

**Redding Consortium for Educational Equity  
Settlement Work Group  
May 24, 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.

The previous meeting minutes were approved as submitted and amended.

**II. Legislation Updates**

Aaron provided updates on the legislation that was recommended by the Consortium. Senate Bill 56 has been passed by the House and Senate and is ready for the Governor's action. House Bill 86 and House Bill 100 as amended are assigned to the House Appropriations Committee.

House Concurrent Resolution 24, titled as Modernizing Delaware's Education System, was introduced in the House and assigned to the House Education Committee. The resolution mandates the Department of Education to submit a report on education funding in the state, including the per-pupil funding formula, by September 1.

**III. Path Forward Discussion**

Aaron reopened the discussion about the path forward for the work group, specifically related to the Opportunity Fund and the Independent Funding Assessment.

Opportunity Fund

Shannon Griffin, Work Group Member, asked if any other Work Groups are having concurrent discussions about these topics. Aaron responded that the Opportunity Fund and the Independent Funding Assessment are only being discussed in the Settlement Work Group.

Susan Bunting, Delaware Secretary of Education, said that she has published the new application for Opportunity Funds. Per child funding has increased towards the FY 2025 target to \$600 per English Learner student and \$524.25 per low-income student.

Shannon asked about what accountability and evaluation measures are in place for the Opportunity Fund. Secretary Bunting described the three-prong approach to accountability, including (1) the oversight committee, (2) a system of goal setting and tracking within the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to understand the efficacy of the funding, and (3) the RAND yearly report on the efficacy of the program.

Shannon asked who is on the Opportunity Fund oversight committee. Kelly Sherretz, Institute for Public Administration, provided a [link](#) to the committee list.

Shannon suggested that there should be a simplistic report or dashboard to understand where additional funding goes, and the results of the additional funding. Secretary Bunting noted that measuring proficiency was difficult last year due to the pandemic. She also added that all Opportunity Fund applications are [publicly available](#).

Aaron said that an important research question is to determine exactly how increased funding will lead to increased proficiency, and examining best practices.

Gary Henry, Work Group Member, said that is an effective practice in many states to have schools share hired specialists. He asked if there are any services or external partners that can contract with different schools to facilitate staff sharing. Secretary Bunting said that sharing staff has always been a possibility, especially in smaller districts. Aaron added, as a small LEA leader, that sharing staff is common.

Shannon asked, what can be learned from Race to the Top? Aaron additionally asked, how can it be ensured the right practices are being used for students of different races and socioeconomic status?

Shannon said that the group could review the LEA published plans and find opportunities for LEAs to do collaborative work and facilitate information sharing. Tika added that it would be useful for the group to hear from LEA leaders about their progress. Kristin Dwyer recommended that professional development be done in groups of educators representing different groups of students (e.g., educators with primarily high-needs students) instead of by school as a vehicle for collaborative work and information sharing.

Chuck asked if there is a particular desire among stakeholders for using the unit count system or the weighted per-pupil model, because trying to use both over time is not going to work. Secretary Bunting responded that there's a lot of exploration of better ways to fund the schools, but there is not consensus at this point.

### Independent Funding Assessment

Chuck opened discussion about the Independent Funding Assessment. The role of the work group as a settlement watchdog is to make sure that stakeholders are heard as the scope of the funding assessment is determined, not to determine the exact framework of the assessment.

Aaron said that it will be important to invite people to meetings and have a public presence about Opportunity Funding and the funding assessment. Shannon later added that the group could work with school boards to develop strategies for engaging with students and families.

Gary said that it would be helpful to set up a public meeting to collect input on what research questions should be addressed by the assessment. The group also needs to know the deadline to provide input for the RFP. Secretary Bunting said that there is no exact timeline for the RFP.

Kristin said that the Opportunity Fund is like a test run for a weighted funding model. She also added that the oversight meetings sometimes feel directionless. Building lines of communication with students and families about their needs is also a test run for the flexibility of the weighted funding model.

Aaron noted that there is an expiration date for the lawsuit. There is a pressure for changes to be made sooner rather than later while the legal threat is still present.

Gary asked if district expenditures can be explicitly traced to the school level. Chuck said that generally salaries are tied to specific schools, but sometimes are prorated by DOE when staff are shared between schools. Districts are supposed to code expenses to the school when possible. Secretary Bunting added that it is currently a priority to improve consistency of expense coding across the state

#### **IV. Jon Neubauer Presentation**

Jon Neubauer, Associate Secretary of the Educator Support Team at the Department of Education, presented on educator recruitment and retention. In his work, building a strong educator workforce starts with a shared common set of expectations through three drivers – Inform, Influence, & Impact. Then there are six key pillars to ensuring equitable access to excellent educators:

1. Prepare Educators for the future
2. Establish, maintain, and adhere to meaningful requirements for licensure and certification
3. Recruit educators with demonstrated pedagogical and content knowledge skills
4. Support educators as they continue to develop pedagogical and content knowledge skills
5. Provide ongoing support and feedback to educators via a common professional growth and support system
6. Ensure the integrity of the educator workforce and safety for all students.

The state's current recruitment and retention work includes:

- Educator Preparation, such as residencies, program scorecards, and in-state preparation programs
- Recruitment, such as the Join Delaware Schools website, online and in-person recruitment events, the educator mobility survey, and the educator equity dashboard
- The Comprehensive Induction Program, including the new teacher academy and mentor academy

- Professional Growth and Evaluation, including redesigning the educator evaluation system, incorporating learning focused on virtual instruction, and office hours for administrators
- School Leadership Initiatives, such as the required mentoring program, the Governor's Institute for School Leadership, a network for leaders of high-needs schools, leadership showcases, and the SEAL program

The state is still considering how to best use the funds provided through the settlement; however, the focus is on investing further in programs that have shown results.

Chuck asked if it is still too early to know what programs DOE will invest in. Jon elaborated those initiatives such as the K-12 Teacher Academy, loan forgiveness, the critical need reimbursement program, the paraprofessional to teacher pipeline, residencies, and the educator leadership pipeline are all ideas being discussed.

Shelley Rouser noted that the Praxis II is a barrier for students becoming teachers, and asked if the runway for becoming a teacher could be extended to allow greater access, especially for potential educators of color. Aaron additionally asked if there are any ongoing initiatives to increase teacher diversity. Raushann Austin added that providing wraparound supports for educators of color in undergraduate programs and providing culturally competent supports once for all educators would improve teacher recruitment retention. Jon agreed that these conversations are important and are happening.

## **V. Public Comment**

Amy Solomon commented on the wide range of topics the group is discussing, and hopes that smaller meetings continue through the summer and produce results. Aaron commented that the group's recommendations go up through the full Consortium and to the relevant state departments.

The Settlement Work Group will resume meetings in September 2021.

## **Attendance**

### **Work Group Members**

Aaron Bass, Co-Chair  
Chuck Longfellow, Co-Chair  
Raushann Austin  
Kristin Dwyer  
Shannon Griffin  
Tika Hartsock  
Gary Henry  
Cliffvon Howell  
Monique Martin  
Shelley Rouser

### **IPA/DSU Staff**

Brendan Laux  
Haley Qaissaunee  
Kelly Sherretz

### **Members of the Public**

Susan Bunting, Delaware Secretary of Education  
Steven Davis  
Jon Neubauer  
Jon Sheehan  
Amy Solomon