

The Redding Consortium for Educational Equity
February 13, 2020
Delaware Technical Community College, Wilmington Campus
Meeting Minutes

Welcome

Consortium Co-Chair Elizabeth “Tizzy” Lockman called the meeting to order at 5:37 p.m. Lockman opened up the floor for introductions from Consortium members and a welcome from Dr. Laura Johnson, Vice President of Delaware Technical Community College and director of its Wilmington Campus. Johnson gave a brief overview of the work that the College is doing to promote the shared mission to serve Delaware students and promote educational equity through its “Achieving the Dream” network.

Approval of Minutes

Quorum was met and the meeting minutes from November 14, 2019, were approved.

Redding Consortium Timeline, Priorities, & Decision-Making Model Review

Lockman reviewed the Consortium’s progress over the last three months and its priorities between February and August 2020. Both the Educator and Redistricting Work Groups have met independently to draft recommendations and deliverables. Lockman stated the Educator Work Group has researched and discussed the recruitment of educators and effects of hiring, the retention of diverse-high-quality educators in High Needs Schools, and further retention and supply practices. The Redistricting Work Group has worked toward its mandate to develop a proposal for redistricting in the City of Wilmington and northern New Castle County, as well as research the viability of the New Castle County Tax District and Tax Pool.

Lockman also briefly reviewed the Consortium Decision-Making Model.

Redistricting Work Group Update

Eugene Young, Work Group Co-Chair, gave a Redistricting Work Group update. He said the Group has convened twice, met with subcommittees to exchange thoughts on the most viable redistricting options. The first two meetings focused on redistricting history in Delaware, an understanding of the legislative mandates and the Work Group’s role, and possible options moving forward. Young said the Group will meet again on February 19, 2020 from 6-8 p.m. at the Community Education Building to review each potential plan for Wilmington and northern New Castle County.

Educator Work Group Update

Noelle Picara, Co-Chair, and Michael Smith, Co-Chair, led the Educator Work Group’s presentation on recommendations for the Consortium’s consideration. Smith said the group met three times since November 2019 to develop action items around recruitment, retention, and allocation of high-quality diverse educators for the Consortium this evening. In order to draft recommendations, Smith assured that the Work Group collaborated with the Delaware Department of Education (DOE) and other stakeholders to look at local data and best practice research.

Jon Neubauer, with DOE Educator Support, presented relevant DOE data. He stated that in the Department's efforts to make more data-driven decisions, they conducted an educator mobility survey to get better data on why folks are moving in this field—whether it be between schools, districts, states, or changing profession all together. Through this research and data, it became clear that one of the top influences that affected educator mobility is school leadership. With this data, Neubauer said the Department has made a concerted effort to support school leaders as needed in order to retain educators in the state of Delaware.

Leadership Initiatives in Delaware

Michael Saylor, with the Department of Education, talked about the leadership initiatives in Delaware and how the state's mobility study mirrors other departments across the country. He first discussed the tiered support system for leaders and educators. Saylor then touched on comprehensive induction programs in which all new leaders in administration are required to meet monthly for professional development led by some of the state's best practitioners. He then reviewed the Leadership Network, which is targeted networking for high-needs school leaders in Wilmington where collaborative leadership is this year's focus. Saylor said the Department also kicked off #FocusED this year, which is monthly professional learning on specific topics like care of students, equity in grading, how to be instructional leader. He also talked about the leadership series—a professional learning opportunity for educators in which school leaders are paired with onsite coaching—and the leadership showcases held throughout the year for leaders across Delaware to share and network about best practices.

Saylor said the DOE offers additional supports to educators like technical support and funding for principal pipelines and preparation programs, scholarships to those in the Relay graduate school, technical support for the educator evaluation system, curriculum training, the state Equity Network, and English Language Learner leader training. He said the Department has closely tracked turnover and “churn,” and from last year to this year, there is already a great reduction in folks moving around.

Recommendations for Review, Discussion, and Action

Smith discussed figures for enrollment in Delaware Education Preparation Programs, which has declined from 789 in 2008-09 to 359 in 2018-19. He also recognized there is a demographic disparity between who the educators are who are teaching Wilmington students, meaning there are a large number of white teachers for a majority Black student population.

Recommendation 1: Grow our own teachers

Smith and Picara reviewed the Consortium's formal recommendation for Delaware to grow its own teachers. The components of this plan included:

1. IHE's create partnerships with Teacher Academies to create pipelines of diverse candidates flowing from schools to postsecondary programs and ultimately back into Delaware schools. Current scholarships and tuition forgiveness programs need to be expanded upon and promoted.
2. For individuals interested in a career path in education, there should be further development and advertisement of existing career path programs, like Future Teacher Leadership and similar groups.

3. LEAs create cohorts of teachers and administrators of color for the purpose of preparing the next generation of teachers and administrators.
4. Create channels of communication between IHEs and LEAs to increase the number of pre-service students who are to fill high-need positions. IHEs should take an active role in preparing teacher and administrator candidates with coursework that sufficiently prepares them to teach in high-needs schools, as well as working in diverse populations. IHEs needs to actively recruit for high-needs areas.
5. Increase the number of IHEs developing year-long residencies for educator and administrator candidates in high-need schools.
6. Address financial barriers and ensue incentive packages in return for agreement for service in high-need schools.
7. Making teacher salaries and/or non-monetary compensation in Wilmington schools competitive with surrounding states and within Delaware.

Picara led a subsequent question and answer portion with Consortium members.

Maria Matos, Consortium member, asked if students would be recruited as soon as they were accepted into college. Susan Bunting, DOE Secretary and ex-officio Consortium member, talked about the pipeline of interested future teachers beginning in high school Teacher Academies and flowing into college. Consortium members also had questions about the demographic makeup of students in these Teacher Academies, to which Bunting replied that it varies based on school and location. Picara said the Consortium can edit this recommendation so the demographic makeup is reflected in it.

Smith then presented statistics for Wilmington teacher and administrator 1-year turnover rates. Lockman then asked if the Consortium's intentions were to monitor progress on these initiatives and issues mentioned. Smith responded that the implementation plan is the next step, and the aforementioned benchmarks will absolutely be discussed and included in that plan.

Recommendation #2: Develop economic assistance packages for educators in the City of Wilmington schools

Noelle moved on to the Work Group's second recommendation to create economic assistance packages for City of Wilmington educators. He said the intention behind this recommendation was to utilize current City of Wilmington assets to further incentivize educators. The components of this plan included:

- A collaboration between the Delaware General Assembly, the City of Wilmington, and the New Castle County government to develop a mixed income, mixed use housing and amenities zone for educators, teachers, administrators, and social workers to attract, support, and retain high quality teachers.
- Exploring the possibility of exempting city educators from the Wilmington wage tax, as not all LEAs provide tax supplements to educators.

Picara opened up the floor again for a question and answer period.

Michael Purzycki, Mayor of the City of Wilmington and Consortium member, supported the recommendation generally, but could not support eliminating the wage tax at this time. He said it

would be in the city's interest to incentivize work force housing for teachers, and especially if the LEAs could partner in funding the initiative. Members then discussed current wage tax procedures in district and charter schools statewide, and how the process could best be structured for City of Wilmington educators, including a posit to cut that cost for those who live outside the city but work in the city. Picara said Consortium members brought up several items to explore for the next meeting that will be incorporated into the report.

Smith cited that the top three reasons Wilmington educators leave are school leadership, student behavior and school climate, and district leadership and/or policies. The Consortium's recommendations would supplement the current improvement efforts underway at DOE and other organizations to address the educator turnover issue.

Recommendation #3. Expand Professional Learning for school administrators in the City of Wilmington schools

Smith brought up the Work Group's third recommendation to expand professional learning initiatives for City of Wilmington school administrators. The components of this plan included:

- Participation by all school leaders in a comprehensive professional development program that includes mentoring, coaching, cultural competency, improving school climate, collaborative leadership, and classroom management.
- Adaptive curriculum to current concerns and issues school leaders are encountering.
- Program logistics developed and implemented by the Delaware Department of Education and the Office of Innovation and Improvement.

Picara opened up the floor for questions. A discussion began about how the Consortium defines Wilmington schools and "high need" in its recommendations. Picara responded there are 18 total charter and traditional public schools that fit the criteria that are physically within the city boundaries, and that the Work Group was interested in providing resources to the high need schools. Smith added that the data showed the elementary and middle schools within city limits had a much more rapid teacher turnover rate than those schools outside city limits.

Some members were not convinced that these ideas would secure the right people for our highest need schools, and expressed how challenging it can be to instill passion for the work in educators and leaders in the highest need schools through professional development training/coaching. Picara and Smith referred back to Recommendation #1, which aimed to recruit the best possible teachers. Margie López-Waite, Consortium member, added it is also up to LEAs to select people that have character and passion, and teach them the skills necessary.

Recommendation 4: Reconstruct and Fund a whole school professional learning package for high-needs schools

Picara covered the Work Group's final recommendation to reconstruct and fund a comprehensive school professional learning package for high-need schools. The components of this plan included:

- Multi-year and focused partnerships with IHEs to provide professional learning and coaching for both administrators and teachers.

- Initiatives aimed at improving school climate and building cultures of respect and learning.
- Tailoring to the unique contexts of individual schools in Wilmington.
- Program support through the Office of Innovation and Improvement at the Delaware Department of Education, and a collaboration between the General Assembly and DOE to determine funding.

Picara said that the Work Group looked at data from other schools with similar climates that had been successful in retaining teachers and pointed out that this model has already been successfully implemented in Delaware Sussex schools. Secretary Bunting commented on how the model was successfully implemented in Laurel High School and said leadership team was highly involved—from superintendent, to principal, to office administrators, to teachers—and proficiency levels rose dramatically as a result.

Educator Recommendations for Draft Approval

Smith made a motion to approve the recommendations and asked if there were any conditional approvals or opposition. Consortium member Ted Blunt approved and Lockman seconded. Smith asked all in favor, every Member affirmed with no opposition.

Lockman reiterated that these are not comprehensive solutions but promising starting points. She thanked the Work Groups members and staff at Delaware State University and the Institute for Public Administration as well as folks at State Agencies for providing support.

Next Steps and Upcoming Meetings

Lockman said that the Educator Work Group will take the supported recommendations and create an action plan for final approval in April 2020. The next full Consortium meeting will take place during the week of April 20–24, 2020.

Public Comment

William Doolittle raised concerns about why educators leave—the primary reason he has heard from teachers is that they leave because they do not have the resources they need to be successful in the school or classroom. He said that in FY19 and FY20, \$111 million was diverted from education, and this year if we follow Governor’s budget, \$102 million we be diverted from education. Doolittle said that if we continue on this path of budget smoothing, by FY26 we will have diverted between \$500 and \$700 million from education.

Closing Remarks

Lockman announced that in April, we will be hearing from Co-Chairs of the Redistricting Work Group on the redistricting plan, as well as an update from the Educator Work Group. She thanked everyone for coming and adjourned the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

The Redding Consortium for Educational Equity
February 13, 2020

Consortium Members:

Tizzy Lockman, Consortium Co-Chair
JJ Johnson, Co-Chair
Deirdra Aikens, for Richard Gregg
Aaron Bass
Ted Blunt
Susan Bunting
Nnamdi Chukwuocha, Co-Chair
Anthony Delcollo
Rick Geisenberger
Dorrell Green
Richard Gregg
Tika Hartsock
Linc Hohler
Stephanie Ingram
Joseph Jones
Ty Jones
Maria Matos
Noelle Picara
Michael Purzycki
Henry Smith
Michael Smith
Mary Nash Wilson, for Mike Jackson
Margie López Waite
Danya Woods
Eugene Young, Co-Chair

Members of the Public:

Gwen Angalet
Kia Baker
Sharon Brittingham
Connor Bifferato

Bill Doolittle
Tim Foxx
Amy Gallagher
Kim Gregor
Henry Harper
Paul Herdeuon
Gwendolyn James
Jacqueline Lee
Spiros Mantzavinou
John Pierson
Rev. Provey Powell
John Read
June Roux
Cora Scott
Jon Sheehan
Deb Stevens

IPA/DSU Staff Members:

Abigail Armstrong
Jason Bourke
Sarah Bruch
Elizabeth Fleming
Chris Kelly
Jerome Lewis
Fran O'Malley
Joseph Pika
Cimone Philpotts
Haley Quassaunee
Dan Rich
Kelly Sherretz
Leighton Trimarco