the work process done by IPA. IPA has promised to keep the committee updated about this work. Michelle Taylor informed committee members that if any of them want to be more involved on the work that the committee is conducting with IPA, they should ask to be part of this process.

Nikki Castle, member of the committee, asked how the research team will define what the needs of students are. Michelle Taylor added that one of the things that the committee would do is to talk to parents to try to find out what their needs are, and the committee would also send survey to the broader community to see what these needs are and also to keep this people involved.

Dawn Alexander, committee member, asked about how information shared at their meeting is available. Elizabeth Burland explained that all approved materials are available on the committee's website.

Michelle Taylor explained that iPads would be used to survey community members at the April 30<sup>th</sup> event, and could also be used at later events in order to update the data in real time. This is another opportunity to find out how to find the community's needs. Michelle Taylor added that the committee plans to conduct a broad survey to parents at the Blue Rocks' Stadium.

Another part of the research conducted by the committee would be focused on what models are the best in addressing the needs of communities. Michelle Taylor then talked about collaborations.

The Committee identified several community initiatives in Delaware:

The Gun Violent Prevention is an initiative by the VDC Committee, Access to Justice, Readiness Teams, Delaware After School Network, Delaware's Hispanic Commission, Children and Families First Coalition, PACE, Wilmington Early Care and Education, Project Launch, Blue Print Communities, Early Learning Council, The New Jim Crow Coalition, Community School Alliance, Student Success 2025

(Vision Coalition), Westside Grows Together, East Side Rises, South Wilmington Planning Network, Trauma Informed Care (Office of Child Advocate), Delaware Health Improvement Plan, Kids Count, Delaware Stars, the Summer-Collab, Summer Employment Coalition, and Neumars Health Survey.

Gwendolyn Sanders, committee member, added that it is important to map what all these groups are doing, because there are so many of them and there may be some overlap with the intended research goals for the committee. Melissa Froemming, committee member, and Jackie Jenkins, co-chair of the committee, added that mapping is also important in order to pull resources together.

*The co-chairs broke the committee into the three sub-committees for 30 minutes. The three sub-committees are: Early Childhood, In-School Supports & Services, and Out-School Support & Services. These groups used this period to identify early wins for the committee and potential approaches that the committee could take to achieve those wins.*

### **Subcommittee Report Outs:**

#### Early Childhood:

Jackie Jenkins, member of that group and committee co-chair, said that the sub-committee seeks to partner with the Project Launch initiative and the Children & Families First Coalition, since they also deal with early childhood development. They hope to work together to share information and expand resources.

#### In-School Supports and Services:

Kenny Oates, committee member, said that his sub-committee talked about funding for special education units as a necessity. He added that cultural sensitivity and competence was an area the sub-committee would focus on. The group noted that teachers must be well trained and that relationships must be built with teachers in order to improve cultural competence in education for diverse learners. It is also important to hold teachers accountable, while also giving them the training they need. They will also look at ESSA and the implications for Delaware education.

#### Out-of-School Supports and Services:

This sub-committee wants to find out what parents think is needed. They talked about the survey at the Blue Rocks' event, where there will be approximately 2,000 parents. They also want to capture good data and stories to add faces to what is actually happening today in the schools. They hope to share the findings with the committee.

For September: the sub-committee said that there is a policy fellow program conducting research on best practices for non-curricular supports that lead to better outcomes for children. These fellows could be paired up with a few community members in order to put recommendations together. In addition, the sub-committee shared that in November, there would be a focus on libraries support across schools.

### **Michelle Taylor brought the discussion back to the full Committee.**

Michelle Taylor stated that there is a full Commission meeting tomorrow (April 26). At this meeting the Commission will discuss the process to approval of the Redistricting Plan as well as updates from each of the committees. Nikki Castle, committee member, shared that she already wrote a letter of support for WEIC's plan to legislatures saying that the kids cannot wait, and that actions should be taken soon.

#### April 30 event (Education Symposium at Warner School):

Transportation would be provided. Tony Allen would provide an overview of WEIC's work. Day care would be provided by the Boys & Girls Club.

Adriana Bohm and Monique Taylor, both committee members, expressed that they were concerned that their schools had not shared any information about the April 30 event with the parents. Kenny Oates said that he would check on this issue. Michelle Taylor said that information was also sent to some churches and other community organizations. Rosa Colon-Kolacko, committee member, added that she had reached out to the Hispanic community as well.

*Ideas about a committee name change were discussed:*

Resources for Low-Income Students  
Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty (Same)  
Social Justice and Equity in Education  
Success for Every Student  
Supporting Children, Families, and Schools  
Unlocking Opportunities for Children, Families, and Schools Dealing with Poverty  
Closing the Gap  
Solutions to Improve Educational Outcomes for Delaware Children  
Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners  
Improving Education Outcomes for Children & Families in Poverty.

Co-chairs asked committee members to choose their favorite option and send their vote via email.

**Public Comment**

Bill Doolittle shared some information with the committee about the Developmental Council. He hopes that the committee will continue to consider students with special needs as a part of their overall plan. He also reminded the committee members how important it is to reach out to their legislators in support of the WEIC efforts.

**Final Comments:**

Jackie Jenkins, co-chair of the committee, reminded that Red Clay’s workshop for dropout prevention conference is tomorrow (April 26). In addition, in June, there will be a pilot office to provide birth certificates to families in the City of Wilmington. The City will also have a summer pilot program with 100 kids to prevent more dropouts.

Michelle Taylor asked for sub-committees to meet outside of the committee in order to formulate ideas about the future small wins. And she encouraged everyone to reach out to the legislators. Dawn Alexander, committee member, added that the Early Childhood advocacy day at the General Assembly is scheduled for May 4, 2016 and she invited committee members to join her.

The co-chairs made a final note that they will begin to revisit the composition of the committee, with a particular focus on attendance history as meeting quorum has begun to be an issue.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:54pm.

**Wilmington Education Improvement Commission  
Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty Committee  
Meeting Attendance  
April 25, 2016**

**Committee Members**

Michelle Taylor, Co-chair  
Jackie Jenkins, Co-chair  
Dawn Alexander  
Adriana Bohm  
Nikki Castle  
Rosa Colon-Kolacko  
Melissa Froemming  
Gloria Grantham

Kenny Oates  
Caitlin Gleason  
Jim Purcell  
Gwendolyn Sanders  
Cara Sawyer  
Deb Stevens  
Monique Taylor-Gibbs

**Members of the Public**

Gwen Angalet  
Bill Doolittle  
Orrin White  
Sam Freer  
Kevin Freer

**Institute for Public Administration Staff**

Elizabeth Burland  
Chester Holland  
Kelsey Mensch  
Kervin Zamora