

Wilmington Education Improvement Commission
April 25, 2017
Red Clay School Board Room
Meeting Minutes

Chair, Dr. Tony Allen called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

Chair Announcements

Chairman T. Allen welcomed the Commission members and the members of the public. T. Allen began by announcing new Commissioner and co-chair on the Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty Committee, Tim Foxx. T. Foxx provided brief background that he is currently President and Chief Executive Officer of Communities in Schools Delaware and looks forward to working with the Commission. T. Allen stated this is a powerful example of a statewide organization collaborating with WEIC efforts to improve outcomes for students.

T. Allen welcomed the incoming DSEA president, Mike Matthews, who has been a strong advocate in education. T. Allen announced M. Matthews will be joining the Commission in July as the DSEA President when Frederika Jenner's tenure is done. F. Jenner will continue to serve as Commissioner.

T. Allen announced Reverend Meredith Griffin is running for a seat on the Christina School Board.

T. Allen announced the second Vice-Chairperson is currently vacant and asked Commission members if there were any suggestions. The vacancy will be filled during the summer.

Approval of Minutes

T. Allen called for an approval of meeting minutes from February 28, 2017 Commission Meeting. The motion was moved and seconded. Meeting meetings from February were approved.

Fiscal Impact Update

Joe Pika, Commission Member and Chair of the Fiscal Impact Ad-hoc Committee

J. Pika provided an update from the presentation given at the previous Commission meeting, reviewing a summary of the findings from the facilities assessment and fiscal impact analysis. The Fiscal Impact Ad-hoc Committee approved the final draft and looks forward to sharing the final form as prepared by the University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration.

J. Pika highlighted several findings of the impact on funding sources. There will be a wash between federal and state funds, which move directly with the students. There will be a shortfall in local school tax and NCC tax pool for Red Clay, meaning the property that would transfer due to redistricting does not generate the funds necessary to educate the students that would be moving from CSD to RCCSD.

J. Pika reviewed the facilities assessment, conducted by Studio JAED in Bear, DE. The facilities assessment was an extensive evaluation of the eight buildings that would transfer from CSD to

RCCSD. The assessment examined necessary deferred maintenance and capital improvement projects over a ten-year period. J. Pika stated that the assessment also examined costs related to integrating the specific building criteria for Red Clay, such as the standardized entrance and computerized energy system that would require modifications. There are several caveats to the facilities assessment. First, it is very likely that RCCSD would choose to surplus some of the transferring buildings which would decrease the costs. Second, the costs related to relocating CSD programs are estimates that would need to be further refined.

J. Pika reminded the Commission that the numbers are maximum estimates.

J. Pika stated that the Ad-Hoc Fiscal Impact Committee identified the areas of expense and provided a reasonable estimate of the bottom line. However, there are a number of items, such as staff, programs, and transportation that remain unknown because the impacted districts have not had the opportunity to fully plan for this potential transition.

J. Pika thanked the Ad-Hoc Fiscal Impact committee members and Chris Kelly, Institute for Public Administration, University of Delaware. The floor was opened for questions.

T. Allen reminded the Commission that it was the Commission's responsibility to fulfill the requirement of the SB 300. The fiscal impact report provides valuable information, regardless of the type of plan that is proposed.

Kenny Rivera, Commission Member, commended J. Pika and the Ad-Hoc Fiscal Impact Committee on their work. He then asked if the capital investments would be needed over time and impact the citizens in the area, regardless of the district.

J. Pika agreed and stated the engineering firm identified all capital investments that would be needed in a certain time; however, the reality of deferred maintenance and many capital projects is that they will be completed outside of the ten-year time frame used in the facilities assessment. It was stated that the committee was tasked to find facts and analyze the fiscal impact. The report identifies key issues related to redistricting and the next step would be for decision-makers to identify how to resolve them.

T. Allen stated that Governor Carney is working to create plan and this report may help move that forward; however, the Commission has to wait for the Governor to release the plan.

K. Rivera asked what future actions are to be taken by the Commission.

Dan Rich, University of Delaware's IPA, stated there are several key points from the fiscal impact report. First, the Fiscal Impact Ad-hoc Committee configured the costs before the districts have finalized details of the programs and services, meaning there will be adjustments to the costs once details are arranged. The second key point is that students have the same rights to the same standards and there is a shared responsibility for students, no matter which district the students are in. Third, the fiscal report confirms the case that there is not sufficient tax base to support the educational needs of the students in that area. He stated that we don't avoid the problem by moving the kids to different district or by keeping them in the same district. The additional caveat is that the report is analyzing the fiscal impact without including the needed

investments of additional resources for low-income and English Language Learners, which is part of the Commission's recommendations.

Presentation on Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty

Jackie Jenkins & Michelle Taylor, Co-Chairs of Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty

J. Jenkins, stated that education remains a key factor in alleviating poverty; however, poverty remains the biggest obstacle. She reviewed the six poverty-related factors are known to impact child development in general and school readiness. She also presented demographic data on Wilmington students, specifically in early learning.

M. Taylor reviewed the committee action plan for several short-term wins. These included, the Campaign for Grade Level Reading, the accomplishments of the partnership with My Very Own Library to build at-home libraries for children, collaborated Delta Sigma Theta Sorority on Education Symposium for families of eight elementary schools and linked schools with community resources. The committee also partnered with City of Wilmington to aid in students' transition from elementary to middle school, and broadened partnerships on providing asset building, life map experience, and soft skill training, with Delaware Pathways program.

M. Taylor stated the committee has short term and long-term goals but is currently focused on early learning and the importance aligning work throughout the continuum from birth through college and career. The outcomes need to be better for children, and the committee has focused on items to help such as getting more kids to received developmental screenings, getting kindergarteners registered on time, and taking advantage of the resources already available from organizations who do this work every day. There are organizations that continue to do this work and it important to map out who is already working on what and integrate so there is no replication of work. She also discussed the importance of making an economic case to invest in early years to have better outcomes for students. To view the full presentation, please see the attached PowerPoint.

Aretha Miller, Commission Member and Co-Chair of Charter District Collaboration Committee, asked what causes the delay of kindergarten registration. The Commission discussed that the different factors of late registration for kindergarten, such as families moving or a lack of awareness of the registration deadlines. The Commission discussed if there can be a formal collective commitment among all schools tackle this issue.

A. Miller stated the Charter District Collaboration Committee is working to draft a Charter District compact that parallels the collaborative work as proposed by other committees.

The Commission continued their discussion noting the work of Readiness Teams to track attendance and the need for baseline data to help improve alignment.

Committee Updates

A. Miller provided an update on the Charter District Collaboration Committee. She asked Kelsey Mensch, University of Delaware, IPA to add in an update about the last committee meeting. K. Mensch noted that representatives from the Department of Education presented on the Strategic Plan for Specialized Education Opportunities at the last committee meeting. She noted that while the plan identified key barriers, committee members felt that the plan lacked strategies and

initiatives to actually overcome barriers. She stated the presentation will be available with the committee minutes once they are approved.

D. Rich reminded the Commission that, since April 2015, there is a record of documents, emails, memos, on behalf of the Commission proposing that the state should develop a comprehensive plan for optimal configuration of schools to meet the needs of students and base that plan on a statewide assessment of student developmental needs. The presentation from M. Taylor and J. Jenkins reinforces this priority. D. Rich stated that as of today, there has been no assessment, even though the Commission has continuously offered to help with carrying it out.

The Commission discussed the moratorium on charter schools as it is linked with the needs assessment. It was stated that moratorium is no longer in effect. It was noted, however, that the moratorium is still tied to this work and could be extended by legislation.

Legislative Update

D. Rich reminded the Commission that there are two pieces of relevant legislation from last legislative session. Senate Joint Resolution (SJR) 17 gave conditional approval of redistricting; however, stated that the Commission must come back for final approval. Senate Bill (SB) 300 put the General Assembly on the record that they have not provided funding that is needed and required the Commission to complete a fiscal impact analysis.

D. Rich also stated there are two items to bring to closure. First, the Commission will bring the fiscal impact analysis to the General Assembly to fulfill SB 300 and move forward to ask for final approval for redistricting. Second, the Commission will continue to support the highest priority additional funding for low-income, ELLs, and special education in K-3.

D. Rich noted additional legislative items and stated that, as noted by a Commissioner at a previous meeting, the attendance of transient students is a problem that must be acted on. Currently under law, if a student is homeless, he or she is allowed to remain in the same district; however, if a student moves homes, there is no law to allow the same opportunity to remain in the same district. There was the clarification that a student has the right to stay at their current school if they move during the year, but this is not the current case. The Commission discussed that transportation is the main impact of not allowing students to stay at their current school. The Commission also highlighted that another part of the story is the impact of attendance and chronic absenteeism on student outcomes. D. Rich suggested the Commission should have a conversation about the State Constitution which currently states the education system shall be free and efficient, yet does not state "equitable." Additionally, D. Rich noted that there is a call to action to the Family and Services Cabinet Council to collaborate with the Commission to address the dilemmas presented in the MNSP Committee presentation.

T. Allen reiterated the aspects that D. Rich stated and asked the Commission to be forward-thinking on the equitable term in the State Constitution.

Upcoming Deliverables

D. Rich said this year has included a lot of research and analysis in support of the Commission. As a result, a whole series of products of the research and analysis will come forward in the next few months.

First, there will be a policy brief series in order to communicate the weighty material and analysis. Upcoming policy briefs include child poverty and policy, best practices on charter district collaboration, Delaware's funding structure for education, and parent and community engagement. The draft of the first policy brief on poverty was created in collaboration with KIDS COUNT in Delaware. Dr. Rich stated the key point for the poverty brief is since the 2009 Child Poverty Task Force in Delaware analyzed and proposed policies, such as transportation and homelessness in order to achieve a 50 percent reduction in poverty; however, over 200 policies later, the poverty rate for children in Delaware has risen. This brief acknowledges and reaffirms the need for a comprehensive plan for the state, based on full-scale assessment of the needs of students and families. D. Rich stated if there are any comments or questions about the poverty brief, send to K. Mensch.

There will be a data report on the 2015-16 school year released for the next Commission meeting. This data report includes performance, graduation, and drop-out data for Wilmington students compared to non-Wilmington students, low-income students, and all students statewide.

Lauren Bailes, a new professor at University of Delaware is working with the parent, educator, and community engagement committee. She is in the process of finalizing the survey that will be distributed to parents and families in the City of Wilmington to understand engagement. It was noted that she should also connect with the Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty Committee.

Additionally, there is an Asset Mapping project that will be completed this summer. This project contains two pieces, the first analyzing what kind of assets exist and then the distribution of assets in the City of Wilmington. The second part has been followed up with survey on the asset institutions. D. Rich stated one highlight from this analysis is there are many asset institutions in Wilmington; however, there are serious issues in regards to the access to the resources of these institutions from those living in high-need communities.

D. Rich commended the Institute for Public Administration at University of Delaware for doing original research on all of these issues.

Public Comment

Bill Doolittle applauded the Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty committee for providing real solutions. He stated that there are real possibilities and solutions without additional dollars. B. Doolittle continued by stating that 19 months in, and we are still admiring the problem of what we need for our schools. He expressed frustration and stated the work needs to begin. B. Doolittle stated that there the special education strategic plan for the state was formed in four months with all stakeholders' input.

Melissa Froemming stated that she has been involved with WEIC from the beginning and is a parent with a daughter in elementary school. She stated the Family Services Council is progress and is a great win for the Commission; however, there needs to be a transition to phase three for the Commission's work. She noted that the work of WEAC and WEIC is important but we must continue to move forward in order to actually do something and act, particularly with the new administration.

Meeting adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

Wilmington Education Improvement Commission

**April 25, 2017
Red Clay School Board Room
Meeting Attendance**

Commissioners

Tony Allen, Chair
Joe Pika
Aretha Miller
Margie Lopez Waite
Frederika Jenner
Tim Foxx
Michelle Taylor
Karen Eller
Kenny Rivera
Harrie Ellen Minnehan
Meredith Griffin

Members of the Public

Jackie Jenkins
Kendall Masset
Bill Doolittle
Ariana Minella
Melissa Froemming
Mike Matthews
Jerome Lewis
Gwen Angalet
Ty Jones

IPA Support Staff

Kelsey Mensch
Dan Rich
Kelly Sherretz
Chester Holland
Melissa Micek
Chris Kelly