

Redding Consortium Planning Meeting
May 14, 2021
Meeting Minutes

The virtual meeting was convened at 10:30 a.m. Senator Elizabeth Lockman, Co-Chair of the Redding Consortium, welcomed all in attendance.

I. June Consortium Meeting – June 21, 5 – 6:30 p.m.

The next full body meeting of the Consortium is scheduled for June 21 at 5:00 p.m. The draft agenda for the meeting is to provide Work Group updates, discuss the status of the Consortium's recommendations following the FY 2022 budget approval vote, and to discuss the next steps for the Consortium. Senator Lockman requested that each Work Group be prepared to discuss their path forward for the rest of the year.

Raye Jones Avery, Co-chair of the Social Determinants Work Group, suggested that district superintendents be given the opportunity to discuss their plans for using American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds at the June meeting.

Tika Hartsock, member of the Social Determinants Work Group, asked if the June meeting can include updates on other state initiatives in education. Sen. Lockman asked Tika if she had any specific initiatives to discuss. Tika mentioned initiatives in internet access, free and reduced lunch, and other wraparound services.

II. Work Group Updates

The Settlement Work Group will be meeting on May 24 at 5:00 p.m. to discuss the Opportunity Fund, the independent funding assessment, and teacher recruitment and retention.

The Social Determinants Work Group met on Monday, May 5. The Department of Education presented on developmental screenings and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part C. Nemours presented on the value of school-based wellness programs. The group is collecting feedback on the speakers and what future speakers the work group members would like to hear from. The work group will be meeting next on June 14 at 4:30 p.m. Dawn Alexander, member of the Social Determinants Work Group, added that the bills discussed in the meeting are being circulated and will be filed soon.

The Funding & Governance Work Group had nothing new to report.

III. Publications for Approval

The drafted statement of support for the Settlement Work Group's recommendations and the Redding Consortium Annual Report are both complete and ready for review and final approval.

IV. Public Engagement

Work Group chairs should send any information they would like to be included in the May newsletter to Alexis Wrease. A one-pager on the Consortium's accomplishments is being drafted and will be finalized after the final FY 2022 budget is released.

V. American Rescue Plan – Susan Bunting, Delaware Secretary of Education

Delaware Secretary of Education Susan Bunting presented about the American Rescue Plan and how the state intends to use the incoming federal funds. Secretary Bunting noted that ARP is the third federal stimulus package of the COVID-19 pandemic, and that funding from the previous packages have gone towards several education initiatives at the state and local level.

90% of the ARP funding, totaling \$369.7 million, will be allocated to the various LEAs in the state. The remaining 10%, totaling \$41.1 million, will be used for statewide initiatives. Of the state's allocation, the bill requires \$20.5 million to be used to mitigate "learning loss," \$4.1 million for summer enrichment programs, and \$4.1 million for afterschool programs. This leaves \$12.4 million for a variety of allowable programs.

The Department of Education is building its ARP plan based on stakeholder feedback from the following questions:

- In what ways have the effects of COVID-19 impacted students' academic, social, and emotional needs?
- In what ways can this funding provide immediate and long-term support for these needs?
- How can Delawareans work together with these funds to quickly provide more in-person learning options for students quickly, sustain schools' safe operations, support students' social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs, and boldly address inequities exacerbated by the pandemic?

Sen. Lockman asked if there is an internal hard deadline for stakeholder feedback even though the deadline is listed as May 14. Secretary Bunting said that feedback received after May 24 will be difficult to incorporate.

Jeff Menzer, Superintendent of Colonial School District, added that the timeline for LEAs is to inform DOE of how they intend to use ARP funds by late May, and have a finalized plan for using the funds by late August. Additionally, LEAs must submit a "Safe Return to School" plan by June 21. Ideally, the Safe Return to School plan and the ARP plan will be developed in tandem, since the ARP funding will support the necessary steps for a safe return. Every step of the process must have opportunities for public and stakeholder input.

Dorrell Green, Superintendent of Red Clay School District, reiterated how there is a need to be strategic about which funds, such as ARP, the previous stimulus funds, and opportunity funds, are used for which programs to maximize impact and ensure sustainability. Jeff agreed, and reiterated the need to be mindful of the difference between one-time funding and sustainable programs. He noted how Colonial School District is planning to hire an employee to manage all the different funding sources, new programs, and infrastructure to ensure investments are made sustainably and to meet the challenge of offering extended summer programming.

Tika said she sees an opportunity to engage with older high school students who are interested in teaching careers to support the summer programs. Jeff agreed and commented that there is a great opportunity to embed the Consortium's efforts and recommendations into the development of ARP funding plans.

VI. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Senator Lockman adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

Attendance

Redding Consortium Members/Work Group Members

Senator Elizabeth Lockman, Co-Chair

Matthew Denn, Co-Chair

Dawn Alexander

Raye Jones Avery

Secretary Susan Bunting

Dorrell Green

Tika Hartsock

Chuck Longfellow

Jeffrey Menzer

IPA/DSU Staff

Brendan Laux

Kelley Sherretz

Members of the Public

Brandon Brice

Casey Montigney

Cyndie Romer

Henry Smith III