

**Redding Consortium Full Body Meeting**  
**June 21, 2021**  
**Meeting Minutes**

The virtual meeting was convened at 5:00 p.m. Senator Elizabeth Lockman, Co-Chair of the Redding Consortium, welcomed all in attendance.

**I. Approval of Minutes**

Redding member Dan Shelton moved to approve the April 29, 2021 meeting minutes. Jeff Menzer seconded. The minutes were approved as submitted.

**II. LEA Updates on American Rescue Plan Funds**

Consortium members asked questions of the LEA leaders in the Consortium about their use of American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding.

*Question 1: 20% of ARP Funds are allocated for learning loss. What are your preliminary thoughts on addressing learning loss? Do you have any specific examples of how you plan to use these funds for this purpose?*

Dan Shelton, Superintendent of the Christina School District, said that the district's focus is on applying ARP funds towards expanding summer school options, increasing access to high quality tutoring, and expanding social-emotional learning curricula. Susan Bunting, Delaware Secretary of Education, clarified that current summer programs are covered by previous federal stimulus funding, and that ARP funding will cover programs for the next several years.

Dorrell Green, Superintendent of the Red Clay Consolidated School District, said that in addition to the programs Superintendent Shelton highlighted, he expects there will be a focus on reassessing where students are in their learning, adding new enrichment opportunities in reading and EL students, and providing staff the supports they need to succeed in the current environment.

Jeff Menzer, Superintendent of the Colonial School District, added that his district is also focused on assessing where students are in their education and social emotional learning, and reengaging students in their learning. The district anticipates a need for additional management infrastructure to handle the incoming funding. The district also plans to assess its physical infrastructure and utilization of spaces.

Joe Jones, Superintendent of the New Castle County Vocational Technical School District, said that the approach of his district is very similar to the other districts. In addition, the district is developing a Career and Technical Education (CTE) Boot Camp program for the summer as well as revamping its math curriculum to be aware of student progress in real-time.

Margie López Waite, Head of School at Las Americas ASPIRA Academy Charter School, wrote to the Consortium that the school is providing free summer learning opportunities in ELA, Spanish Language Arts, and Math. During the school year, they are offering after school tutoring as well as additional supports to reinforce regular instruction.

*Question 2: Where are you in the process of getting input from the community? What are the opportunities for the community to provide input?*

Margie López Waite wrote that her school hosted community listening sessions in English and Spanish as well as meeting with students, families, and team members to understand their needs and concerns. More listening sessions will be held throughout the 2021-22 school year to assess progress and make adjustments as needed

Superintendent Jones said that his district has been taking feedback from businesses and contractors, and hearing that there is a shortage in skilled construction work. They are using this feedback to develop programs to train students. The district also holds both prerecorded and live town hall events in English with Spanish translations to update the community and collect feedback.

Superintendent Menzer said that the Citizen's Finance Oversight Committee provides a monthly report on the use of federal stimulus funds. The district has been undergoing a strategic planning process and taking feedback about ARP and the district's pandemic response as part of the process.

Superintendent Green said that the district has been taking opportunities such as board meetings and Consortium meetings to actively engage and collect feedback from families and the community. The district will continue to engage with the PTA and other groups ahead of its next strategic planning cycle.

Superintendent Shelton said that his district is in the same position as the others in terms of engaging the community on ARP within the strategic planning process. They also had a public meeting specifically about the return to school and what resources will be needed.

*Question 3: What are your preliminary thoughts on addressing the needs of underrepresented student groups and vulnerable student populations? Do you have any specific examples of how you plan to use ARP funds for this purpose?*

Superintendent Shelton said that his district plans to continue using learning pods, continue holding mental health forums in the district, and build "care teams" within each school to provide for students with an equity focus.

Superintendent Green said that his district is reinforcing an equity and support focus from the school level up through the district. He celebrated the state's educators and school staff for enduring a difficult year.

Superintendent Menzer said that connecting with community leaders is necessary to determine the best path forward to provide for different groups. The district has a dedicated equity team that provides professional development to staff and understand the needs of all learners in their classrooms. The district is also in an ongoing equity audit to examine its practices through an equity lens.

Superintendent Jones said that his district has specific initiatives for reengaging underrepresented students, including inviting first year students into the school before the fall and specifically working with students whose attendance was poor during the previous year.

Margie López Waite wrote that her school is providing a number of services to students regardless of their subgroup classification, including reading assists, additional English Learner educators and school counselors, partnerships in the community to fill gaps in services, outreach in the community through the culture and climate team, and the option to enroll virtually or face to face based on the needs of the students.

### **III. Redding Consortium Recommendations in FY 22 Budget**

The FY 22 budget included \$10.24 million for Redding Consortium recommendations, split between a \$3 million increase to the DDOE budget, and \$7.24 million in one-time funding.

The proposed plan for the expenditures pending approval by the legislature includes:

- \$4.5m Outside School Time Services & In-School Health Services
- \$2.3m Pre-K Services
- \$1.3m Enhanced Data Collection
- \$720k Whole School Professional Development
- \$600k Early Childhood Home Visitation Services
- \$240k to support Redding Operations
- \$105k Staff Support for Developmental Screenings
- \$100k Grow Our Own Teacher Academy Program

The work of the Consortium moving forward is to ensure that these programs are implemented properly and continue to receive support from the legislature moving forward. Matt Denn, Co-Chair of the Consortium, praised the legislators in the Consortium for the diligent work in pushing for these recommendations to be included.

Of the three bills recommended by the Consortium:

- Senate Bill 56: Opportunity Funding has been passed by the House and Senate and is ready for the Governor's action.
- House Bill 86: K-3 Basic Special Education Unit was passed by the House and is ready for action in the Senate.
- House Bill 100: Mental Health Services Unit for Elementary Schools were passed by the House and is ready for action in the Senate.

Among other legislation discussed by the Consortium:

- House Concurrent Resolution 24: Modernizing Delaware’s Education Funding System is out of the House Education Committee.
- House Bill 198: African American Curriculum has been signed into law by the Governor.
- House Bill 202: Developmental Screenings has passed the House and is in the Senate Education Committee
- Senate Bill 99: High Needs Educator Student Loans is out of committee and on the Senate ready list.

#### **IV. Work Groups – Path Forward**

The Educators Work Group was tasked with reviewing local data along with best practice research to create recommendations for the recruitment, retention, and equitable allocation of diverse, high-quality educators in the City of Wilmington. The group recommended the “Grow Our Own” program to build an educator pipeline in critical needs areas, and a multi-year professional learning package to improve school climate and limit teacher attrition. The path forward for the work group is to monitor the implementation of these recommendations by periodically reconvening.

The Social Determinants Work Group is continuing to meet and strengthen their knowledge in different subject areas. Moving forward, the work group is anticipating five broad streams of work for the next academic year, including monitoring the group’s recommendations, facilitating conversations with stakeholders, encouraging cross-district collaboration, exploring and sharing best practices to support the whole child, and explore the needs of secondary students.

The Settlement Work Group is continuing to serve as a watchdog for the implementation of the education funding settlement. The group made recommendations to improve the Equity Statement and continues to have conversations about the Ombudsperson program, teacher recruitment and retention, and systemic funding issues. Moving forward, the group plans to make recommendations for the Independent Funding Assessment, support the work of the social determinants and educator work groups, and push for legislative action beyond the minimum compliance requirements for FY 2023.

The Funding & Governance Work Group’s path forward is to refocus on governance and examine the feasibility of redistricting. The work group does not currently have a legislative mandate and will not be meeting.

#### **V. Public Comment**

Bill Doolittle expressed his concern over a lack of a specific plan to support students with severe learning loss due to the pandemic. He also expressed the need for an adequacy study of the state’s funding system.

**Senator Lockman adjourned the meeting at 6:25 p.m.**

**Attendance**

**Redding Consortium Members**

Sen. Elizabeth Lockman, Co-Chair  
Matthew Denn, Co-Chair  
Raye Jones Avery  
Rep. Nnamdi Chukwuocha  
Dorrell Green  
Tika Hartsock  
Stephanie Ingram  
Joseph Jones  
Sen. Ernesto Lopez  
Jeff Menzer  
Noelle Picara  
Rep. Michael Smith  
Dan Shelton  
Danya Woods  
Eugene Young  
Mary Nash Wilson, OMB designee  
Secretary Susan Bunting  
Secretary Rick Geisenberger

**Redding Work Group Members**

Emily Falcon  
Gary Henry  
Roger Harrison  
Cliffvon Howell  
Stephanie Ingram  
Teri Lawler  
Chuck Longfellow  
Tamara Smith

**IPA/DSU Staff**

Jason Bourke  
Chris Kelly  
Brendan Laux  
Fran O'Malley  
Cimone Philpotts  
Haley Qaissaunee  
Kelly Sherretz

**Members of the Public**

Steven Davis  
Bill Doolittle  
Jason Dougherty  
Karen Eller  
Joe Jones  
VJ Leonard  
Mary Nash  
Debbie Panchisin  
Erika Powell  
Mary Schorse