

**Redding Consortium for Educational Equity
Settlement Work Group
March 1, 2021 5:00–6:30 p.m.
Meeting Minutes**

I. Welcome

Aaron Bass, Co-Chair of the Settlement Work Group, welcomed everyone to the meeting and presented the meeting agenda.

Gary Henry, Work Group Member, moved to approve the previous meeting minutes. Kristin Dwyer, Work Group Member, seconded. The minutes were approved as submitted.

II. Legislation Updates

Aaron provided updates on the legislation that was recommended by the Consortium. Senate Bill 56, House Bill 86, and House Bill 100 have been assigned to their respective Senate and House education committees. Those committees are scheduled to meet virtually on March 10, 2021.

III. Settlement Implementation Updates

Chuck Longfellow, Co-Chair of the Settlement Work Group, discussed the new revision to the Major Capital Improvement Program regulations. The changes implement the provisions of the settlement to require an equity statement for major capital projects. Chuck provided his opinion that these equity statements should be made public, but currently there is no explicit requirement. Gary Henry, Work Group Member, agreed with Chuck, especially as taxpayers fund these projects. He asked if there is any way to recommend that this transparency be implemented.

Gary asked if the regulation is just an administrative process. Chuck said that the regulation is an extension of the law, and carries the force of a law in terms of enforceability.

Kristin suggested that the equity statement could be required as part of the public posting of major capital referenda. Chuck said that could probably be done through the legislature.

Aaron expressed concern that the act of requiring equity statements does not guarantee that the intention of equity will be met. Shannon Griffin, Work Group Member, agreed and reiterated that an element of accountability must be a part of the regulation. Aaron added that it should not permanently be the responsibility of grassroots organizers to enforce the new standards.

Kristin Dwyer asked about the timeline of the regulation and public comment. Chuck clarified that the regulation is already implemented, but that regulations can be changed again. He recommended that the group discuss this regulation in-depth at the next meeting and potentially recommend further changes.

IV. Gary Henry Presentation

Gary Henry, Dean of the College of Education at the University of Delaware, gave a presentation on school finance reform. Gary's presentation can be viewed [here](#).

Gary highlighted the various inequities among Delaware students. Outcomes are worse for students of color, students with disabilities, low-income students, and English Learners students. There is greater turnover of educators and principals in the city of Wilmington than the rest of the state. He also highlighted the differences in local vs. state per pupil funding as compared to other states.

Gary summarized six guiding principles for Delaware systemic education finance reform:

- Provide adequate funding to operate an equitable education system
- Distribute funds based on student need and concentration of need
- Equalize local funding to compensate for differences in district ability to raise funds
- Allocate & monitor funding to specific schools based on need
- Allow for flexibility in spending based on student need
- Eliminate referenda for operational funding to allow districts to focus on learning

Gary noted that the settlement has created opportunities for these types of systemic funding reforms, such as the Opportunity Fund establishing the principle of weighted funding and increasing funds to be more adequate & meet student needs.

Aaron asked if the guiding principles are in order of priority. Gary said that they were not deliberately in a priority order, but that the first two are certainly the most important.

Aaron also asked what needs to be in place to make sure school leaders use the proposed flexibility properly and equitably. Gary said that the first step is to ensure effective leaders are in place and they have the resources they need, and the second step is to use accountability measures.

Kristin Dwyer asked if there are data related to what portion of state funding goes to special education and related services. Gary responded that it has been very difficult to get data with that kind of specificity as it has not been collected by the state. Chuck added that the Delaware funding system and the way funds are accounted for makes it difficult to track which specific funds go to which specific students.

V. Kristin Dwyer Presentation

Kristin Dwyer, Director of Legislation & Political Organizing at the Delaware State Education Association (DSEA), presented on the DSEA's work on funding reform. Kristin's presentation can be viewed [here](#).

DSEA recently published a whitepaper in opposition to the Race to the Top policy, arguing that it did not meet student needs. The group has strongly supported K-3 basic special education funding, and has advocated for House Bill 100 to establish mental health funding. Additionally, the DSEA has supported and advocated for systemic changes to Opportunity Funding, property reassessment, referenda reform, and a holistic funding assessment.

Kristin discussed the Educator Work Group's work on teacher retention, and a study of movement of teachers in the city of Wilmington. Three main categories affect teacher movement:

- Lack of student supports
- Problems with School Leadership
- Problems with accountability practices, compensation, and building maintenance

Kristin specifically advocated for the Community Schools Model to partially address these issues. The model includes six pillars of practice:

- Strong and proven culturally relevant curriculum, including the arts
- High-quality teaching and learning
- Inclusive & collaborative leadership
- Positive behavior practices, including restorative justice
- Family and community partnerships
- Coordinated and integrated wraparound supports

Shannon Griffin posted the Wilmington Center for Education Equity & Policy's criteria for allocating mental health funding in an equitable way as a potential accountability measure amendment for HB 100.

VI. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Aaron thanked Gary and Kristin, and requested work members to fill out a survey that will be distributed to them in order to gauge the priorities of the work group. The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m. The next meeting of the Settlement Work Group will be on March 22, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.

Attendance

Work Group Members

Aaron Bass, Co-Chair
Chuck Longfellow, Co-Chair
Kristin Dwyer
Shannon Griffin
Tika Hartsock
Gary Henry
Monique Martin
Shelly Rouser
Laurisa Schutt

Members of the Public

Matthew Denn, Consortium Co-Chair
Dorrell Green
Tammy Croce
Chris Kelly
Neil Kirschling
Brendan Laux
VJ Leonard
Haley Qaissaunee
Kyle Sheppard
Kelly Sherretz
Alexis Wrease