



Wilmington Education Advisory Committee

# STRENGTHENING WILMINGTON EDUCATION: --- AN ACTION AGENDA

FINAL REPORT | 2015

Strengthening  
Wilmington Education:  
An Action Agenda

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April 2015



*Charles Park's statue "Louis L. Redding - Advocate for Equality" outside the Louis L. Redding City County Building on French Street in Wilmington, Delaware.*

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*Telegram from Louis L. Redding to Governor J. Caleb Boggs requesting State  
Police at Milford High School* retrieved from Delaware Public Archives

In Memoriam  
John H. Taylor, Jr.  
1943–2015

*“This is not a city problem it is a societal problem.  
We can’t keep silent ... It’s our problem, and we  
ignore it at our peril ... Delaware can’t afford to let  
a significant part of its human resources drown in  
violence because we never paid it sufficient attention.  
If we are to confront and cope with this social dilemma  
we must have honest talk about race and class and  
real opportunities for all young people.”*

JOHN H. TAYLOR, JR.  
FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
DELAWARE PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE  
EDITORIAL PAGE EDITOR EMERITUS  
THE NEWS JOURNAL  
*Speech to the Wilmington Rotary Club | 2014*

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*We are also extremely grateful for the support of Governor Jack Markell. His willingness to allow us to work unencumbered has been a very important part of this process.*

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*There are too many crusaders to name who have dedicated themselves to strengthening education for all children throughout Delaware. However, I offer the following champions as symbols of the broad shoulders upon which the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee stands: Chancellor Collins Seitz; Attorney Louis L. Redding; Attorney Jack Greenberg; Dr. Joseph Johnson; Mr. William Hicks-Anderson; Councilman Jea P. Street; Ms. Raye Jones-Avery; Mr. John H. Taylor, Jr.; Mr. Norman Lockman; Mr. Marvin N. "Skip" Schoenhals; Mr. James Gilliam, Sr; Mr. Paul Fine; State Senator Margaret Rose Henry; the Delaware Commission on Hispanic Affairs; Ms. Bebe Coker; Mr. Maurice Pritchett; Ms. Maria Matos. and Dr. Jeff Raffel. There are countless others including the extraordinary parents and students, and people such as the Belton and Bulah families who were involved in the historic Brown ruling. Despite the challenges, many spent time navigating a very complex and ever-changing public education system in Wilmington that's needed revamping for more than half a century.*

*Last, special thanks to the Brooks Fellowship, which provided the initial funding for the work of the Advisory Committee.*

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## Wilmington Education Historical Timeline<sup>1</sup>

<b>1897</b>	Separate educational system is encoded in 1897 constitution.
<b>1921</b>	Delaware General Assembly (GA) requires separate but equal schools; 50 separate school districts operate in the state.
<b>1954</b>	Brown v. Board of Education; desegregation ordered, but compliance is limited.
<b>1956</b>	Evans v. Buchanan first brought to court; court orders desegregation, but implementation is delayed.
<b>1957</b>	U.S. District Court requires Delaware to develop a comprehensive desegregation plan.
<b>1965</b>	State Board of Education (SBOE) adopts resolution to close smaller schools and phase out the last “black school district.”
<b>1968</b>	GA passes Education Advancement Act, consolidates smaller districts (Wilmington excluded), and provides equalization funding.
<b>1971</b>	Education Advancement Act is challenged in U.S. Supreme Court; Evans v. Buchanan reopened.
<b>1974</b>	U.S. District Court decides Wilmington schools are segregated; Education Advancement Act declared unconstitutional.
<b>1976</b>	Evans v. Buchanan; court mandated inter-district busing, upheld through repeated appeals.
<b>1978</b>	“9–3” busing school desegregation plan is implemented.
<b>1980–1981</b>	GA passes law prompting SBOE to create four districts in New Castle County; court upholds.
<b>1980–1990s</b>	Sustained pressure to desegregate districts in Delaware, but also gradual loosening of desegregation standards nationally.

<b>1993</b>	State of Delaware requests unitary status for four districts; U.S. District Court assents (1995).
<b>1995–1996</b>	Court-ordered federal supervision of desegregation ends; busing continues largely unchanged.
<b>1995</b>	GA formally amends state constitution to abolish separate education system.
<b>1996</b>	Delaware School Choice Program approved (partly a response to busing).
<b>1996</b>	GA passes legislation allowing charter schools.
<b>1998</b>	Wilmington High School closes as a traditional school and building reopens with a magnet school (Cab Calloway School of the Arts) and a charter school (Charter School of Wilmington).
<b>2000</b>	Neighborhood Schools Act dramatically reduces busing.
<b>2001</b>	Report mandated by Neighborhood Schools Act titled “They Matter Most” is released; the report is endorsed by Wilmington City Council, but no state action is taken on the recommendations.
<b>2006</b>	Coalition of government, education, business, and community leaders establishes Vision 2015 and releases plan to develop world-class public education for Delaware.
<b>2006</b>	Hope Commission Report is produced and a new nonprofit is created; recommendations are made with no action.
<b>2008</b>	Wilmington Education Task Force convened by Senator Margaret Rose Henry; recommendations are made with no action.
<b>2013</b>	Mayor’s Youth, Education and Citizenship Strategic Planning Team established but issued no formal report.
<b>2014</b>	Governor Markell creates the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee.

<sup>1</sup> Hoff, S. (2007, August 14). Delaware’s constitution and its impact on education. Eccel, J. (2012, April 1). History of public education in Delaware during past 50 years.

## Foreword: Waiting Is No Longer an Option

### Another Report

We have now published another report on Wilmington education. It's good. The historical framing, the acknowledgment of race, class, and geography as compounding forces, the impact on children, the costs of continued inertia, the recommendations for immediate action, the call for comprehensive planning—it's all here. This report addresses what is now three generations of a largely failed experiment for children who could least afford it.

The 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision centered on achieving equity for a young Delaware girl, Shirley Bulah of Hockessin, Delaware. The Bulah family knew that Shirley deserved better than the education she was receiving at Hockessin Colored School 107 (c), a one-room schoolhouse with outdated, hand-me-down books that had an inferior curriculum compared to schools that her white peers attended; no transportation support; and a teacher who could rely on very little professional supports other than what he or she had learned in what was likely an equally segregated and under-resourced college. In cases brought by the Bulah family and the Belton family of Claymont, Attorney Louis L. Redding and Delaware Chancery Court Judge Collins Seitz challenged the segregation that sustained this inequity. The Delaware cases were the only ones included in the historic *Brown* decision where the lower court ruled in favor of the plaintiff, and as such, set the precedent for the court's actions. While the segregation of schools was struck down in public law 60 years ago, the inequality of educational opportunity has persisted for three generations of students who were supposed to be the beneficiaries of these historic rulings.

This is not what Chancellor Seitz, Attorney Redding, or the U.S. Supreme Court intended.

### A Window into More of the Same

In chairing the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee, I have learned a great deal about public education reform in Delaware and have been humbled by its profound and troubled history—and its equally troubled present. Indeed, the last eight months are a window into the last 60 years. It has been a period of vigorous disagreement over how best to serve children who—because of where they come from, what they look like, and/or the financial



*“No one has told us that the path of the last 60 years is sustainable, appropriate or fair. To change that path, we need a broad based, cross-sector coalition to act boldly and without equivocation, right now.”*

**TONY ALLEN, PH.D.**  
CHAIR, WILMINGTON EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
*Strengthening Wilmington Education: An Action Agenda* | March 2015



and social circumstances of their families—need more support in the way of resources to learn effectively in school, and by extension, to succeed in life.

The adults who teach these students generally believe strongly in their potential. They exhibit a passion and personal devotion that compels them to do their very best in the classroom and also to spend their own time and money to do much more than is required. I have heard countless stories from teachers who wash their students' clothes, feed them when they are hungry, provide their parents with advice, and connect both parents and children to services that help them deal with the very real trauma they face at home and in their neighborhoods.

Many of these educators believe that being held accountable for the performance of these students on standardized tests is unfair. They argue that the tests are flawed and focus on factors that do not address the developmental needs of these children or the actual learning of content and life skills. They point to the many challenges these students face: hunger, homelessness, institutionalized racism, violence, “broken” family structures, poverty, lack of access to quality health care, and the intergenerational effects of parents who themselves are under-educated and under-prepared to role model “achievement” for their children. A great many teachers have said to me that for students who live with these challenges, the very fact that they can get to school every day is—in many cases—a sheer miracle. Given what I have heard and seen, those miracles are regular occurrences. Even so, they should never be used to justify low expectations of student achievement and thereby cast a very long shadow over the prospects of poor children and the communities they come from. High expectations for all our children still has to be the standard and teachers must be given the tools and support to help all their students succeed.

With parents, we commonly mistake intergenerational poverty for parental neglect, suggesting that poor parents are ill-equipped to be educational advocates and “first teachers” for their kids. I don't doubt that there are cases where this argument holds, and in those cases it is difficult for educators to do their jobs and for children to learn. But this is not typical. Low-income parents certainly have barriers to success, some of which are systemic while others are of their own doing, but like any other parents, their priority is giving their children the best possible educational options they can afford. For many parents, the schools they attended and where they often were deemed unteachable are the very same schools their children now attend. The stigma attached to this kind of scenario cannot be overstated, but it does not make

parents indifferent or make student failure a foregone conclusion. Virtually all agree that parent engagement is critical to student success.

Politicians and civic leaders often center their views on education around which constituencies speak with the loudest voices. Business leaders often propose that change can be accomplished by applying simple, logical business practices backed by a stronger resolve by education leaders who focus on measuring success. They want results, but many don't know what goes on in our schools or in the lives of our students. Preaching best business practices and a focus on data to a beleaguered inner-city teacher is hardly a recipe for success.

For all the contending views and stakeholders, few disagree with the guiding principle of putting students at the center of everything we do and giving teachers the resources and support to meet student needs. Acting on this principle is quite a different matter. There is never enough money—incremental or reallocated. Some think we already spend too much, while others can't conceive of making improvements without a great deal more. There are so many competing interests and priorities within the existing system that getting agreement is never easy. There is rarely enough political will to actually sustain changes that might have a lasting, positive impact. After 60 years of failed reforms, innovations, and experiments, there is fatigue among many within the public education system and an embedded and growing public skepticism about most proposals for improvement.

This state of affairs gave Delaware a 20-year pass on implementing any part of Brown, despite its clear role in the ruling, and led to 40 years of failed reforms that continue to favor inertia over change.

## **A Way Forward**

The members of the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee believe the action agenda in our report offers a way forward. We propose a comprehensive package of changes that builds upon the recommendations of previous task forces addressing the challenges of improving Wilmington education. Implementing the recommended changes will clear away 60 years of institutional and policy underbrush that currently limits improvements in student learning outcomes. Our recommendations are not a panacea, but they are necessary steps on a more positive path for public education in Wilmington. We are convinced that the proposed path will better serve our students by supporting the continuous improvement of our schools and will lead to much higher levels of quality across the entire Wilmington public education system.

The starting point is to repair the governance of Wilmington public education that has evolved into an arrangement that is simply irrational and indefensible. As of fall 2015, there will be 19 separate governing units responsible for delivering public education to approximately 11,000 Wilmington children with no unified plan, few efforts at collaboration, and virtually no requirements to function as a coordinated public education system. It is irrational to have responsibilities for Wilmington public education fragmented to the extent that there is one district with fewer than 200 students and literally no schools in the city, and another district that is one of only four discontinuous districts in the nation (out of 14,000 school districts) that has 20 miles of interstate highway separating one part from the other. We believe that a rational solution is for the Colonial and Christina Schools Districts to no longer serve Wilmington students. We propose that the Red Clay Consolidated School District should take responsibility for those Wilmington schools and students. This transition should begin immediately, recognizing that it will take a few years for the process to be completed in an effective and non-disruptive manner for the students, their families, and their educators.

Changing district lines will not automatically translate to higher student achievement, but it will remove obstacles that limit our capacity to focus our full capacity and efforts on student success. It will give greater responsibility to a single district for improving the education of the vast majority of Wilmington children. To fulfill that responsibility, Red Clay will need the will, the money, and an improved approach to addressing the challenges of schools with high concentrations of low-income children.

Equally irrational is the notion that the state with the nation's third-highest percentage of students enrolled in charter schools, most concentrated in Wilmington, had approved a growth in charter enrollment of 90 percent over the next five years with no plan for its charter schools or for how they should connect with the other parts of the public education system.<sup>2</sup>

We cannot continue to operate and fund at taxpayer expense two largely disconnected and often competing public education systems (three, if we consider the separately governed vo-tech schools). This arrangement will not support educational improvement for all of our students. We need a statewide strategic plan for the development of public education that includes the desired number, type, and mix of charter, district, and vo-tech schools, and

also a charter consortium that supports the sharing of best practices among charters and between charters and district schools.

Our report also calls upon the state to activate its existing infrastructure and reallocate its resources to better address the needs of low-income students in Wilmington and across Delaware. To be clear, this is more than a Wilmington problem. According to the Southern Education Foundation, in 2013, 51 percent of Delaware children qualified as low income based on their eligibility for the Free and Reduced-Price Lunch program. Addressing the needs of these children and their families and providing the needed supports for schools with high concentrations of low-income students is a statewide challenge and needs to be met in a comprehensive manner.

Delaware needs to develop and implement a comprehensive plan that can mobilize existing statewide institutions, policies, and resources toward the common objective of addressing the needs of children in poverty and supporting the schools in which those children are educated. Today, existing state programs and agencies are largely dormant and disconnected. By way of example, the council on higher education presidents, a forum in which one would think the university and college presidents throughout Delaware could come together and put their collective resources toward support for a statewide Pre-K-to-college plan, has not met in years. This is one of many examples where we simply are not optimizing the systems and resources we have in place.

We also believe that the system for funding public schools is antiquated and no longer effectively serves student needs. We propose changes that will ensure that the most challenged schools are well-resourced and adequately support the needs of their students. This includes attracting and supporting the best teachers in the toughest classrooms. We need to change the state's funding formula to better address the needs of all Delaware schools with large concentrations of low-income students and English language learners. We also are proposing a close review of the revenue base that supports Delaware in general and its public education system in particular. It is a well-known fact that the foundations of public education funding are weak at both the state and local levels. It is a grave concern that property reassessment has not been done in New Castle County since 1983, Kent County since 1986, and in Sussex County sometime between 1972 and 1974.

Finally, let us not forget the voices of the people whose children are most affected. Throughout our review process, we have heard calls for a re-imagined Wilmington School District. In my view, this is a largely nostalgic re-

<sup>2</sup> As of the end of 2014, the state had authorized a 90 percent increase in Wilmington charter enrollment over the next five years; subsequently, the state approved the relocation of one charter school outside the city and the reduction of projected enrollments requested by charter schools. As a result, charter enrollment is now projected to increase by 60 percent, from 3,868 to 6,167 over the next five years.

action to a time that once was, where Wilmington communities were still racially segregated but were also multi-income and made up of professionals of color living in close proximity to the working poor. Today, those communities are different. Suburban flight among all races has left most Wilmington communities with significantly fewer resources than existed 40 years ago and, equally problematic, with many fewer role-models of achievement. You couldn't build a Wilmington School District today without recognizing its immediate economic peril and the concentrated challenges that such a school district would face. We don't surmise any more success in that construct than what exists today. Instead, we believe that the Wilmington city government should mobilize representative voices for their community's children, and that the proposed City Office of Education and Public Policy should bring those voices to the forefront, particularly for those parents who otherwise simply cannot navigate the complexities of the current ill-constructed system.

**The Time to Act Is Now**

What gives us even greater optimism is the community support we have received for the recommendations in our interim report. In our public comment period, we received input from thousands of Wilmington and Delaware citizens through meetings, public events, and social media. We met with politicians and decision-makers at every level of government, education leaders from districts and charters, and a host of community partners, parents, and students.

No one has told us that the path of the last 60 years is sustainable, appropriate, or fair.

To change that path, we need a broad-based, cross-sector coalition to act boldly and without equivocation, right now, on the recommendations of the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee. The time to act is now.



Tony Allen, Ph.D.  
Chair, Wilmington Education Advisory Committee

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*“Do not be [led] astray by the siren call that the people are not yet ready for any particular change you may mention. I say this to each of you bluntly. You will never be worth your salt if, at some time during your life, you don’t take up a worth-while cause and fight its fight.”*

**THE HONORABLE COLLINS J. SEITZ**  
CHANCELLOR, SUPREME COURT OF DELAWARE (1951–1966)

*Speech given to the graduating class of Salesianum High School | 1951*

## Executive Summary

The Wilmington Education Advisory Committee was mandated by Executive Order to recommend how to strengthen public education for all Wilmington students. The Advisory Committee represents a cross-section of the Wilmington community and has focused on promoting the long-term best interests of Wilmington’s students. While we have vigorously debated the efficacy of public education in Wilmington, we have shared expectations and agree on the following guiding principles.

- Delivering high-quality public education to all children, including those who are low-income, black or Latino, is not only a Wilmington problem. It is a challenge facing all of Delaware.
- All Wilmington schools should meet high and rising standards for student learning in Delaware and across the globe. There should be agreed-upon measures for student success in meeting those standards that apply to all schools.
- Parent and family engagement is critical to the effectiveness of public education, and we must establish a strong Wilmington education partnership between schools and the families they serve.
- All Wilmington students should have access to high-quality educators who are prepared to meet their diverse needs and to the human and financial resources needed to support student success.
- Wilmington schools should be seen as community assets and must have allies to address the complex challenges of educating the city’s children. These allies include engaged families, community and business partners,

early childhood educators, mental and physical health providers, institutions of higher education, and social service providers. Wilmington students should continue to be served by a combination of district, charter, and vo-tech schools. Policies and practices for Wilmington schools should promote collaboration, shared learning, and a mutual commitment to improvements that serve all students.

The Advisory Committee has focused on four key issues: (1) Creating Responsive Governance, (2) Meeting Wilmington Student Needs, (3) Funding Student Success, and (4) Implementing Change. These are issues of broad and urgent community concern, and they are critical to strengthening the overall quality of public education in Wilmington. After reviewing earlier reports, meeting with Wilmington community, education, and governmental leaders, analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of many options and receiving input from thousands of Delawareans, the Advisory Committee developed the action agenda described in this report.

## Creating Responsive Governance

The governance of Wilmington public education is fragmented and dysfunctional. More coherent and responsive governance requires actions on three fronts.

1. Traditional school districts operating in Wilmington should have a more streamlined configuration that better addresses the needs of Wilmington students and more fully supports continuous improvement and community responsiveness.
  - The Christina and Colonial School Districts should no longer serve Wilmington. The Red Clay Consolidated, Brandywine, and New Castle County Vocational-Technical (NCC Vo-tech) School Districts should continue to serve Wilmington children. Red Clay should take responsibility for all Wilmington schools currently under Christina.
2. Charter schools should be developed in accordance with a statewide strategic plan, and existing Wilmington charter schools should form a citywide consortium that promotes shared capacity, collaboration, and best practices among charter schools and between charter and traditional schools.

- Governor Markell should call for a strategic plan for charter schools that includes the desired number and mix of traditional, charter, and vo-tech schools. No new charter school or expansion of an existing charter school in Wilmington or New Castle County should be authorized until the plan has been accepted.
3. The Wilmington city government should be an engaged partner in the governance of Wilmington public education through the mobilization of parent/family engagement and the strengthening of partnerships between schools and community organizations, such as libraries, churches, community centers, after-school programs, business sponsors, and non-profit service organizations.
    - The Advisory Committee endorses the plan of the City of Wilmington to create an Office of Education and Public Policy.

## Meeting Wilmington Student Needs

The needs of students in poverty must be addressed through stronger alignment of needed supports and services starting in early childhood and extending through entry into a career or higher education.

- The state government should use its existing policy infrastructure to develop and implement a comprehensive plan for the integration of services for low-income children and families and for schools with high concentrations of poverty. The plan should include recommendations for redirecting current state funding.
- Existing public, private, and nonprofit institutions and investments should be mobilized to carry out key facets of the state plan. These include the state's Interagency Resource Management Committee, the Delaware and Wilmington Early Childhood Councils, community institutions such as Nemours, United Way of Delaware, and Children & Families First, and business partners such as the State and New Castle County Chambers of Commerce.
- The city government's proposed Office of Education and Public Policy should play a lead role in strengthening parent engagement in student learning, advocating for students with special needs, and mobilizing community support for Wilmington schools. The office should be funded and operated by the City of Wilmington.

## **Funding Student Success**

Strengthening Wilmington education requires funding adjustments in four areas: (1) an allocation of funds to schools with high concentrations of students in poverty, (2) an improved revenue base to support the overall costs of public education, (3) transitional resources to effectively implement district realignment, and (4) funds for early childhood and other programs needed to meet the needs of low-income students.

- The governor and state legislature should approve a weighted student funding formula or a modification to the current unit count formula that incorporates allocations for schools with high concentrations of students in poverty and English language learners and that expands special education status to grades K–3.
- The resource base supporting public education must be strengthened at both the state and local levels. After 30 years of inaction, property reassessment needs to be implemented without further delay and be undertaken on a regular schedule that reflects national best practices.
- Funding adjustments must be made to support the cost of district reconfiguration.

## **Implementing Change**

A broadly representative, cross-sector commission, outside of the current agencies of state government, should lead the planning and implementation of the recommendations in this report.

- The governor and state legislature should establish the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission (WEIC) to oversee implementation and to advise on additional policy and program improvements to strengthen Wilmington education. The commission should be an independent body operating outside of the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) and should report annually to the governor and state legislature. The commission should sunset after five years.

In response to the Advisory Committee's interim report, the Christina School District Board voted to support the recommendation that the district no longer serve the City of Wilmington. Governor Markell affirmed his concurrence and intention that the Christina School District would give up its schools in Wilmington and no longer serve Wilmington students.

The Governor also announced that he was directing the State Board of Education and DDOE to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment and strategic planning process for the future of Delaware public schools, including charter, vo-tech, and magnet schools. The Governor stipulated that the state will not authorize any new charter schools until the plan is in place. Charters already authorized but not yet opened would proceed with opening on the schedule approved.

## Wilmington Students and Families: 2013 Profile

Wilmington Population: 71,143

Table 1: Profile of Students and Families in Wilmington, 2013

Race and Ethnicity <sup>1</sup>	
White	37%
Black or African American	56%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.5%
Asian	0.5%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0%
Other	3%
Two or More Races	3%
Identify as Hispanic/Latino Ethnicity	8%

Income	
Median Household Income	38,727
Percentage of Children Ages 0 to 18 in Poverty	34%
Percent of Wilmington Students Classified as Low-Income in 2014	70%
Unemployment Rate	13.5%

Households	
Female Householder, No Husband Present	25.30%
Male Householder, No Wife Present	6.40%
Married-Couple Family	22.80%

Educational Attainment, 25 Years and Over	46,741
Less than 9th grade	5.80%
9th to 12th grade, No Diploma	12.70%
High School Graduate (includes equivalency)	33.40%
Some College, No Degree	18.80%
Associate's Degree	4.40%
Bachelor's Degree	14.60%
Graduate or Professional Degree	10.30%

Wilmington Students Enrolled in School, 3 Years and Over	17,782
Nursery School, Preschool	1,395
Kindergarten to 12th Grade (including private school enrollment)	12,445
College, Undergraduate	3,078
Graduate, Professional School	864

Public School Enrollment (2014–15 School Year)	11, 595
Number of Wilmington Students in Traditional Public Schools	8,457
Number of Wilmington Students in Charter Schools	2,475
Number of Wilmington Students in Vo-Tech Schools	643

Graduation Rate of Wilmington Students in 2014	68%
Delaware High School Dropouts from Wilmington in 2014	16%

Sources: 2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Data and Delaware Department of Education Data Set, 2014-15 School Year

<sup>3</sup> These percentages are only partially comparable to the census information on the city since the Department of Education reports Hispanic as a racial category, and the census reports it only as an ethnicity identifier.



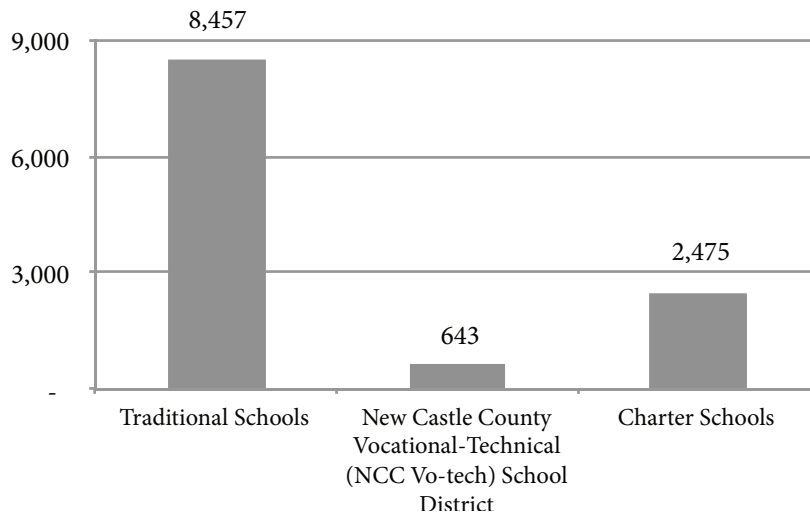
## Wilmington Students Enrollment: 2014–15 Profile

### Wilmington Students in Public Schools, 2014–15: 11,595<sup>4</sup>

- 74% African American, 18% Hispanic, 7% White
- 70% Low-Income

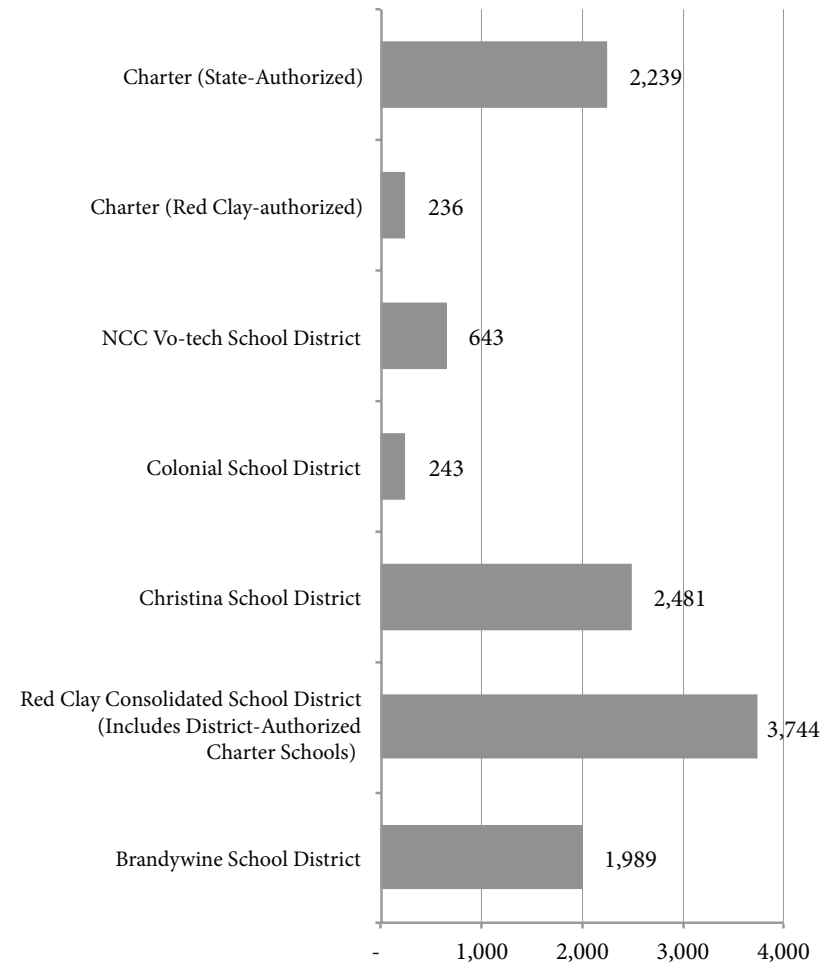
### Students in Public Schools Located in Wilmington, 2014–15: 11,233

Figure 1: Wilmington Student Enrollment by Public School Type, 2014–15 School Year



Source: Delaware Department of Education Data Set, 2014-15 School Year

Figure 2: Wilmington Student Enrollment, 2014–15 School Year



Source: Delaware Department of Education Data Set, 2014-15 School Year

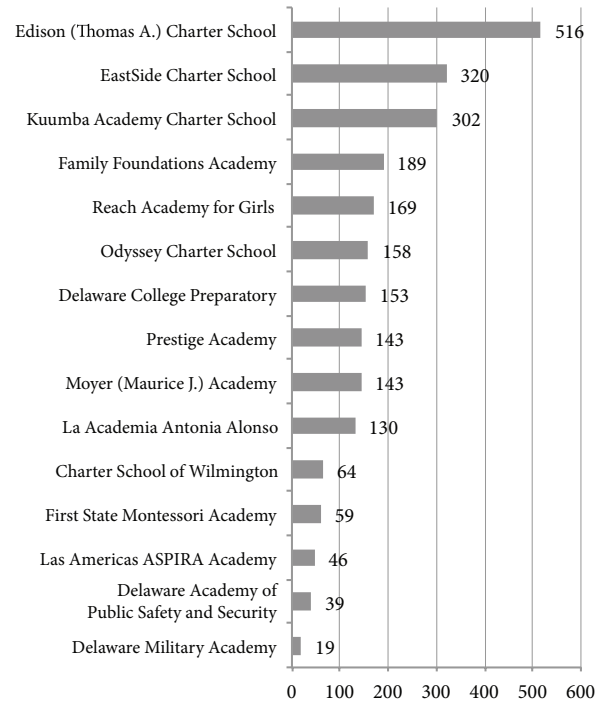
<sup>4</sup> Enrollment numbers are determined by the September 30 count according to Delaware Department of Education. Strengthening Wilmington Education: An Interim Report cited 10,634 as the number of Wilmington students in 2013–14. This number represented the total enrollment of schools located in the city limits and did not include Wilmington residents who may be attending schools outside the city limits. Subsequently acquired data allow for a more accurate picture of Wilmington students based on residency. Accordingly, the number of students who lived within City of Wilmington limits was 11,437 in 2013–14 and is 11,595 in 2014–15.

Table 2: Wilmington Student Enrollment, 2014–15 School Year

Red Clay Consolidated School District*	3,744
Christina School District	2,481
Brandywine School District	1,989
NCC Vo-tech School District	643
Edison (Thomas A.) Charter School	516
EastSide Charter School	320
Kuumba Academy Charter School	302
Colonial School District	243
Family Foundations Academy	189
Reach Academy for Girls	169
Odyssey Charter School	158
Delaware College Preparatory Academy*	154
Prestige Academy	143
Moyer (Maurice J.) Academic Institute	143
Academia Antonia Alonso	130
Charter School of Wilmington*	64
First State Montessori Academy	59
Las Americas ASPIRA Academy	46
Delaware Academy of Public Safety and Security	39
Delaware Military Academy*	19
MOT Charter School	<15
Gateway Lab School	<15
Early College High School at Delaware State University (DSU)	<15
Silver Lake Elementary School (Appoquinimink School District)	<15
Middletown High School (Appoquinimink School District)	<15
Loss (Olive B.) Elementary School (Appoquinimink School District)	<15
W. Reily Brown Elementary School (Caesar Rodney School District)	<15
Dover High School (Capital School District)	<15

Source: Delaware Department of Education Data Set, 2014-15 School Year  
 Note: \* Red Clay-authorized charter schools are listed separately.

Figure 3: Wilmington Student Enrollment in Charter Schools, 2014–15 School Year



Source: Delaware Department of Education Data Set, 2014-15 School Year  
 Note: \* Gateway Lab School, Early College High School at DSU, and MOT Charter School were not reported because fewer than 15 students are enrolled at each of these schools.

Table 3: Educational Attainment, Population 25 Years and Over, 2013

Educational Attainment	Wilmington	NCC	Delaware	U.S.
Less than a High School Diploma	18.5%	10.7%	12.3%	13.9%
High School Graduate (includes equivalency)	33.4%	29.1%	31.7%	28.1%
Some College, No Degree	18.8%	19.7%	19.9%	21.2%
Associate's Degree	4.4%	6.8%	7.3%	7.8%
Bachelor's Degree	14.6%	19.9%	17.2%	18.0%
Graduate or Professional Degree	10.3%	13.9%	11.7%	10.8%

Source: 2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Data



*“The future of the City of Wilmington is its children... For too long, we have accepted that many of our children are not getting the education they deserve... An excellent education is a right, not a privilege. If our country is going to remain a democratic republic, as a constitutional democracy of free people, we must fix our education system. We cannot continue with some receiving an excellent education and others not.”*

THE HONORABLE JAMES BAKER  
FORMER MAYOR, CITY OF WILMINGTON  
MEMBER, WILMINGTON EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

April 2014

## An Action Agenda for Wilmington Education

**T**oday, thousands of Wilmington children, most of them poor, black, or Latino, still do not have access to high-quality public education. Judged on most outcomes—test scores, truancy, graduation rates, college attendance, socio-emotional well-being, drug use, homelessness, arrests, and unemployment—these children have become data points for a system of failure. Various groups address these challenges by blaming each other; government officials, parents, educational advocates, community and business leaders, unions, educational administrators, teachers, and, at times, even the children themselves are blamed for the failures of public education. This confrontational dialogue, which has generally focused on how one group can hold another group accountable, is now an embedded feature of Wilmington education.

The confrontational dialogue about Wilmington education is partly an expression of growing disputes over state and national education reform. Delaware’s selection for a federal Race to the Top grant ushered in accelerated educational reforms that have generated rising levels of controversy. Governor Markell and the Delaware General Assembly are reviewing which grant-funded reform efforts should continue with state funding. Controversy also extends to the standardized testing regimen that has been a hallmark of federal and state education reform under both No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top.

Since the summer of 2014, the level of confrontation about Wilmington education has escalated. Governor Jack Markell and Delaware Secretary of Education Mark Murphy challenged two districts to accept plans to transform six low-performing, urban schools. The American Civil Liberties Union

filed a claim with the U.S. Office of Civil Rights that the state's charter law has re-segregated Wilmington schools. Wilmington Mayor Dennis P. Williams filed suit against the State of Delaware to hold open the Moyer Academic Institute, a charter school deemed by the Delaware Department of Education to be failing its students. The board of Reach Academy for Girls, another charter school faced with closure, sued the State of Delaware for the right to continue. In the not-so-distant background, Wilmington attracted unwanted national attention for its level of violent crime. Much of that violence can be attributed to former Wilmington public education students. The Wilmington schools were never prepared for these students, and they ultimately failed to educate them to become productive citizens.

Despite the allegations and confrontations that now typify Wilmington education, the simple and undeniable historical fact is that our entire Delaware community is responsible for the conditions that currently exist. Only the entire community, acting together, will change these conditions, and even then it will not be easy. High-quality education is a pathway out of poverty, but making that pathway available to all students requires the commitment of our entire community expressed through intentional and comprehensive changes supported by policy, resources, and political will.

It is a time to act. It is a time to set Wilmington education on a new and different path. To do that, we should reduce the forces that divide our efforts and eliminate the barriers to high-quality public education for all Wilmington students. Anything less will continue to compromise the lives of our children and diminish the prospects for both Wilmington and Delaware.

In September 2014, Governor Markell, with encouragement from members of Wilmington's state legislative delegation, specifically Representatives Charles Potter, Stephanie Bolden, and James "J.J." Johnson and Senator Margaret Rose Henry, formed the Wilmington Educational Advisory Committee (WEAC). The Advisory Committee's mandate is to recommend how to strengthen the public education system for all Wilmington students. Governor Markell charged the Advisory Committee with addressing the underlying challenges facing public education in Wilmington and proposing actions that will propel continuous improvements in Wilmington schools.

The Advisory Committee includes a diverse representation of the Wilmington community, including educators, parents, advocates, and community activists. While diverse, we have approached our work with shared expectations and agreement on guiding principles. While our focus is Wilmington, we believe these principles should apply across Delaware.

- Delivering high-quality public education to all children, including those who are low-income, black or Latino, is not only a Wilmington problem. It is a challenge facing all of Delaware.
- All Wilmington schools should meet high and rising standards for student learning in Delaware and across the globe. There should be agreed-upon measures for student success in meeting those standards that apply to all schools.
- Parent and family engagement is critical to the effectiveness of public education, and we must establish a strong Wilmington education partnership between schools and the families they serve.
- All Wilmington students should have access to high-quality educators who are prepared to meet their diverse needs, and to the human and financial resources needed to support student success.
- Wilmington schools should be seen as community assets and must have allies to address the complex challenges of educating the city's children. These allies include engaged families, community and business partners, early childhood educators, mental and physical health providers, institutions of higher education, and social service providers.
- Wilmington students should continue to be served by a combination of district, charter, and vo-tech schools. Policies and practices for Wilmington schools should promote collaboration, shared learning, and a mutual commitment to improvements that serve all students.

The Advisory Committee reviewed the work of earlier commissions addressing the challenges of Wilmington education: the Wilmington Neighborhood Schools Committee, 2001;<sup>5</sup> the Wilmington Hope Commission, 2006;<sup>6</sup> the Wilmington Education Task Force, 2008;<sup>7</sup> and the Mayor's Youth, Education and Citizenship Strategic Planning Team, 2013. These commissions arrived at similar recommendations for strengthening Wilmington education (see Appendix A). With few exceptions, those recommendations have never been acted upon. We find great value in the work of these earlier commissions, and we have sought to build upon their analysis and recommendations. Our deliberations also have been framed by the longer history of Wilmington

<sup>5</sup> Wilmington Neighborhood Schools Committee. (2001, January 01). They matter most: Investing in Wilmington's children and Delaware's future.

<sup>6</sup> Wilmington Hope Commission. (2006, March). Hope Commission: A Wilmington plan.

<sup>7</sup> The Wilmington Education Task Force (2008, April). Report of the Wilmington Education Task Force.

education, particularly the implementation of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). Beyond this, we have considered changes in conditions since 2001, when the first of the earlier commission reports on Wilmington education was issued. The Advisory Committee has focused on promoting the long-term best interests of students. As such, we have avoided alignment with or criticism of the aforementioned contending interests and institutions that now characterize Wilmington education. Instead, we have developed an “action agenda” around which a broad-based community coalition can rally: parents, teachers, principals, district officials, business and community leaders, elected officials, and concerned citizens in Wilmington and across Delaware.

The Advisory Committee has met with state and local government officials, including the Wilmington delegation of the General Assembly as well as legislators from other parts of New Castle County, the chairs of the Education Committees of the Delaware House of Representatives and Senate, Wilmington’s mayor and city council president and several members of Wilmington and New Castle County Councils. Presentations have been made to the Delaware House of Representatives and Senate Education Committees and the Wilmington City Council Education Committee. We also have met with state and district education officials, charter school leaders and advocates, and community advocates for education and made a presentation to the State Board of Education. In addition, educators, parents, and community members have attended our regular meetings.

Beyond these meetings, the Advisory Committee solicited broad public input and commentary. We made our interim report public on January 26, 2015, and invited comment from the Delaware community through the subsequent six weeks. We especially sought input from the families, citizens, and leaders of Wilmington and from the districts and other institutions that would be impacted by our recommendations (see Appendix D for the Community Outreach Meeting List). Community comment and suggestions were utilized to further elaborate and refine the recommendations for this final report. We called upon all Delawareans to join this dialogue and to do so with a constructive spirit that will help to generate common commitment to an action agenda. Many did! We had more than 1,400 participants in the Solutions for Delaware Schools Facebook commentary. Over 700 Delawareans participated in the Imagine Delaware forum on March 9 that focused on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, and thousands more watched the forum online.

Rather than seek to address all education issues, the analysis and recommendations of the Advisory Committee have focused on addressing issues of governance, meeting the distinctive needs of Wilmington children, and providing the resources needed for student success. These are matters of broad and urgent community concern that influence many other factors impacting the effectiveness of Wilmington public education. We believe this is an appropriate focus for a committee representative of a cross-section of the Wilmington community. We recognize that there are many other critical factors impacting Wilmington education, such as the content of the curriculum, the organizational and instructional practices within our schools, and the quality and performance of school leaders and other educators. Some of these important issues are being addressed by other organizations, and we look forward to a continuing dialogue on these issues as the process of implementing our recommendations goes forward.

Our action agenda focuses in four areas: (1) Creating Responsive Governance, (2) Meeting Wilmington Student Needs, (3) Funding Student Success, and (4) Implementing Change. The action agenda in these four areas is interconnected and interdependent. Strengthening Wilmington education requires that the proposed actions in all four areas be carried out in a systematic and coordinated fashion. The effectiveness of the action agenda in each of the four areas is highly dependent upon the implementation of the action agenda in the other areas.



*“What better gift can we give our children than providing the tools and resources needed so they can excel and achieve their dreams and goals—these are our future doctors, politicians, lawyers, and business owners—basically the backbone of our community and future of our country.”*

**DAVE AND ALEJANDRA POPPITI**

PARENTS OF A SIXTH-GRADE STUDENT AT CAB CALLOWAY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS AND A FOURTH-GRADE STUDENT AT HIGHLANDS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

2015

## Creating Responsive Governance<sup>8</sup>

Strengthening Wilmington education requires more coherent and responsive governance of Wilmington public schools. Improved governance will not solve all the problems facing public education in Wilmington, but it should be the starting point. Without changing the governance of Wilmington public education, all other improvements will be made more difficult or simply not possible. This has been the conclusion of every working group focused on Wilmington education since 2001. All have proposed the need to create a system of governance that is streamlined, more responsive to the needs of Wilmington’s children and their families, and more deeply connected with the community that it serves. A range of proposals has been offered—from district consolidation to the creation of a Wilmington charter district—but none has been implemented. Indeed, the fragmentation of Wilmington public education governance has become more acute.

By the fall of 2015, responsibility for the governance of Wilmington public education will be divided among four traditional school districts, one vo-tech district, and twelve charter schools (see Table 4).<sup>9</sup> In addition to these seventeen governing units two independent charters schools outside of Wilmington are expected to open in fall 2015 and draw Wilmington students, and other charter schools outside of Wilmington already draw Wilmington students (see Table 4). In addition to all of these governing units, the Delaware Department of Education and the State Board of Education both have man-

<sup>8</sup> For the purpose of this report, the term “governance” refers to the units with designated authority under state law for educational decisions and delivery of public educational programs.

<sup>9</sup> Note: This included nine state authorized independent charter schools in Wilmington and three charter schools authorized by the Red Clay Consolidated School District.

dated oversight roles in public education governance. The groups that are not included among the governing units of Wilmington public education, however, are the community it serves and the city government that represents that community. Neither has a formal role in the governance of the schools that educate its children.

**Table 4: Public Schools Serving Wilmington Students, Fall 2015**

Schools Located within City of Wilmington Limits			
District	Elementary	Middle	High
Brandywine	Harlan Elementary School	P.S. duPont Middle School	N/A
Christina	Bancroft Elementary School Elbert-Palmer Elementary School Pulaski Elementary School Stubbs Elementary School	Bayard Middle School	N/A
Colonial	N/A	N/A	N/A
Red Clay Consolidated	<b>Delaware College Preparatory Academy**</b> Highlands Elementary School Lewis Dual Language Elementary School Shortlidge Academy Warner Elementary School	Cab Calloway School of the Arts*	<b>Delaware Military Academy**</b> (not located within Wilmington) Cab Calloway School of the Arts* <b>Charter School of Wilmington**</b>
New Castle County Vocational Technical (NCC Vo-tech)	N/A	N/A	Howard High School of Technology
State-Authorized Charter Schools (Grade Levels Vary) within City of Wilmington Limits			
<b>EastSide Charter School</b> <b>Edison Charter School</b> <b>First State Montessori Academy</b> <b>Freire Charter School***</b>		<b>Great Oaks Charter School***</b> <b>Kuumba Academy</b> <b>La Academia Antonia Alonso</b> <b>Prestige Academy</b> <b>The Delaware MET***</b>	
Additional State-Authorized Charter Schools Serving Wilmington Students			
<b>Delaware Academy of Public Safety</b> <b>Delaware Design Lab High School***</b> <b>Early College High School at Delaware State University</b> <b>First State Military Academy ***</b>		<b>Gateway Lab School</b> <b>Las Americas ASPIRA Academy</b> <b>MOT Charter School</b> <b>Odyssey Charter School</b>	

Notes: Independent governing units are bolded. This table does not include alternative schools located in the city. Moyer Academic Institute and Reach Academy for Girls are not included, as they are proposed for closure.  
\*Magnet School.  
\*\* Charter schools authorized by Red Clay Consolidated School District.  
\*\*\* New schools approved to open in fall 2015.  
Source: Delaware Department of Education. (2014) School Profiles.

The fragmentation of governance responsibilities is no accident. State and federal policies and practices, some four decades old, have created and sustained this condition (see Wilmington Education Historical Timeline on page x). Some of these policies and practices also encourage competition and displacement among district, vo-tech, and charter schools rather than collaboration and mutual commitment to improvements for all Wilmington schools. As a result, Wilmington now has an arrangement of public education in which traditional districts, a vo-tech district, and charter schools operate as largely disconnected subsystems, funded at rising public expense but with no acceptance of shared responsibility for the education of all Wilmington students.

Even within the charter and district subsystems, cooperation, collaboration, and shared learning are the exceptions rather than the norm. Indeed, the operation of this system has become increasingly fractious, as evidenced by the recent dialogue about Wilmington education. Even when the dialogue is civil, it is typically incident-driven and not accompanied by any vision of how the complex arrangement of districts and charters will ultimately result in a stronger public education system for all Wilmington students.

Wilmington children can no longer afford to pay the price for this fractured, disconnected, and increasingly dysfunctional system. Wilmington teachers and other educators should not have to work in this contentious and unsupportive environment. Wilmington citizens and Delaware taxpayers should not be expected to pay the rising costs—social as well as financial—of maintaining such a system.

Strengthening Wilmington education requires that all public schools be guided by a vision of responsibility for the overall effectiveness of public education. Further, coherent and responsive governance of Wilmington education requires action on three fronts:

1. Traditional school districts operating in Wilmington should have a more streamlined configuration that better addresses the needs of Wilmington students and more fully supports continuous improvement and community responsiveness.
2. Charter schools should be developed in accordance with a statewide strategic plan, and existing Wilmington charter schools should form a citywide consortium that promotes shared capacity, collaboration, and best practices among charter schools and between charter and traditional schools.

3. The Wilmington city government should be an engaged partner in the governance of Wilmington public education through the mobilization of parent/family engagement and the strengthening of partnerships between schools and community organizations, such as libraries, churches, community centers, after-school programs, business sponsors, and non-profit service organizations.

### **Reconfiguring Wilmington School Districts**

The configuration of four traditional school districts—Brandywine, Christina, Colonial, and Red Clay Consolidated—with split responsibilities for Wilmington students is a product of a forty-year-old court decision to achieve metropolitan school desegregation. State policies, specifically the development of options to promote charters and choice (1996) and the Neighborhood Schools Act (2000),<sup>10</sup> have overtaken the original rationale for this configuration. Wilmington students were expected to benefit from this configuration, which includes one of only four discontinuous districts among the 14,000 districts in the nation.<sup>11</sup> In fact, Wilmington students have experienced—and still experience—the greatest burden from this configuration.

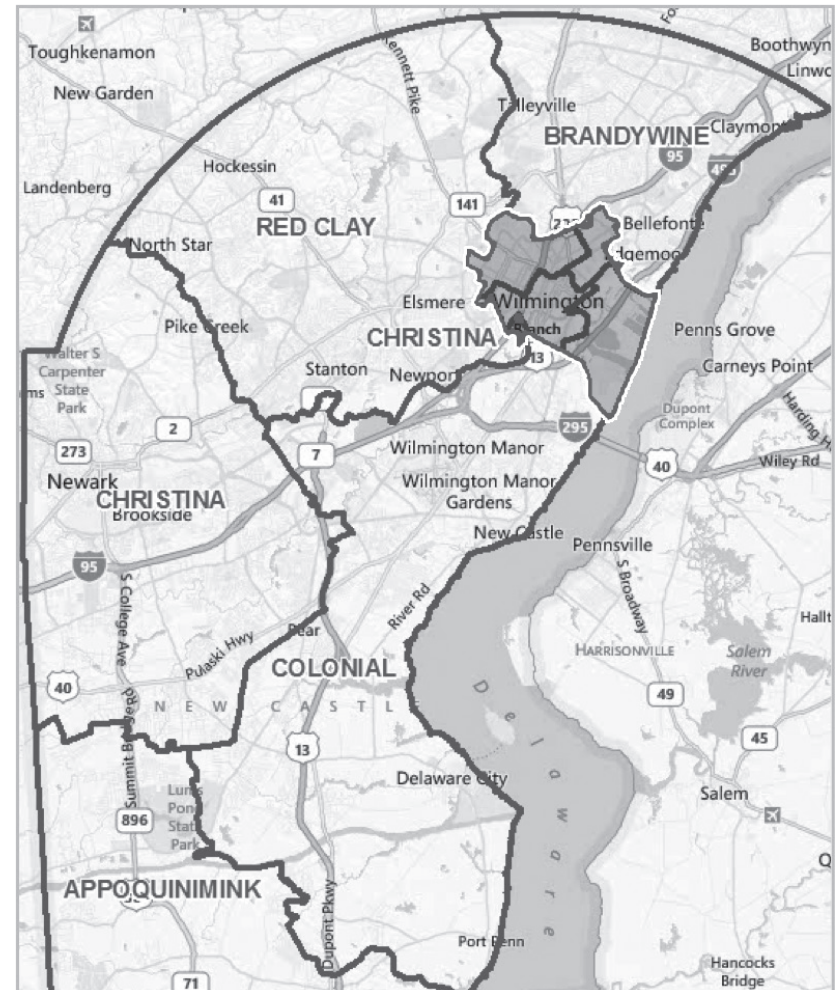
Wilmington has been divided as a community, the role of schools as community assets has been diminished, and the largest city in our state has no traditional public high school within its boundaries. Most importantly, the current configuration does not effectively address the acute educational challenges faced by many Wilmington students. Indeed, the split of responsibilities makes addressing those challenges more difficult. The citizens and families of the city are not well served by a disconnected arrangement of school governance that makes their own engagement with education more cumbersome—and often beyond their practical reach.

As a community, Wilmington does not benefit from a public education governance structure built around four districts, none of which has a primary responsibility for the education of Wilmington’s children.

The current arrangement of district responsibilities for Wilmington continues largely as a result of inertia. No member of the Advisory Committee believes that this arrangement is in the best interest of Wilmington’s children. All believe that strengthening the education of Wilmington’s children requires

a reconfiguration of district responsibilities. This is the same conclusion that has been reached by every task force that has looked at this issue since 2001.

Figure 4: City of Wilmington District Map



Note: White line indicates city boundary. City is shaded in gray.  
Source: Delaware Department of Education. (2014). GIS Mapping.

<sup>10</sup> Neighborhood Schools Act of 2000, 72 Del. Laws, c.287 §2 (2000). School Choice Act of 1996, 70 Del. Laws, c.180 §3 (1996). Charter School Act of 1995, 70 Del. Laws, c.179 §5 (1996).

<sup>11</sup> Other districts are Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District in California, Fulton School District in Georgia, and Keystone Oaks School District in Pennsylvania.



### Evaluating Alternatives

In evaluating alternatives to the current district configuration, the Advisory Committee recognizes that many factors must be considered. Any solution to the fragmentation of districts in Wilmington will have impacts and implications for students and families in other parts of New Castle County. A change in configuration also will generate transition costs. Most important, any proposal for district reconfiguration must contribute to the overall coherence and responsiveness of public education governance over the long term; it must offer a lasting and stable outcome.

A recommended proposal must meet the following objectives:

- Streamline governance by reducing the number of districts operating in Wilmington.
- Increase overall responsiveness of district governance to community priorities.
- Maintain the funding base supporting Wilmington district schools, with transitional funding to support district reconfiguration.
- Strengthen capacity for collaboration between district and charter schools.
- Reduce the burdens of district fragmentation experienced by Wilmington students.
- Provide benefits and mitigate disruptions for students and families across New Castle County.

Viewed against these objectives, some options that may seem attractive in principle are not viable in practice. The creation of a Wilmington School District defined by the geographic boundaries of the city is not viable. The 2001 Wilmington Neighborhood Schools Committee and others thereafter have agreed that this option poses an unacceptable trade-off. While a Wilmington district would increase local control and community responsiveness, it would result in fewer resources and diminished capacity to meet the needs of Wilmington students. Such a reconfiguration also would solidify educational segregation and further isolate Wilmington's high-needs students.

The combination of some, or all, existing districts to form a Metropolitan School District that serves the students in all of New Castle County is impractical as well. The overall consolidation of the four school districts, while desirable on a number of grounds, would be disruptive for students and fami-

lies across New Castle County and would likely be resisted politically at every level. Further, such a district would not increase the responsiveness of governance to Wilmington community needs—or the needs of other communities in New Castle County. Indeed, the single district solution for northern New Castle County was the original court-proposed remedy for metropolitan desegregation over 40 years ago. It was soon replaced by the four-district organization still in place today. A single metropolitan district for northern New Castle County is not feasible, and focusing on this option would likely lead to a political stalemate with no action taken to alleviate the current fragmentation of governance.

Converting all Wilmington schools to charter schools authorized by a newly created Wilmington Charter District is neither desirable on educational grounds nor practical on political grounds. Charter schools are playing a central and growing role in Wilmington public education. However, Wilmington children require the full array of educational options that is possible only with a continued reliance on district, charter, and vo-tech schools.

The Advisory Committee believes that the district reconfiguration recommended below would best meet the objectives.

### Action Agenda

1. The Christina School District should leave the City of Wilmington and no longer serve Wilmington students. The current configuration of the Christina School District has no educational rationale other than the inertia of a forty-year-old decision that no longer serves the function for which it was originally intended.
  - The Christina School District should concentrate on serving students in Newark and other communities in western New Castle County. In that proposed configuration, it will be more responsive to the needs of the students in those communities.
  - Wilmington students currently served by Christina schools outside of Wilmington should continue to attend those schools until a comprehensive relocation plan can be developed and implemented. While the transition of Christina out of Wilmington should begin with the 2016–2017 school year, it should continue until all Wilmington students have the opportunity to graduate from the schools in which they are enrolled.

- Transitional funding adjustments will be needed to implement this reconfiguration (see section on Funding Student Success on page 57).
2. The Colonial School District, which has no school facilities in the City of Wilmington, should no longer serve Wilmington students. The Colonial School District currently serves about 243 Wilmington students as of the fall of 2014 (see Figure 2).<sup>12</sup> The transition of Wilmington students out of Colonial should begin with the 2016–2017 school year and continue until all Wilmington students have the opportunity to graduate from the schools in which they are enrolled.
    - Transitional funding adjustments will be needed to implement this change (see section on Funding Student Success on page 57).
  3. Two school districts, Red Clay Consolidated and Brandywine, should continue to serve Wilmington children. Red Clay should take responsibility for all of the Wilmington schools currently under the Christina School District and for Wilmington students currently served by the Colonial School District. This expanded role for Red Clay is desirable for several reasons.
    - Red Clay already has a core role in the city and operates as a metropolitan school district.
    - Red Clay has a plan for addressing the challenges of some of the city’s priority schools. It makes sense for all priority schools to be part of a single plan.
    - Red Clay is the only district in the state with direct experience in authorizing and working with charter schools, and that experience should enable Red Clay to be effective in collaborating with the growing number of charter schools in Wilmington. Red Clay’s role in bridging traditional and charter schools is critical to the long-term coherence and stability of public education governance in Wilmington.
    - The proposed expansion of Red Clay’s responsibilities carries with it an expectation that the district will play a leadership role in the overall improvement of Wilmington public education. The key to that leadership role is achieving greater student success in schools with high concentrations of poverty. The district should affirm its commitment

to that objective and should be supported in fulfilling that commitment by the state and all sectors of the Wilmington and New Castle County communities. An initial step is for the district to build upon and extend its priority schools plan through the introduction of best practices for all schools with high concentrations of poverty.

- The effective fulfillment of Red Clay’s leadership role depends upon the implementation of the Advisory Committee’s recommendations on funding student success (see page 60).
4. The New Castle County Vocational-Technical School District (NCC Vo-tech) should actively collaborate with the Red Clay Consolidated and Brandywine School Districts and with the Wilmington charter schools to expand vocational education opportunities for Wilmington students. We recommend the development of joint programs among NCC Vo-tech, district high schools, Wilmington charter high schools, Delaware Technical Community College, and Delaware businesses to facilitate coordinated pathways for students from all high schools to employment opportunities and advanced technical training. The NCC Vo-tech district should take the lead in developing a comprehensive plan for this new vocational education partnership and presenting it to the governor, secretary of education, and state legislature by January 2016.

*In response to the Advisory Committee’s interim report, the Christina School District Board voted 5–2, to support all of the recommendations outlined in the interim report, including that the district no longer serve the City of Wilmington. Governor Markell affirmed his concurrence and intention that the Christina School District would give up its schools in Wilmington and no longer serve Wilmington students.*

Planning for the implementation of these recommended changes should begin immediately (see section on Implementing Change on page 63).

#### Illustrating the Enrollment Impacts of Redistricting<sup>13</sup>

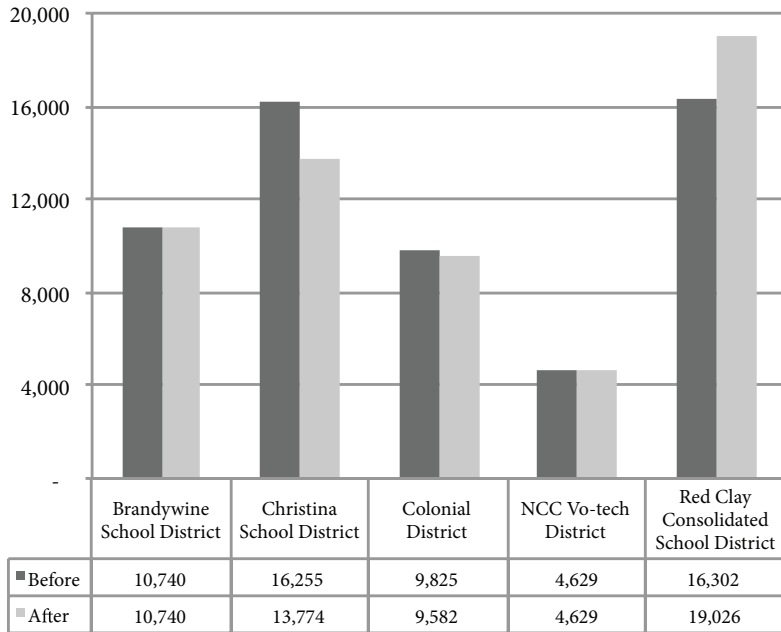
Using data for the 2014–2015 school year, the figures below compare the current student enrollment in the Wilmington school districts with a profile of district enrollment if the WEAC recommended changes were adopted. The “before enrollment” is the actual enrollment; the “after enrollment” is a

<sup>13</sup> Note: For illustrative purposes, these figures assume that the student population will remain constant. Brandywine and NCC Vo-tech are included in these before and after redistricting illustrations despite the lack of changes recommended for those districts. Assuming student population stays constant, enrollment is not expected to change specifically from our recommendations; therefore, the before and after illustration is simply to show the demographics and the constancy in those enrollments.

<sup>12</sup> Based on Department of Education unit counts September 30, 2014. There are some other calculated totals from both the state and the school district that report fewer than 243 students from the city in Colonial School District.

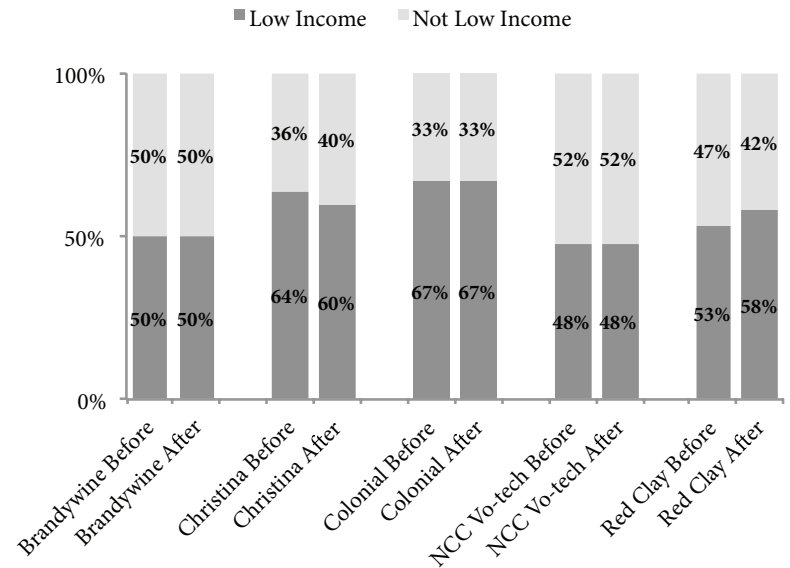
simulation of that same enrollment data under the proposed change in district responsibilities. These comparisons are for illustrative purposes and do not represent actual projections. The illustrations provide a point of reference for the anticipated magnitude of changes in total student enrollment and in the demographic composition of enrollment for factors of low-income status, English Language Learner (ELL) status, students with disabilities, and race.

Figure 5: School District Enrollments, Before and After Redistricting



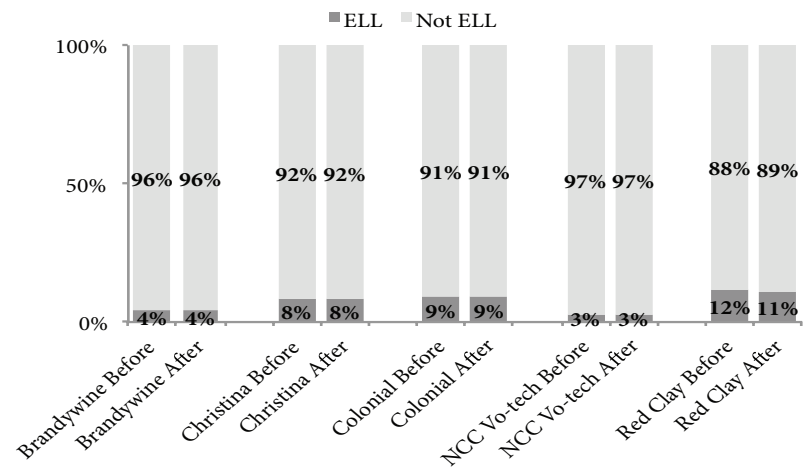
Source: Delaware Department of Education Data Set, 2014-15 School Year  
Note: Excludes Red Clay-authorized charter schools.

Figure 6: Low-Income Students, Before and After Redistricting



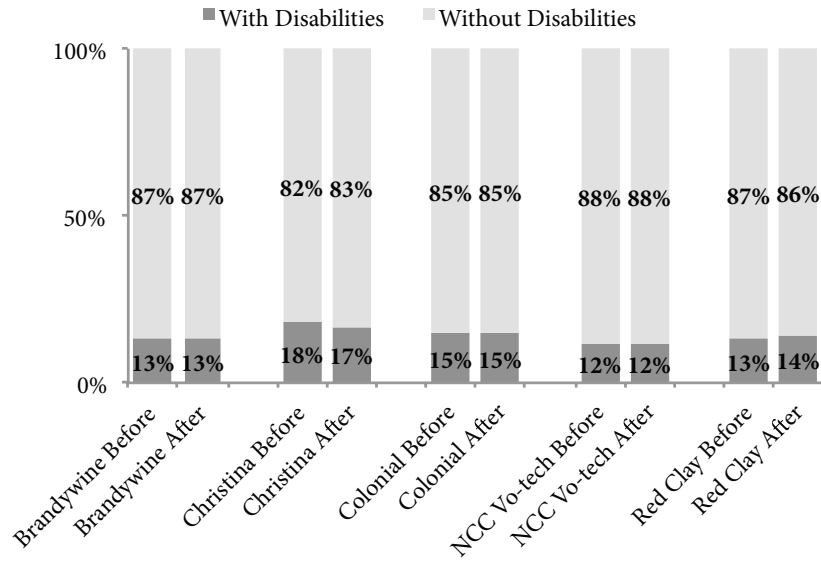
Source: Delaware Department of Education Data Set, 2014-15 School Year  
Note: Excludes Red Clay-authorized charter schools.

Figure 7: English Language Learner (ELL) Students, Before and After Redistricting



Source: Delaware Department of Education Data Set, 2014-15 School Year  
Note: Excludes Red Clay-authorized charter schools.

Figure 8: Students with Disabilities, Before and After Redistricting



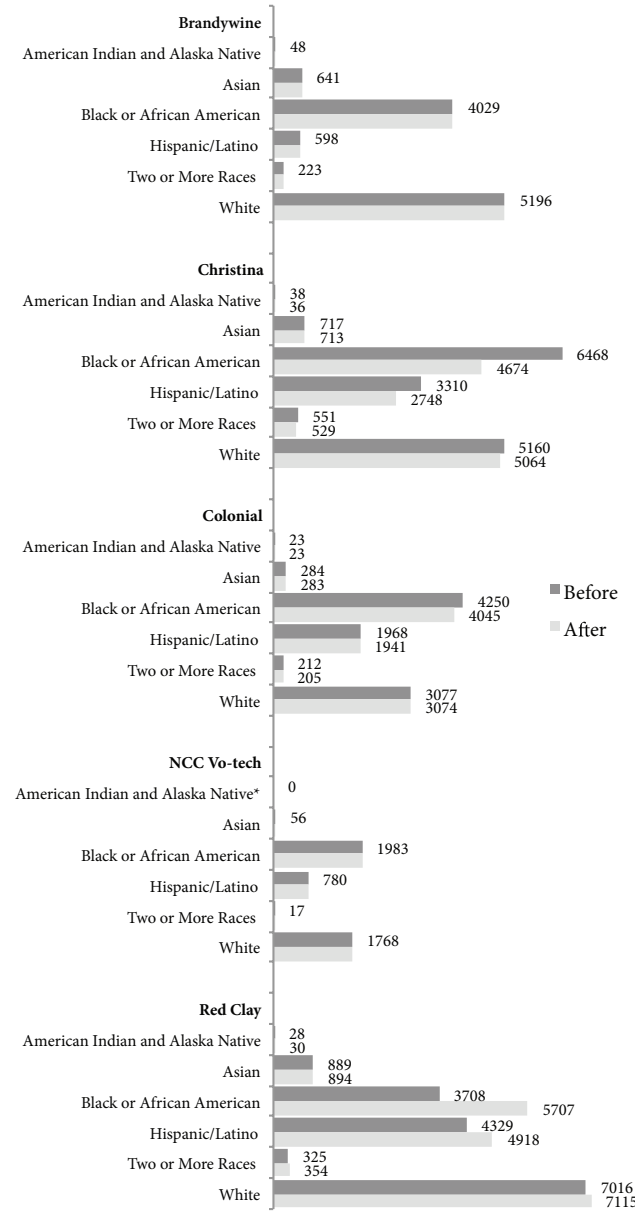
Source: Delaware Department of Education Data Set, 2014-15 School Year  
 Note: Excludes Red Clay-authorized charter schools.

Table 5: Race Breakdown, Before and After Redistricting

	Brandywine		Christina		Colonial		NCC Vo-tech		Red Clay	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
American Indian and Alaska Native	48	48	38	36	23	23	<15	<15	28	30
Asian	641	641	717	713	284	283	56	56	889	894
Black or African American	4,029	4,029	6,468	4,674	4,250	4,045	1,983	1,983	3,708	5,707
Hispanic/Latino	598	598	3,310	2,748	1,968	1,941	780	780	4,329	4,918
Two or More Races	223	223	551	529	212	205	17	17	325	354
White	5,196	5,196	5,160	5,064	3,077	3,074	1,768	1,768	7,016	7,115

Note: "Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander" is not included as there are fewer than 15 students who meet this category in each district.

Figure 9: Race Breakdown, Before and After Redistricting

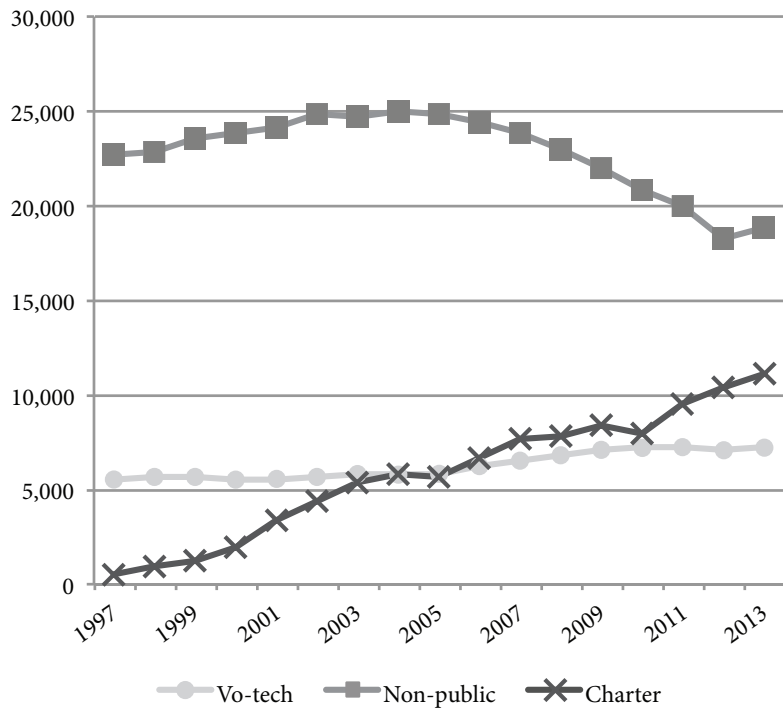


Note: "Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander" is not included as there are fewer than 15 students who meet this category in each district.  
 \* Fewer than 15 students.

**Pursuing a New Vision for Wilmington Charter Schools<sup>14</sup>**

Charter schools are now an important component of Wilmington education, and they will become even more important in the years ahead. In 2012, Delaware ranked third among states in the percentage of public school students enrolled in charters. In that year over 10,300 students were enrolled, representing 9 percent of Delaware’s total public school enrollment. Between 1997 and 2013, Delaware charter school enrollment increased from 524 to 11,078. During that same period, enrollment increased in traditional public schools from 105,429 to 115,046, and in vo-tech schools from 5,525 to 7,245. However, enrollment in non-public schools declined from 22,753 to 18,790 (see Figure 10).<sup>15</sup>

**Figure 10: Charter, Vo-Tech and Non-Public Enrollment 1997-2013**



Source: Department of Education, 2013-2014

Delaware’s heaviest and most rapidly growing concentration of charters is in Wilmington, with 12 (see Table 4).<sup>16</sup> Students living within three public school districts generate nearly two-thirds of total state charter enrollment: Based on 2012 data from the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE), charter enrollment account for 13.1 percent of students in Christina, 8.9 percent in Colonial, and 8.5 percent in Red Clay.<sup>17</sup> With additional Wilmington charter schools already authorized, these percentages will continue to grow. As of the end of 2014, the state had authorized a 90 percent increase in Wilmington charter enrollment over the next five years; subsequently, the state approved the relocation of one charter school outside the city and the reduction of projected enrollments requested by charter schools. As a result, charter enrollment is now projected to increase by 60 percent, from 3,868 to 6,167 over the next five years (see Figure 11). Over the same time period, charter enrollment capacity is projected to increase from 1,997 to 2,601 for elementary schools, from 756 to 1,320 for middle schools, and from 1,115 to 2,246 for high schools. This increased capacity may not be filled, and students from outside Wilmington undoubtedly will fill some seats. Even so, the anticipated growth of charter school enrollment influences the overall configuration of public education in the city and in New Castle County.

Charter schools offer options for Wilmington families; they also pose challenges for the governance of Wilmington public education. The increasing number of charter schools in Wilmington has generated additional governing units that operate largely independent of one another and disconnected from the traditional districts. Indeed, Wilmington charter schools have developed as a separate public education system, occupying the same geographic space as the traditional school districts but operating disconnected from those districts. Traditional and charter schools most often compete rather than collaborate. Rather than promoting the type of market competition that strengthens performance and responsiveness, this competition is pursued at public expense and dissipates the capacity for overall improvement. The absence of sustained collaborations between charter schools and traditional school districts stands in sharp contrast to the operation and expectations of charters and traditional schools in most of the nation.

<sup>14</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, data cited in this section are from Delaware Charter School Data, Institute for Public Administration, 2013. [www.ipa.udel.edu/publications/charter\\_school\\_data\\_delaware-2013.pdf](http://www.ipa.udel.edu/publications/charter_school_data_delaware-2013.pdf) [www.ipa.udel.edu/publications/CharterPublicHearingPresentation.pdf](http://www.ipa.udel.edu/publications/CharterPublicHearingPresentation.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> “Non-public” includes religious and independent schools.

<sup>16</sup> This included nine state-authorized independent charter schools in Wilmington and three charter schools authorized by the Red Clay Consolidated School District.

<sup>17</sup> Percentage attending charters who reside within the district.

### Evaluating Alternatives

The National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) calls upon all charter authorizers to have a compelling vision for charter development, clear goals, and a plan for accomplishing those goals. NACSA also works with authorizers to develop such strategic plans. The State of Delaware is the primary authorizer for all but three charter schools, and it has no plan for the desired number of charters, the distribution of charters, or the total enrollment or grade levels they should serve. There is no plan for the desired mix of charters, traditional public schools, vo-techs, and private schools in the state or in Wilmington. The absence of such a plan most dramatically impacts Wilmington.

The emerging numbers, types, and locations of charters have been driven almost entirely by discrete and disconnected decisions on each separate charter application. Applications have been considered and some approved without any assessment of whether the new charter school will strengthen the overall system of public education. Indeed, until last year, decisions about charter schools were being made without any evaluation of the cumulative community impact of those decisions. Some assessment is now part of the review process. Even so, the state is still making decisions about particular charter applications without any overall plan for what the sum of those decisions is expected to accomplish for the overall delivery of public education. In this, as in other areas, Delaware remains an outlier to national best practices for the development of charter schools.

Across America, charter schools are intended to encourage creative school environments and innovative teaching and learning methods. Central to the rationale for charters is their anticipated role as demonstration schools, with the expectation that successful innovations will be shared and adopted by other charters as well as traditional public schools. In most of the nation, this is exactly what is expected and what takes place. Nationally, 90 percent of charter school authorizers are local school districts, and the majority of charter schools are authorized by school districts.<sup>18</sup> This structure helps to foster communication, coordination, and collaboration between charters and traditional schools. In Delaware, however, about 90 percent of charters are authorized by the State of Delaware. Even though all school districts are eligible to be charter authorizers, Red Clay is the only school district that has authorized charter schools.

In Delaware, the role of charter schools in encouraging innovation rarely translates to a demonstration and scaling up of best practices. While there is sharing across some charters, it generally involves a small number of charters and not all of those that might benefit. Sharing between state-authorized charters and traditional districts is virtually nonexistent. There are few professional development programs that bring together teachers and other educators to work collaboratively on scaling up best practices across charter, traditional, and vo-tech schools. A notable but almost singular exception is the Vision Network of Schools, now called Schools That Lead, which always has included participation from educators in all types of public schools. Even so, the state has not yet designated collaborative programs for educators across different types of schools as a priority for the use of its professional development funding.

An additional factor impacting charter capacity and performance is that almost all Wilmington (and Delaware) charter schools are single-site schools rather than schools that are part of a larger network of charter school providers (such as KIPP). As a result, most Delaware charter schools do not have access to the support resources that are often available to schools that are part of a regional or national network.

For single-site schools, a charter consortium that provides support in non-instructional services and promotes collaboration on best practices has particular value. Such consortiums already operate effectively in many communities, including the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association, the New York City Charter School Center, the Florida Consortium of Public Charter Schools, and the California Charter School Association. These organizations go beyond advocacy to provide services and technical assistance that support the operation of charter schools and improve their performance. They also facilitate collaboration and sharing of best practices, engage community support, contribute to good governance and management practices, and coordinate efforts to address facilities and other needs. In Delaware, the Delaware Charter School Network offers some of these support services, but the scope of its services is limited by the lack of resources and a coordinated strategic plan for the overall improvement of Delaware and Wilmington charter schools.

All Wilmington children should have access to charter schools (and other public schools) in their community that can best meet their learning needs and goals. While charter schools offer families a choice of public school options that may address the diverse learning needs of the students in the City

<sup>18</sup> National Association of Charter School Authorizers, *The State of Charter School Authorizing: A Report on NACSA's Authorizer Survey*, 2013.

of Wilmington, not all families are prepared or engaged to pursue the option that best serves their students. Additionally, while most Wilmington charter schools predominantly serve the students in their surrounding neighborhoods and have demographic characteristics similar to the traditional public schools in those neighborhoods, some do not (see Figure 18). Some charter schools have restrictions or conditions on enrollment that limit options for Wilmington students. Some of these restrictions result from enrollment preference policies that do not always align with national best practices, which encourage the fewest possible enrollment preferences and the greatest possible open choice for students and families. A task force of the Delaware General Assembly has been reviewing the issues and options related to enrollment preferences. We encourage the task force to recommend policies and practices that are aligned with national best practices and eliminate enrollment practices for all schools that limit the educational opportunities of students.

The starting point for improvements is the recognition that charter schools are an important part of public education in Wilmington and will become even more important in the decades ahead. Precisely because of their importance, it is critical that they, like all public schools, operate in ways that support the overall improvement of public education.

Delaware and Wilmington require a new vision of the role and responsibilities of charter schools framed by a state plan that is grounded in national best practices and focused on sharing effective educational innovations and practices with all public schools. That new vision should be matched with the creation of a new entity that actively supports initiatives to fulfill this vision.

#### Action Agenda

1. Governor Markell should mandate the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) and State Board of Education (SBOE) to produce a strategic plan for the development of charters that includes the desired number and mix of charter, district, and vo-tech schools statewide but also with an immediate focus in Wilmington and New Castle County where charter growth has been most extensive. The state plan for the development of charters should be based on a systematic evaluation of the educational needs of Delaware students, with an immediate focus on Wilmington students. The plan should comply with NACSA guidelines for best practices and align with the desired overall configuration of the public education system, including fiscal considerations, as defined by the governor and state legislature. The statewide needs assessment and strategic plan

should be updated every five years and should be supported by analysis of the impacts of existing Delaware charter schools on the overall effectiveness of Delaware public education.

2. The following steps should be completed before any new charter school or expansion of an existing charter school is authorized in Wilmington and New Castle County.
  - The state has completed a statewide needs assessment and produced a strategic plan for the development of charters that includes a proposed optimal mix of district, charter, and vo-tech schools in Wilmington and New Castle County. The charter application has undergone a full analysis of its alignment with the state strategic plan, including an assessment of the impact on Wilmington and New Castle County communities.
  - DDOE confirms that it (or any district or alternative authorizer) has sufficient capacity to provide oversight for additional charter schools.
  - SBOE and DDOE can demonstrate that charter approval is consistent with the state's needs assessment and strategic plan and will generate a net benefit for the overall system of public education in Wilmington and New Castle County.
3. Given that most Wilmington charters operate outside of school districts, an institutional arrangement needs to be established through which coordination of efficient and effective services and sustained collaboration on best practices is supported and delivered. A Wilmington Charter Consortium should be established to promote the effective coordination of charter operations and the use of best practices. All charter schools in the City of Wilmington authorized by the state should be members of the consortium, represented by the heads of schools, with district-authorized charter heads invited to collaborate. The Wilmington Charter Consortium should focus on:
  - Providing administrative support services (such as business operations and shared provision of non-academic services).
  - Coordinating professional development for charter boards, leaders, and teachers.

- Promoting program collaborations to expand best practices among charters and between charters and Wilmington school districts.
  - Serving as an ongoing liaison with the leaders of Wilmington school districts, including NCC Vo-tech.
  - Engaging the Wilmington city government as a partner. The City of Wilmington should have a liaison from the new Office of Education and Public Policy appointed to work with the consortium.
4. The leadership of the consortium should be elected from among the heads of the charter schools. Initially, the consortium should be launched and operated as an extension of the proposed state Wilmington Education Improvement Commission (see section on Implementing Change on page 63), with the expectation that it will develop into an autonomous institution. Some charter schools already benefit from support provided by the Delaware Charter School Network, Innovative Schools, and the services provided by the Community Education Building. We expect this to continue and provide some of the initial foundation for the work of the consortium. Indeed, the consortium may develop from the extended initiatives of the combined efforts of these organizations. However, the scope of the consortium's support should go beyond what is currently being provided by these organizations and parallel the scope of support provided to charters by the model organizations cited earlier. Initial funding for the consortium should be provided by the State of Delaware as well as from private sources. Members of the consortium should develop a long-term resource plan.

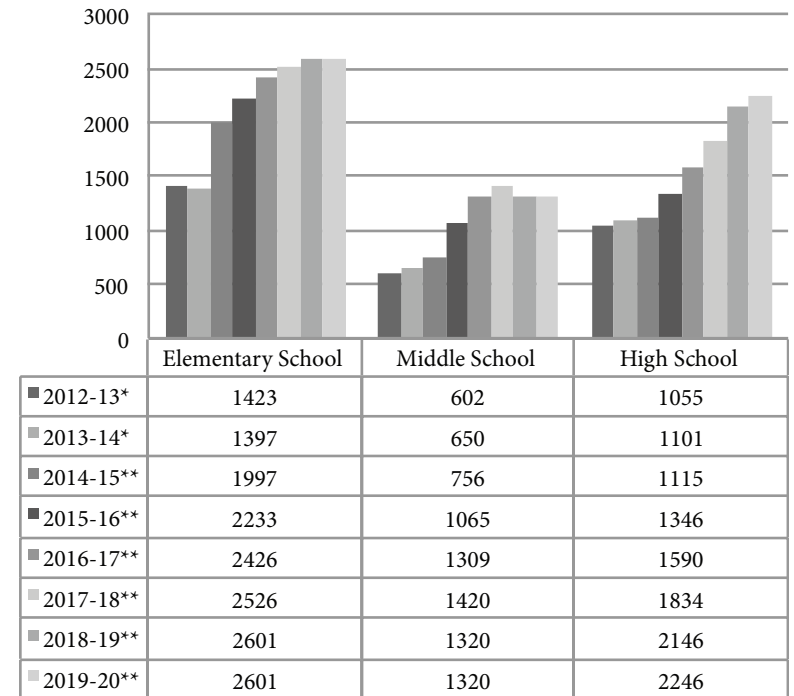
*In response to Advisory Committee's interim report, Governor Markell announced, on March 19, 2015, that he was directing the SBOE and the DDOE to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment and strategic planning process for the future of Delaware public schools, including charter, vo-tech, and magnet schools. He confirmed that the process would review current opportunities available to students, analyze trends, and quantify areas of unmet need for Delaware families. The assessment would evaluate the educational needs of Delaware students and the schools required to meet those needs. Once the needs assessment is completed, the governor directed the SBOE and DDOE to develop a plan that will include all schools but be focused on charter and other special need schools that may be needed to supplement traditional public schools.*

*In his March 19, 2015, announcement, Governor Markell also acted on the above recommendations of the Advisory Committee and stipulated that the state will not authorize any new charter schools until the plan is in place. Charters already authorized but not yet opened would proceed with opening on the schedule approved.*

**Illustrating the Enrollment Impact of Wilmington Charter Growth**

The increased enrollment in already-authorized Wilmington Charter schools (see Figure 11) is likely to have a significant impact on the overall profile of Wilmington education as well as on the projected enrollment of traditional districts after reorganization.

**Figure 11: Projected Charter Enrollment Capacity in Wilmington by School Level**



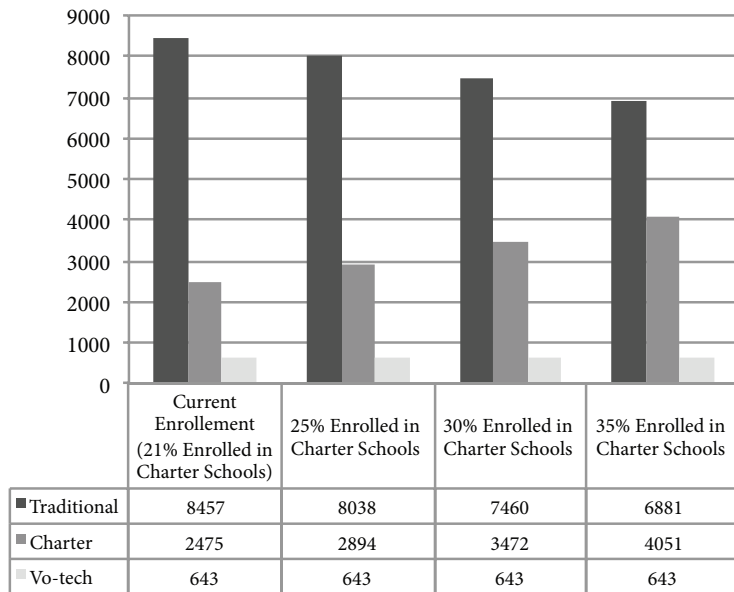
Notes: (1) Enrollment does not come exclusively from students who live in the city. (2) Analysis follows approved modifications and new charters opening in 2015. (3) Projections for new charters and modifications assume enrollment at capacity as indicated. (4) Existing schools without a modification are assumed static. (5) Does not include charter school openings under discussion or proposed past the 2015 school year. (6) \*Actual Data \*\*Projected Figure  
Source: University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration, 2015



Recognizing that some portion of the increased enrollment will come from outside of Wilmington, the impacts on the public education enrollment patterns for Wilmington students are nonetheless likely to be significant. This could be particularly true for enrollment at the high school level given that there soon may be much greater options for Wilmington students to enroll in high schools within the city.

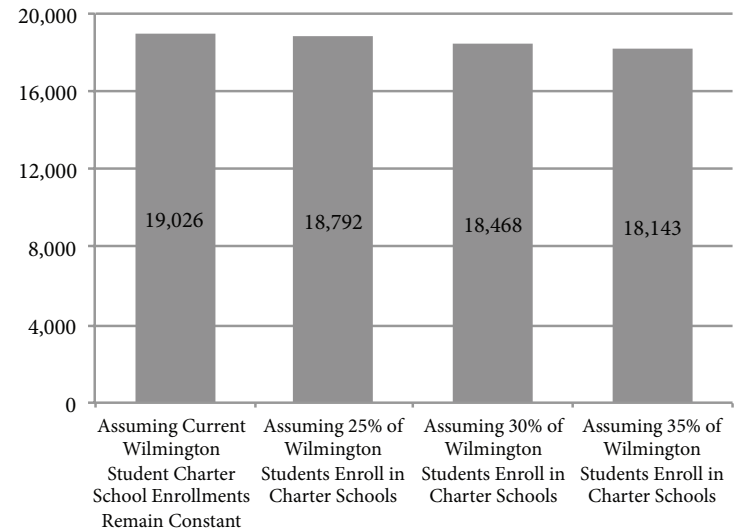
Figures 12, 13, and 14, illustrate the potential shift in Wilmington public school students enrolling in traditional and charter schools after redistricting. The base illustration reflects the current 21 percent charter enrollment of Wilmington students. The additional illustrations represent three possible scenarios resulting from district changes and the approved increases in enrollment capacity of Wilmington charters. These illustrations assume that student population will remain constant.

**Figure 12: Illustration of the Potential Effect of Charter Enrollment Increases on Wilmington Student Enrollments**

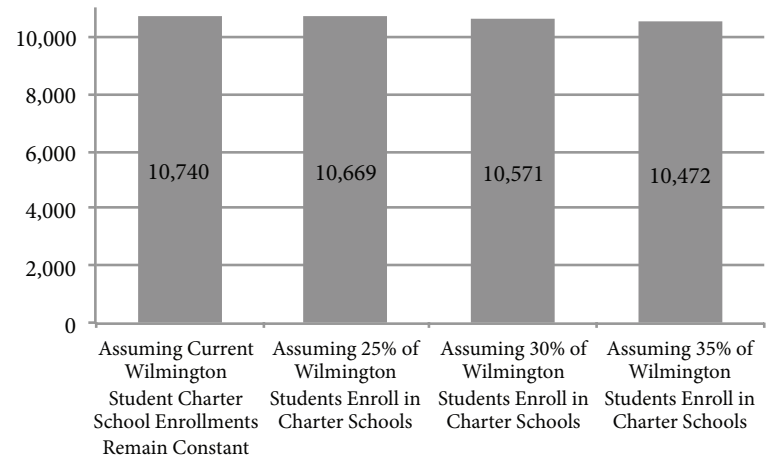


The following illustration of Red Clay enrollment after redistricting assumes that the increases in charter enrollment apply to students transferring from Christina and Colonial School Districts and also to students already in the Red Clay Consolidated School District.

**Figure 13: Illustration of Red Clay Enrollment Under Increasing Percentages of Students in Wilmington Charters<sup>19</sup>**



**Figure 14: Illustration of Brandywine Enrollment Under Increasing Percentages of Students in Wilmington Charters<sup>20</sup>**



<sup>19</sup> Enrollment projections are applied to Red Clay and Brandywine as they are the districts designated to serve City of Wilmington students. It is likely that Christina and Colonial will lose students due to charter growth; however, the database for Wilmington student enrollment does not support that type of analysis.

<sup>20</sup> This only takes into account percentages of Wilmington students who might potentially enroll in charter schools. It does not include the potential for an increase in non-Wilmington Brandywine students enrolling in charter schools due to the increased capacity.

### *Strengthening the Role of the Wilmington Community*

Effective public education in Wilmington requires the active engagement of the community it serves and the city government that represents it. The reconfiguring of districts and creation of the Wilmington Charter Consortium should be accompanied by a new and meaningful partnership with the Wilmington community. Responsive governance requires the ongoing participation of the community and city government in both district and charter school decisions impacting the education of Wilmington’s children.

We endorse the Wilmington city government’s plans to enhance its capacity to become more systematically engaged in public education. A step in this direction is the creation of an Office of Education and Public Policy within the city government with the mandate and the resources needed to represent the interests of its community in the process of strengthening Wilmington education. The office should play a leadership role for broad-based community involvement in public education. The office should forge strong partnerships with the reconfigured schools, districts, and the Wilmington Charter Consortium. The office may also become the source of initiative for the recently proposed Wilmington Education Alliance that would engage all city stakeholders in the active support of public education.

As currently conceived by city leaders, the office would support parent and family engagement in school activity and decision-making, work on behalf of students’ rights to safe educational environments, support a diverse and highly qualified staff of Wilmington educators, and generate greater understanding and commitment to meeting the needs of Wilmington students.

#### **Action Agenda**

1. The Advisory Committee endorses the plan of the Wilmington city government to create an Office of Education and Public Policy to promote active engagement in public education issues by the Wilmington community. The office should support the continuous improvement of education for Wilmington students.
2. The Office of Education and Public Policy should play the leadership role in facilitating parent and family engagement in support of the ongoing learning needs of their students. This effort should be a key element of a larger partnership facilitated by the Office of Education and Public Policy to mobilize the resources—human, organizational, and financial—of community institutions from all sectors in support of Wilmington

schools. This role is consistent with ideas proposed by city leaders for the Office of Education and Public Policy to support a citywide alliance. To be effective, the alliance must pool resources and be guided by a coordinated plan and implementation structure so that all Wilmington schools receive the support they need to effectively address the learning needs of their students.

3. In the proposed new configuration, the Red Clay Consolidated, Brandywine, and NCC Vo-tech School Districts should work closely with the Office of Education and Public Policy and the new Wilmington Education Alliance. The boards of the Red Clay Consolidated and Brandywine School Districts should both be expanded to include additional members from the City of Wilmington.
4. The Wilmington Charter Consortium should become a key vehicle for community partnership, working with the proposed Office of Education and Public Policy and the broader alliance of partner institutions to engage the Wilmington community in its deliberations and decisions. The office, consortium, and Wilmington school districts should collaborate in a sustained and coordinated fashion on the overall planning and development of the city’s educational programs and services.



*“Any plan that aspires to be fair and equitable to all affected children in New Castle County must include fair and equitable opportunities to learn for those children whose residence in a particular neighborhood consigns them by law to a high-poverty school.”*

**H. RAYE JONES AVERY**

CHAIR, WILMINGTON NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS COMMITTEE

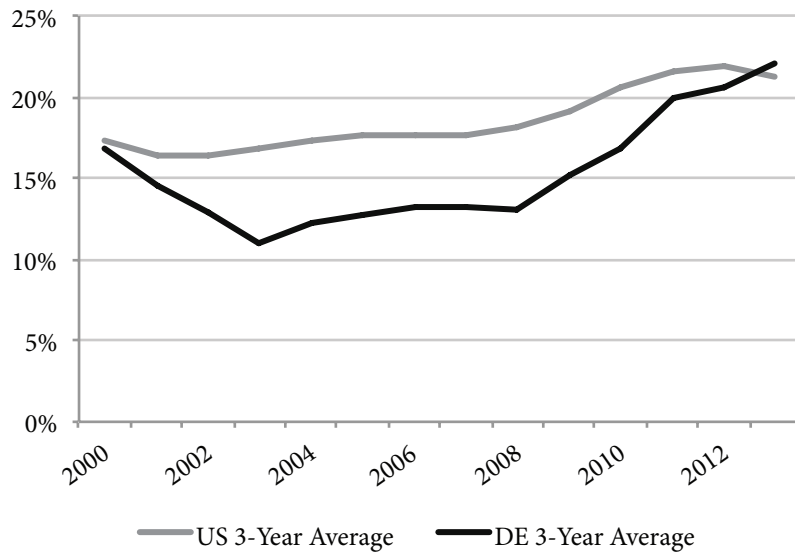
*They Matter Most: Investing in Wilmington's  
Children and Delaware's Future* | January 2001

## Meeting Wilmington Student Needs

All previous working groups on Wilmington education, beginning with the 2001 report *They Matter Most: Investing in Wilmington's Children and Delaware's Future*, have highlighted the unique needs of students in poverty and the challenges facing schools with concentrated poverty. The 2001 report summarizes the challenges by pointing out that low-income children in high-poverty schools (schools with more than 40 percent low-income students), perform worse academically, read less, have lower attendance rates, are more likely to have serious developmental delays and untreated health problems, have higher rates of student behavior problems, and experience a lack of family involvement. Students in schools with lower concentrations of poverty do not face these challenges to the same extent. The 2001 working group and those after have called for actions to address the needs of schools with high concentrations of students in poverty.

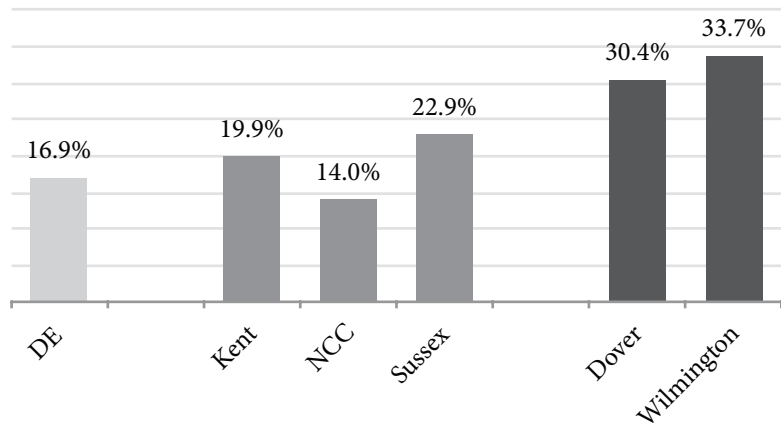
Since the 2001 report was issued, the condition of poverty among Delaware children in general—and Wilmington children in particular—has become more acute and far more widespread. This is consistent with the increase in poverty nationally. The percentage of Delaware children in poverty has gone from a low of about 10 percent in 2003 to about 23 percent in 2013 (see Figure 15). This increase in child poverty is occurring statewide. Some areas in southern Delaware are experiencing soaring numbers of children and families in poverty. However, the highest concentration of children and families in poverty is in Wilmington, with over a third of school-age children in poverty (see Figure 16). Considered in the context of child poverty throughout New Castle County (see Figure 17), the high concentrations in Wilmington are even more apparent.

Figure 15: State of Delaware Children in Poverty, 2000–2013



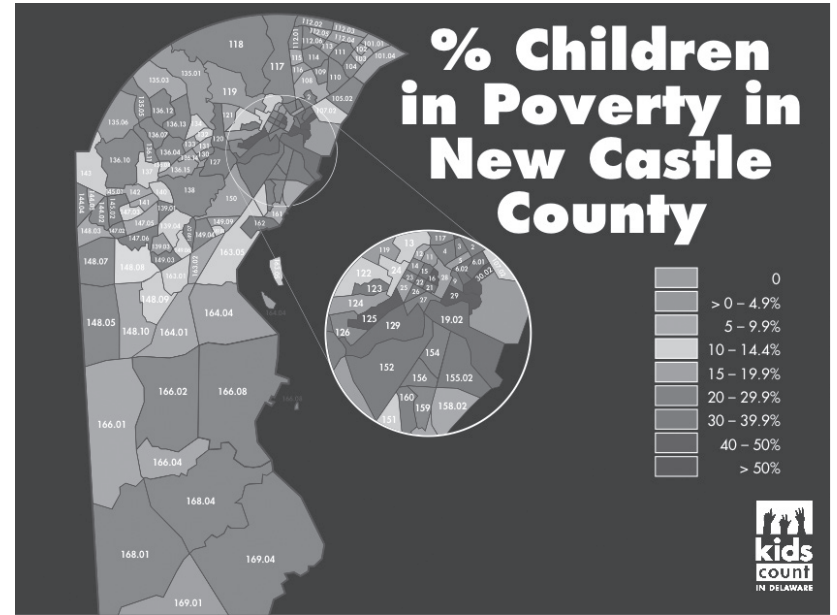
Source: Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research, University of Delaware. (2015).

Figure 16: Delaware Child Poverty by County and Place, Five-Year Average, 2008–2012



Note: The official poverty rate is calculated by the U.S. Census Bureau based on income thresholds and family structure and size in the 2008–2012 American Community Survey. Source: University of Delaware’s Center for Community Research and Service. (2014).

Figure 17: Map Showing the Percentage of Children Ages 0–18 in Poverty by Census Tract in New Castle County, Five-Year Average, 2008–2012



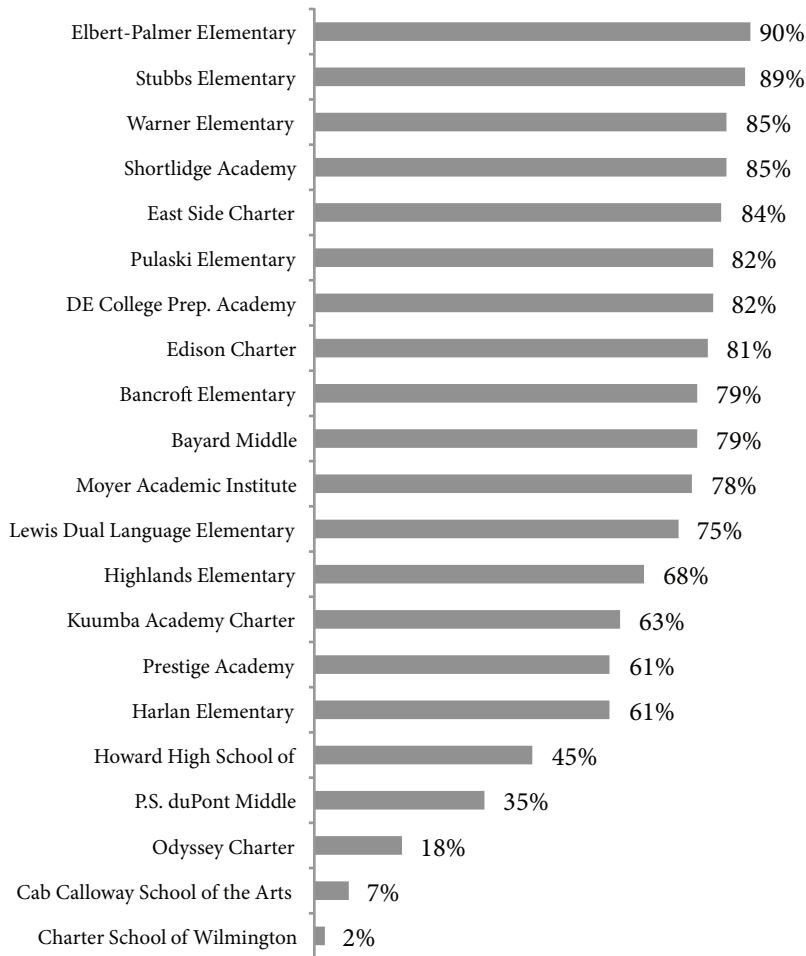
Note: The official poverty rate is calculated by the U.S. Census Bureau based on income thresholds and family structure and size. Source: Kids Count of Delaware. (2014).

Figure 18 shows the percentage of low-income students in City of Wilmington schools determined by eligibility for the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) programs that are proxy measures for poverty. Yet poverty is not just a Wilmington problem. Over 50 percent of all Delaware students in Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade in the 2012–2013 school year were eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL), the federal program used until recently to determine low-income status. These percentages confirm the high percentage of students in Wilmington who are living in poverty and the high concentrations of those students in Wilmington schools.

The relationship between poverty and education is complex. On the one hand, education has long been recognized as the pathway out of poverty, and for some Wilmington students, this is the case. On the other hand, poverty—in all the dimensions that accompany life in low-income families and neighborhoods—is the most dominant force limiting the educational success

of many children. The relationships among education, poverty, and race are critical to the prospects of growing numbers of Delaware children and the communities in which they live. This is the case for Wilmington.

**Figure 18: Percentage of Low-Income Enrollment in Wilmington Schools in 2014**



Source: Delaware Department of Education. (2014). School Profiles.

The Advisory Committee affirms that the poverty of children and families should never be used as an excuse to justify the poor performance of schools they attend. We also affirm that schools with high concentrations of students in poverty face challenges not present in schools with more prosperous students. We concur with earlier working groups that students in poverty, regardless of whether they attend schools with high or low test scores, have unique needs that require resources far in excess of what typically is required for more prosperous students. These resources are needed to address the developmental needs and socio-emotional demands on children in poverty.

Children in poverty in Wilmington often face particularly harsh circumstances because their environment imposes burdens upon them that extend far beyond the limits of their families' incomes. Some of these burdens are the conditions of violence and instability experienced at home and in their neighborhoods. Other factors include institutionalized racism and classism, high unemployment rates, lack of "livable wage" work, lack of sufficient safe and affordable housing, food insecurity, pervasive stereotypes about children of color who live in poverty, and the underfunding of educational and social supports designed to address these traumas.

For students in extreme poverty, the traumas of their lives are carried with them every day at school, and most schools are not equipped to deal with them. A July 2014 research brief from Child Trends, using data from the 2011–12 National Survey of Children's Health, evaluates the prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) for children ages birth through 17 in Delaware. Fully 35 percent of Delaware children and children across the nation have experienced one or two adverse childhood experiences, and 13 percent of Delaware's children have experienced three or more adverse childhood experiences. The four most common ACEs among Delaware children, as reported by parents, are hardship, divorce, violence, and alcohol. Delaware falls into the highest quartile for prevalence of violence as a reported adverse childhood experience. These adverse experiences can lead to trauma and behavioral dysfunctions for children and also result in severe discipline problems within schools. Addressing the challenges of childhood trauma is beyond the training or capacity of teachers and educators. Meeting these challenges requires professional treatment services within schools that are managed by certified specialists.

The achievement gap between poor and more prosperous children is created even before those children arrive at school. Fully 90 percent of brain

growth occurs in the first five years of life.<sup>21</sup> If student learning falls behind in those early years, it is very difficult and sometimes impossible to compensate later. Earlier reports on Wilmington education have consistently identified investment in early learning programs as critical. This is one area in which there has been action by Delaware's leaders, and the impacts of those actions are beginning to materialize. Five years ago, Governor Markell and the Delaware General Assembly undertook policy changes that have greatly increased the access of low-income children to higher-quality early learning environments. The number of high-quality programs (Star rating 3 or above) has increased dramatically, with a significant portion of that increase in Wilmington.<sup>22</sup> Programs participating in the Stars for Early Success program receive support to improve and an increased subsidy when participating; more programs should be encouraged to participate.

Delaware already has home visiting supports in place to help families. Part of the Early Childhood Strategic Plan includes expanding evidence-based home visiting and family health practices. Home visitors have training and experience that can start the process of parental engagement. The process of parental engagement can be continued in high-quality early childhood programs that participate in Stars and used as a foundation for implementing family engagement models in K-12.

To help work on a seamless transition into K-12, the state is implementing the Early Learner Survey for all incoming Delaware Kindergarten students enabling teachers to better determine the needs of their students and better evaluate the areas for further improvement in early learning. Comparable policy changes are needed in many areas that could positively impact the lives of children in poverty and help provide the broader support needed for the schools in which those students enroll.

Addressing these challenges requires a developmental approach that focuses on the alignment of needed supports and services starting in early childhood and extending through entry into a career or higher education. Alignment of supports and services requires a strong partnership between the community and its schools. All sectors of the community should be mobilized. One model of this type of partnership already underway is the work of the Delaware Readiness Teams supporting advances in early learning and

<sup>21</sup> Sustaining Early Success: Delaware's Strategic Plan for A Comprehensive Early Childhood System, Delaware Early Childhood Council, 2013

<sup>22</sup> Delaware Stars for Early Success. (2014, June). Quarterly Report for April - June 2014. Retrieved January 22, 2015 from [www.delawarestars.udel.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Monthly-Data-Report-September-2014.pdf](http://www.delawarestars.udel.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Monthly-Data-Report-September-2014.pdf)

connecting community institutions and resources to those providing essential educational and developmental services to young children and their families. Existing services provided by public, private, and nonprofit institutions should be more effectively and efficiently integrated at each stage of child development and in the transition from one stage to another. The range of services needed includes access to high-quality early childhood education; expanded school time and attention—including enhanced in-school services, such as school psychologists and social workers; availability of after-school programs; expanded school-to-work partnership programs; and more concerted efforts to reach and engage families in student learning and connect them to available services and supports.

Simply adding services without alignment and integration would be costly and ineffective. A systemic change is needed, and our recommendations focus on the starting points for that change, beginning with a comprehensive implementation plan. The plan should be the mandated responsibility of the existing State of Delaware Interagency Resource Management Committee (IRMC), which already has responsibility under the Delaware Code for the coordination and integration of state programs and services and includes the secretaries of the state Departments of Education, Health and Social Services, and Services for Children, Youth and Their Families; Office of Management and Budget; and the Office of the Controller General. The role of IRMC should now be expanded. In addition, the capacity of community institutions across all sectors should be mobilized to support the delivery of support services at each stage of student development and reduce duplication with increased alignment.

As first steps, our proposals seek to take better advantage of organizations and institutions already in place such as the Office of Early Learning, Early Childhood Council, and Wilmington Early Care and Education Council, which include a wide range of community institutions serving children such as Nemours, United Way of Delaware, Children & Families First, and the Commission on Early Education and the Economy. Other organizations are critical to the transitions from early childhood to K-12 education and entry to the workforce or higher education. These organizations include the Delaware P-20 Council, state council of higher education presidents, State and New Castle County Chambers of Commerce, and the Delaware Business Roundtable. We should build on the goal of the Early Childhood Strategic Plan to mobilize community partnerships and public commitment, including family engagement throughout the whole education system.

## Action Agenda

1. The governor and state legislature should mandate the IRMC to develop and implement a comprehensive plan for state and local services, including partnerships with private and nonprofit institutions, which will create a community of support for low-income children and their families. The plan also should address the needs of schools in which large percentages of low-income children enroll. The plan should include initial recommendations for program and policy changes, responsible groups or needed groups, and funding requirements and should be submitted by the IRMC to the governor and state legislature in January 2016 or a year after the mandate is implemented. The IRMC should provide the governor and state legislature with an annual report on the implementation and operation of the plan.
2. Recent improvements in early childhood programs should be accelerated. The Early Childhood Council, Office of Early Learning, and Wilmington Early Care and Education Council should re-develop an early childhood community plan for Wilmington that would provide access to high-quality early childhood programs and services for all children. This initiative should align with the state's already-approved early childhood strategic plan.<sup>23</sup> A key step will be the development of a citywide partnership that includes all providers (family- and center-based), Early Head Start, Head Start, school districts, and higher education. This initiative should be supported actively by the Governor's Commission on Early Education and the Economy, with the shared goal of working with providers to establish easily accessible and affordable high-quality services (including needed screenings and interventions to identify and address developmental needs) for all Wilmington children. This initiative should be coordinated with the existing Early Childhood Readiness Teams and include a formal partnership among early childhood providers and districts and charters serving Wilmington to facilitate the effective transition of children from early childhood to K-12 education.
3. The state should increase supports in schools through increased numbers of psychologists, social workers, and other professionals with knowledge of working with students who experience trauma and other social or

emotional challenges. Delaware should rely on models of best practices in other states to develop a program designed to meet our state's distinctive needs. We must ensure consistency among existing providers to embed improved services within all schools.

4. The governor should redirect the Delaware P-20 Council, representing Pre-K through higher education, to recommend improvements in the alignment of resources and programs to support student learning and development from birth through access to college and careers. This should include a review of resources and programs from public, private, and nonprofit institutions. There should be a logical progression of learning for students from early childhood to post-secondary education and workforce readiness aimed at reducing the need for remediation at each transition. Improved alignment will benefit all children in Delaware. It will be of particular importance to low-income children who often lack sufficient support for their learning progress. Improved alignment also will strengthen cost-effectiveness in the overall delivery of educational programs and services.
5. The governor should call upon the council of higher education presidents to create a coordinated and aligned partnership program to help strengthen Wilmington education from early childhood through college access. Delaware institutions of higher education—public and private—that offer teacher or administrator education programs should be asked to develop collaborative models of comprehensive professional development and ongoing training aimed at assisting early childhood education programs and Wilmington schools with high percentages of low-income or minority students. One step, consistent with Delaware's early childhood strategic plan, is for institutions of higher education to work more directly with the Early Childhood Council to better align early childhood and elementary education programs.
6. In collaboration with the State and New Castle County Chambers of Commerce and the Delaware Business Roundtable, the governor should launch a business sponsorship program focused on Wilmington schools with high percentages of low-income students. Business sponsors should work as partners with each school, helping to generate the human, material, and fiscal resources needed to support student success. This type of sponsorship already is present in some schools and it should be available, formalized, and enhanced for all Wilmington schools. Once developed,

<sup>23</sup> Sustaining Early Success: Delaware's Strategic Plan for a Comprehensive Early Childhood System, Dover, DE: Delaware Early Childhood Council, 2013, p.2.

the business sponsorship program should be expanded statewide for all schools with high percentages of low-income students.

7. The Wilmington Education Alliance, supported by the Office of Education and Public Policy, should play a leadership role in strengthening parent engagement in student learning, beginning in early childhood and extending through college and career choice. The alliance also should support parent advocacy, especially for students with special needs, and mobilize cross-sector community resources to strengthen the support for low-income families and Wilmington schools with high concentrations of low-income students.





*“Our city schools are struggling because of an antiquated funding system that doesn’t take into account the vast amount of resources needed to make them successful. WEAC has done some truly awesome work and it is now up to the elected officials to finish the job and see that our students finally get the supports they need to be successful.”*

**MICHAEL MATTHEWS**

TEACHER, WARNER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER  
PRESIDENT, RED CLAY TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

2015

## Funding Student Success

All previous working groups have recommended changes in education funding to better support Wilmington schools. The 2001 report, for example, recommended increased funding to address the unique needs of schools with large percentages of low-income students, including funding for higher-quality early childhood programs, special education services, and increased professional time. The report also indicated that the attraction and retention of quality teachers to Wilmington schools requires competitive salaries, well-resourced working conditions, and professional development.<sup>24</sup> The 2008 report more specifically identified the need for a change in the state’s education funding formula and recommended a weighted student funding system designed to provide enhanced resources for low-income students and schools in which they are concentrated.<sup>25</sup>

In our view, the funding issues fall into four categories: (1) an allocation formula for public school operating funds that responds to the added resource needs of schools with high percentages of low-income students, (2) a sufficient revenue base to support the overall rising costs of the public education system, (3) an array of transition and capital resources needed to effectively implement the proposed district realignment, and (4) an allocation of funding for the additional programs and services, such as high-quality early childhood programs, required to meet the needs of students in poverty.

<sup>24</sup> Wilmington Neighborhood Schools Committee. (2001, January 01). They matter most: Investing in Wilmington’s children and Delaware’s future.

<sup>25</sup> The Wilmington Education Task Force Study Committee (2008, April). Report of the Wilmington Education Task Force.

Significant discussion is underway about whether Delaware should preserve its current public education funding allocation system based on “unit counts,” or move to a new student-based foundation system that incorporates a weighted formula based on differential student needs. The Advisory Committee believes that the movement to a new allocation system would provide the best opportunity to fully incorporate the needs of low-income students, particularly those in extreme poverty. Even so, we have framed our recommendations within the existing allocation system on the belief that the funding needed to support Wilmington schools and students should not be dependent on moving to a new funding allocation system.

Our funding recommendations address the underlying revenue base supporting public education. The capacity of the State of Delaware to sustain its share of the increasing revenues needed to fund public education is uncertain. The capacity of local sources to sustain revenues to meet their share of the cost of public education also is in doubt. Without stabilizing and enhancing revenue support at both the state and local levels, changes in the funding formula may be difficult and less effective.

The primary source of revenue for public education at the local level is generated from a property tax based on the assessment value of the property as well as the tax rate. Equitable administration of the property tax requires that property assessments be related to the actual market value of the property. Best practices suggest that the actual market value of properties should be evaluated on a regular schedule. When property assessments are out of date, significant inequities arise between various classes of property (e.g., residential, commercial, industrial) and within each class of property. The counties are currently responsible for maintaining property assessment, and the most recent assessment of market value was 1983 in New Castle County, 1987 in Kent County, and 1974 in Sussex County.<sup>26</sup> While there are many reasons for this lag in assessment, most particularly that the costs of assessment are high and the political opposition to assessment from property owners is significant, the large and growing mismatch between the market value and taxable value of property represents an increasing inequity. This lag renders the state’s equalization process, which was intended to compensate for inequities in the tax bases among districts, inaccurate and ineffective. The greatest burden is on the districts that should be the beneficiaries of equalization.

**Table 6: General Fiscal and Personnel Factors and Issues in Redistricting**

Tax Base
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The impact on current expense revenue compared to additional or decreased local expenditures.</li> <li>2. New Castle County Tax District modifications are required to reflect the movement of students. The allocation percentages are currently frozen and based on enrollment to a certain degree.</li> <li>3. Other local district tax components and the impact on revenue versus costs (tuition tax, debt service, match tax, etc.).</li> <li>4. Impact of the State Equalization Formula.</li> </ol>
State Funding
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Unit funding impact and how to handle staff funded by state funding.</li> <li>2. Transportation feeder patterns and savings and costs on state and local side.</li> <li>3. Minor Capital Improvement Funding to address building conditions.</li> <li>4. Major capital improvement funding to address needs.</li> </ol>
Other
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Building conditions and the costs to operate and building capacity. This will impact major and minor capital improvement funding.</li> <li>2. Enrollment capacity in districts and enrollment patterns, including fiscal and billing implications to address choice and charter students and student transitions.</li> <li>3. Employee collective bargaining agreements. How will employees be transitioned in districts that lose state funding units? Do employees transfer to the district where their students are redistricted?</li> <li>4. Other Assets (equipment, instructional materials, etc.) to be transferred.</li> <li>5. Will redistricting impact federal allocations and school nutrition funding?</li> <li>6. Impact on state-approved special schools and billing.</li> <li>7. Will board composition change since district configurations are different?</li> </ol>

<sup>26</sup> 2013-2014 Property Tax Report. (2013, September). Delaware Economic Development Office. Retrieved January 20, 2015 from [http://dedo.delaware.gov/dedo\\_pdf/NewsEvents\\_pdf/publications/DelawarePropertyTaxes\\_2013\\_2014.pdf](http://dedo.delaware.gov/dedo_pdf/NewsEvents_pdf/publications/DelawarePropertyTaxes_2013_2014.pdf)

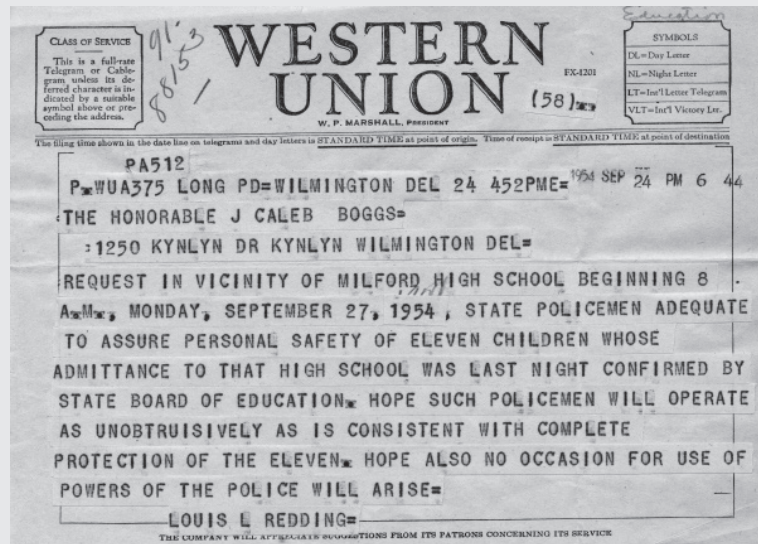
Redistricting entails a significant number of fiscal and personnel impacts. Table 6 provides an initial list of issues to be addressed. A comprehensive analysis of these and related factors should be conducted as part of the planning for and execution of redistricting. The fiscal and personnel implications need to be addressed as part of and concurrent with the overall decision-making on redistricting.

***Action Agenda***

1. The governor and state legislature should approve a modification to the current unit count allocation formula (or move to a new weighted student allocation formula) that addresses the needs of at-risk students by incorporating allocations for schools with high concentrations of students in poverty and English language learners, and expands special education status to grades K-3. Allocations should be applied to multiple enrollment data points/periods to compensate for shifting student populations, and a transition fund should be established to manage the funding impacts of these shifts.
2. The revenue base supporting public education should be strengthened at both the state and local levels. Property reassessment should be implemented without further delay and undertaken on an ongoing schedule that reflects national best practices. Districts should be authorized to increase taxes by a designated percentage without referendum. Districts also should be authorized to apply an equalization surcharge tax that would be redistributed according to the equalization formula to partially redress the lag in equalization. These changes are essential to an effective equalization process.
3. As per the list of factors in Table 6, funding adjustments must be made to support the costs of district reorganization. The impacts of these adjustments on personnel must be addressed as part of the initial planning and decision-making process. Funding adjustments include transitional funding for districts during the years in which the affected districts' student populations will be reshaped as a product of mandated reorganization. The staffing impacts of changes in funding should be addressed as part of an overall transition plan that proceeds with implementation in a manner that generates as little disruption as possible for educators and other staff. Beyond transition funding, a needs assessment should be conducted to evaluate whether the remaining districts in Wilmington

require new middle and high schools in the city. This may be conducted as part of or in parallel to the statewide needs assessment mandated by Governor Markell for charter, vocational-technical, and magnet schools.

4. The General Assembly should approve enabling legislation for the City of Wilmington to increase revenue, subject to approval by the city council and the mayor, for the specific support of an Office of Education and Public Policy.
5. The Advisory Committee endorses the increased investment needed and already anticipated to sustain and accelerate advances in early childhood learning and workforce and college access. The continued investment in early childhood learning is critical to the overall improvement of public education, particularly for low-income students. The Advisory Committee strongly supports the commitment that both the governor and the state legislature have already made to the priority of early childhood education and recognizes that acceleration of improvements in this domain can and will accelerate improvements at all subsequent stages of public education.
6. The IRMC comprehensive plan for low-income students, families, and schools should incorporate steps for redirecting existing state funding to support implementation. The plan should indicate how existing funding should be redirected to support after-school programs, expanded summer programs, and other high-impact supports for low-income students and their families. The governor and state legislature should call upon the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission (in the Implementing Change on page 63) to work with the IRMC to identify state funding that may be redirected to the implementation of the comprehensive plan.



## Implementing Change

The recommendations of earlier Wilmington education working groups have not been implemented. There are many reasons for the lack of action. One of the most important reasons is the fractured nature of governance responsibilities for public education in Wilmington, which works against the actions needed for its own improvement. Leaving responsibility for implementation to be worked out through the typical operations of the current governance system is a guarantee that little change will occur. While the governor and state legislature ultimately have responsibility for acting on the recommendations provided by the Advisory Committee, their ability to carry out that responsibility over a number of years requires that implementation plans be developed and the implementation process be monitored and evaluated. These responsibilities should not be left within the existing agencies of state government. A broadly representative, cross-sector commission mandated by the governor and state legislature is required to work with the various governance units to develop and seek approval for the implementation plans and monitor the process of implementation. The mandate to this commission should apply to all recommended changes from this report and further recommended actions for the continuous improvement of Wilmington public education.

*“The Wilmington Education Advisory Committee has laid the landscape for action to occur this time around. The ability of this committee to mobilize and convene concerned citizens around the state for this one very important topic should be enough to show elected officials that it is time for a change. It is my hope that my colleagues in the General Assembly can work together to implement the needed changes as recommended in the final report.”*

THE HONORABLE MARGARET ROSE HENRY  
SENATOR, DELAWARE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

March 2015

### Action Agenda

1. The governor and legislature should establish, through the Delaware Code, the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission (WEIC).

- WEIC should serve as the state advisory commission on planning and implementing the recommended changes to improve Wilmington education.
  - WEIC should monitor progress on implementation and recommend additional policy and program improvements to strengthen Wilmington education.
  - WEIC should advise the governor and legislature on statewide improvements for all schools with high concentrations of children in poverty.
  - WEIC should make recommendations to the governor and the legislature that promote the coherent and responsive governance of Wilmington education, the coordination and effective delivery of state and private and nonprofit services for schools with high percentages of children in poverty, and the effective and efficient use of state and local resources to support continuous improvement in Wilmington public education.
2. WEIC should include representatives of state government, including the chairs of the Education Committees of the Delaware House of Representatives and Senate, the secretary of education, and the president of the State Board of Education; Wilmington city government; Wilmington districts impacted by the proposed recommendations; charter school leaders; key Wilmington education stakeholders, including parents; a cross-section of community institutions from all sectors; and at least two student representatives. The chair and vice-chair of WEIC should be appointed from among the private and nonprofit members. The operational support of WEIC should be external to the state Department of Education or other public sector or educational units directly impacted by the implementation of the recommendations. WEIC should issue an annual report to the governor and state legislature describing the progress of implementation and proposals for continuous improvement in Wilmington education. Unless reauthorized, WEIC should sunset on June 30, 2020.



*“As a state we have a responsibility to provide all of our students with the opportunities and support they need to succeed. Implementation of the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee’s recommendations will strengthen the public education system for students in Wilmington and throughout Delaware. We must act now.”*

**ERNEST J. DIANASTASIS**  
 MANAGING DIRECTOR, CAI  
 CHAIRMAN, VISION COALITION LEADERSHIP TEAM  
 2015

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## Appendix A



### Overview of Past Committee Reports

The Wilmington Education Advisory Committee (WEAC) reviewed the work of previous commissions addressing the challenges of Wilmington education. There are several recurring themes in the previous reports. Among the main topics addressed in the reports are teacher training and professional development, additional funding for low-income students as a high-need population, early learning, and a redevelopment of the governance structure. Despite the overlapping recommendations of each commission, very little action has been taken. The 2014–2015 Wilmington Education Advisory Committee, formed at the request of Governor Jack Markell and members of the Delaware General Assembly, is the latest group to address the challenges that have existed in the City of Wilmington for over a century and has worked to build upon the recommendations of past commissions, framing the recommendations around the longer history of Wilmington education, but also considering the changes in conditions since the first report was released.

The Wilmington Neighborhood Schools Committee was created as part of the Neighborhood Schools Act of 2000 to establish an implementation plan that would be fair and equitable to all children. This committee, chaired by Raye Jones Avery, released a report in 2001 titled *They Matter Most: Investing in Wilmington's Children and Delaware's Future*. In 2006, the Hope Commission released a report with the primary recommendation of creating a strong youth advocacy organization to improve the education of children in the City of Wilmington. The Wilmington Education Task Force was created by a Delaware Senate joint resolution and was chaired by Senator Margaret Rose Henry. They produced a report in April 2008 that gave further recommendations to overcome the challenges facing Wilmington students. Below is a summarization of past recommendations, categorized as addressing the issues of governance, meeting unique student needs, and funding.

Wilmington students and schools face unique needs that other schools may not face, and may not be addressed in the current education system. Each report described the unique needs that were identified for the city and its students. The 2001 report details the challenges faced in schools with higher percentages of low-income students. The creation of neighborhood schools, by its nature, creates schools in the city that are highly concentrated in poverty. The report identifies that children in high-poverty schools, identified in the report as schools with more than 40 percent low-income students, perform worse academically, read less, have lower attendance rates, are more likely to have serious developmental delays and untreated health problems, have

less funding for advanced classes, higher rates of student behavior problems, less highly qualified teachers, and a lack of family involvement. Students in schools with lower concentrations of poverty do not face these challenges to the same extent yet are treated the same in terms of funding and teacher training and recruitment, among other things. This report cites both national and local studies identifying the unique needs of urban, low-income students that need to be addressed in any proposed recommendation.

Each report identified that the current funding formula is not meeting the needs of Wilmington students. All three reports identified the need for teacher recruitment. Further, the reports identified student loan forgiveness and professional development as two ways to improve in this area. Wilmington schools, which serve a higher-needs population, would need additional funding from the state to afford recruitment and professional development.

## Summary of the Recommendations from the Wilmington Neighborhood Schools Committee Report (2001)

### Governance

- Create a *Charter School District* in which all schools within the City of Wilmington would have the freedom of innovation that charter school do and allow for freedom of choice within the city.
- Merge the Red Clay Consolidated and Brandywine School Districts and the City of Wilmington into one *Metropolitan School District*, creating a common tax base.
- [Consideration of a Wilmington School District was halted after identifying the funding challenges that such a district would provide.]

### Meeting the Unique Student Needs

- Implement full-day kindergarten programs.
- Implement smaller class sizes.
- Recruit and retain highly qualified teachers for high-need schools.
- Provide additional professional development so teachers are continually able to meet the needs of their students.
- Create small learning communities for high-need students, staying



with the same teacher for several years and focusing on literacy and math core.

- Make early literacy a focus, helping parents to support early literacy including reading and vocabulary.
- Allow state and local authorities to seek partnerships with health, family welfare, and educational service providers.
- Provide adequate resources and attention to ensure that English language learners attain academic language proficiency in a timely fashion and master state content standards at grade level.

### ***Funding***

- Provide funding to address the unique requirements of low-income students: early childhood, special education services, and increased instructional time.
- Provide incentives for teachers including a waived city wage tax, competitive salaries, and a loan forgiveness program.

### ***Other***

- Establish monitoring and accountability for all schools to judge success based on the achievement of all students.

## **Summary of the Wilmington Hope Commission Report (2006)**

### ***Unique Student Needs***

- Improve the quality of childcare and pre-school for all City of Wilmington children.
- Focus on early literacy and math skills in middle schools.
- Provide professional development that focuses on ensuring all students graduate from high school.
- Work with Delaware colleges and universities to prepare teachers for the challenge of teaching urban youth.
- Help parents prepare their children for school.

- Create partnerships among school districts, community centers, and religious institutions to ensure effective after-school programs and tutoring for students in their communities.
- Create an education advocacy organization in the city to mobilize resources to improve achievement among all students, working closely with districts, the government, community groups, and the faith-based community.

### ***Other***

- Reduce school truancy.

## **Summary of the Recommendations from the Wilmington Education Task Force (April 2008)**

### ***Governance***

- Create *The River Plan*, redistricting to place all students to the east of Market Street in Brandywine School District and place students to the west of Market Street in Red Clay Consolidated School District. Any changes to district lines should be given enough time to implement and should be as revenue-neutral as possible.
- Move toward having one northern New Castle County School District.
- Give Wilmington students the opportunity to attend public schools in their communities for grades Pre-K to 8.
- Provide proportional representation for Wilmington students on school boards.
- Create one or more middle schools and a public high school in the city.
- Create an Urban Professional Development Center in the city to be able to model best practices for schools in Wilmington and to assist with the recruitment and retention of quality teachers and school leaders.

### ***Meeting the Unique Student Needs***

- Increase the number of vocational technical seats available to city students.

- Ensure equity and access of the latest technology available in city public schools.
- Provide innovative training and recruitment to attract and maintain quality educators.
- Develop smaller learning environments where the same teachers, families, and students stay together over a period of time.

***Funding***

- Provide funding for students who choice into high schools in surrounding districts.

***Other***

- Conduct annual assessments to track student progress over time.
- Conduct additional study on urban education, community school partnerships, and public/private partnerships.
- Develop a citywide implementation plan, establishing appropriate outcomes, conducting a gap analysis, building on what is working, and developing an implementation strategy.

**Summary of the Recommendations from the Mayor’s Youth, Education and Citizenship Strategic Planning Team (2013)**

In 2013, the Mayor’s Youth, Education and Citizenship Strategic Planning Team was established but issued no formal report.

**Appendix B**  
  
**Profile of Wilmington Student Achievement**

Table B1: Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS) Scores, 2013–14 School Year

	DCAS Math		DCAS Reading			
	Wilmington	State	Wilmington	State	Wilmington	State
<b>Percent Proficient Grade 3</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>70%</b>
Score of 1	184	20%	10%	316	35%	16%
Score of 2	322	36%	20%	171	19%	14%
Score of 3	316	35%	30%	219	24%	24%
Score of 4	85	9%	40%	196	22%	46%
<b>Percent Proficient Grade 5</b>						
<b>Percent Proficient Grade 5</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>76%</b>
Score of 1	229	26%	12%	207	24%	11%
Score of 2	231	27%	18%	181	21%	13%
Score of 3	326	37%	43%	302	35%	33%
Score of 4	86	10%	27%	170	20%	43%
<b>Percent Proficient Grade 8</b>						
<b>Percent Proficient Grade 8</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>71%</b>
Score of 1	245	30%	14%	236	29%	15%
Score of 2	228	28%	18%	143	18%	14%
Score of 3	252	31%	38%	233	29%	27%
Score of 4	90	11%	30%	197	24%	44%
<b>Percent Proficient Grade 10</b>						
<b>Percent Proficient Grade 10</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>71%</b>
Score of 1	113	22%	10%	136	22%	11%
Score of 2	208	22%	21%	141	22%	14%
Score of 3	261	24%	46%	154	24%	24%
Score of 4	52	32%	23%	200	32%	51%

Source: Delaware Department of Education Data Set, 2013-14 School Year  
 Note: Scores of 3 and 4 are considered proficient.  
 Score of 1 = Well Below  
 Score of 2 = Below  
 Score of 3 = Meets Expectations  
 Score of 4 = Advanced

Table B2: Comparative Students Graduation Rates, Class of 2014

	Wilmington		Delaware	
	Not Graduated	Graduated	Not Graduated	Graduated
<b>Not Graduated</b>	238	32%	1,511	16%
<b>Graduated</b>	514	68%	8,201	84%
<b>By Race</b>				
	Wilmington		Delaware	
	Not Graduated	Graduated	Not Graduated	Graduated
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	37%	63%	19%	81%
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	*	*	*	*
<b>Black</b>	33%	67%	20%	80%
<b>White</b>	13%	87%	13%	87%
<b>Asian</b>	*	*	8%	92%
<b>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</b>	*	*	*	*
<b>Two or More Races</b>	71%	29%	14%	86%

Note: \*Fewer than 15 students.  
 Source: Delaware Department of Education Data Set, 2013-14 School Year

Table B3: Wilmington Dropout Rates, Class of 2014

<b>Not from Wilmington</b>	879	84%
<b>Wilmington Resident</b>	172	16%
<b>By Race</b>		
	Total	Percentage
<b>American Indian or Alaska Native</b>	*	*
<b>Asian American</b>	30	3%
<b>Black or African American</b>	450	43%
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	143	14%
<b>Two or More Races</b>	17	2%
<b>White</b>	407	39%

Source: Delaware Department of Education Data Set, 2013-14 School Year

**Appendix C**




**Public Transmittal Documents**

**Public Transmittal Documents**

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**Executive Order Number Forty-Six**

STATE OF DELAWARE



EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT  
DOVER

**EXECUTIVE ORDER  
NUMBER FORTY-SIX**

TO: HEADS OF ALL STATE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

RE: CREATING THE CITY OF WILMINGTON EDUCATION ADVISORY GROUP TO PROVIDE INPUT TO EXECUTIVE BRANCH LEADERS IN EFFORTS TO IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH IN THE CITY OF WILMINGTON

WHEREAS, a high-quality education is essential for our children to reach their full potential;

WHEREAS, the State of Delaware has made tremendous progress in improving its education system and outcomes for students, as indicated by higher graduation and college attendance rates, lower drop-out rates, and more students meeting their personal growth targets; however, students in some communities continue to need additional support;

WHEREAS, many schools serving Delaware's children with high needs are struggling to show significant progress, and the six lowest-performing district schools in the state are all located in the City of Wilmington;

WHEREAS, high-needs students, disproportionately from the City of Wilmington, begin each school year significantly academically disadvantaged, frequently fail to meet their growth targets, and fall even farther behind their peers in a cycle that continues year after year;

WHEREAS, children who perform poorly academically are less likely to obtain a college degree or professional certification that they need in order to start a successful career path;

WHEREAS, we must do everything within our power to enhance educational opportunities for those students who need our help the most;

WHEREAS, engaging community leaders, activists, parents, teachers, and family members is essential to combating the inequalities that plague our schools within the City of Wilmington;

WHEREAS, to improve our education system for students from the City of Wilmington, it is vital that we listen to the voices of community leaders and engage parents and guardians who seek the advancement of educational opportunities for Delaware's children; and

WHEREAS, an advisory group can review and evaluate educational opportunities available to students from the City of Wilmington and provide recommendations to my administration to help ensure that all of our children receive the education they need to reach their full potential.

NOW THEREFORE, I, JACK A. MARKELL, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Delaware, do hereby declare and order as follows:

1. The City of Wilmington Education Advisory Group (hereinafter, the "Advisory Group") is hereby established. The Advisory Group shall be comprised of at least fifteen community members with a special interest in the City of Wilmington, appointed by the Governor in consultation with elected representatives who serve the City. The Governor will appoint the Chair, who shall convene meetings and present recommendations of the Advisory Group to the Governor and the Secretary of Education as appropriate.

2. The Advisory Group shall advise the Governor and the Secretary of the Department of Education on all issues relevant to providing excellent educational opportunities for students in the City of Wilmington. This shall include but not be limited to making recommendations for improving educational outcomes, community involvement, family engagement, social services, and access to extracurricular activities.

3. In connection with the foregoing, the Advisory Group may:

- a. Examine the quality and availability of educational opportunities for students in the City of Wilmington;
- b. Examine social issues that are specific to the needs of students in the City of Wilmington;
- c. Examine ways to improve collaboration and information-sharing among community members, educators, administrators, policymakers, and families to facilitate improved access to high-quality educational opportunities; and
- d. Make policy recommendations consistent with the purpose and goals of this Advisory Group.

4. The Advisory Group shall hold meetings by order of the Chair or by vote of at least one-half of the members of the Advisory Group.

5. The Chair may appoint a Vice-Chair to assist in facilitating the initiatives articulated in this Executive Order.

6. The Advisory Group shall be terminated on December 31, 2016, if not reconstituted by further Executive Order.



APPROVED this 25<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2014

*Jack Markell*  
Governor

ATTEST:

*[Signature]*  
Secretary of State

## **Wilmington Education Advisory Committee Public Meeting Schedule**

### ***November 5, 2014***

*Governor's Conference Room, Carvel State Office Building*  
Remarks from The Honorable Jack Markell, Delaware Governor

### ***November 24, 2014***

*Warner Elementary School*

### ***December 6, 2014***

*Community Education Building*  
Presentations by Aretha Miller, Chief Executive Officer, Community Education Building and The Honorable Mark Murphy, Delaware Secretary of Education

### ***December 15, 2014***

*Bancroft Elementary School*  
Introduction by Harold "Butch" Ingram, Principal, Bancroft Elementary  
Presentation by Mike Jackson, Deputy Controller General, Officer of the Controller General

### ***January 5, 2014***

*EastSide Charter School*  
Presentation by Dr. Lamont Browne, Head of School/Principal, EastSide Charter

### ***January 12, 2014***

*Howard High School of Technology*  
Presentation Colleen Conaty, Vice Principal, Howard High School of Technology

### ***January 19, 2014***

*Louis L. Redding House*  
Introduction by Dr. Joseph Johnson

### ***February 2, 2015***

*Highlands Elementary School*  
Presentation by Barbara Land, Assistant Principal, Marbrook Elementary

### ***February 9, 2015***

*Stubbs Elementary School*  
Presentation by Jeffers Brown, Principal; Melissa Brady, Assistant Principal; and Ken Livingston, Eastside Community Center Coordinator

### ***March 2, 2015***

*The Achievement Center*  
Introduction by Charles Madden, Executive Director, The Achievement Center

### ***March 9, 2015***

*Chase Center on the Riverfront*  
Imagine Delaware Forum

### ***March 16, 2015***

*Cathedral Choir School of Delaware*  
Welcome Performance by the Intergenerational Cathedral Choir  
Presentation by Arreon Harley, Director of Music and Operations, Cathedral Choir School of Delaware

Letter to Governor Markell, January 9, 2015

Wilmington Education  
Advisory Committee

January 9, 2015

The Honorable Jack Markell  
Governor, State of Delaware  
820 North French Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Wilmington, Delaware 19801

Dear Governor Markell:

When you appointed the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee, you charged us with advising you and Secretary Murphy on how best to strengthen educational opportunities for all Wilmington students. Our Committee has been diligent in this regard. As such, today, I am writing on behalf of the Committee to request that you defer final actions on the Red Clay Consolidated and Christina School District priority schools until we issue our interim set of recommendations.

Our intention is to submit this set of recommendations by Monday, January 26, the contents of which will include initial analyses and proposals in the following critical areas we have identified.

- Governance and the current landscape of traditional, Vo-Tech and charter schools in the City of Wilmington
- The role of the City of Wilmington, particularly as it relates to formal representation, participation and influence
- Overcoming barriers to student success, including the impacts of race, class, geography and the unique needs of Wilmington children and schools
- Needs-based student funding, and
- Implementation

We intend to make these interim recommendations available for public comment, which we will seek in earnest through early March. Our final report will be submitted no later than March 31.

We recognize that the approval process already is underway for the plan submitted by Red Clay and that the timetable is confirmed for actions on the priority schools in both districts. To be clear, we will not be commenting on the plans themselves, but do expect that our recommendations will have impact on the broader set of governing responsibilities for all Wilmington schools, including the priority schools in Christina and Red Clay. As such, we believe it is prudent that you consider our recommendations before moving forward.

In thinking through this request, we have gained the support of Wilmington Mayor Dennis Williams, Wilmington City Council President Theopolis Gregory, New Castle County Councilman Jea Street, the Wilmington delegation of the General Assembly as well as other elected officials and community partners.

Wilmington Education  
Advisory Committee

January 9, 2015

The Advisory Committee agreed early in our convening that we would take the long view with respect to public education in Wilmington, but would also take advantage of any opportunity to weigh-in on specific action items during 'moments that matter.' This is one such occasion.

In that vein, I hope you will accept our request. We look forward to your response soon. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Tony Allen, Ph.D., Chairman

- cc: The Honorable Mark Murphy, Secretary of Education  
The Honorable Patricia Blevins, Senate President Pro Tempore  
The Honorable Peter Schwartzkopf, Speaker of the House  
The Honorable David Sokola, Senate Education Committee Chair  
The Honorable Earl Jaques, House Education Committee Chair  
The Honorable Jea Street, New Castle County Councilman  
The Honorable Dennis Williams, Mayor of the City of Wilmington  
The Honorable Theopolis Gregory Sr., Wilmington City Council President  
The Honorable Nnamdi Chukwuocha, Wilmington City Council Education Committee Chair

Wilmington delegation

- The Honorable Margaret Rose Henry, State Senator  
The Honorable Robert Marshall, State Senator  
The Honorable Harris McDowell, State Senator  
The Honorable Stephanie Bolden, State Representative  
The Honorable Gerald Brady, State Representative  
The Honorable James Johnson, State Representative  
The Honorable Helene Keeley, State Representative  
The Honorable Charles Potter, State Representative

Members of the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee



## Wilmington Education Advisory Committee Transmittal Letter

### Wilmington Education Advisory Committee

January 26, 2015

The Honorable Jack Markell  
Governor, State of Delaware  
820 North French Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Wilmington, Delaware 19801

Dear Governor Markell:

On January 9, 2015, I requested that you delay any final decisions on the Christina and Red Clay *Priority Schools* plans until you reviewed the Wilmington Educational Advisory Committee's interim set of recommendations. Enclosed is the Committee's Interim Report containing the recommendations and an initial analysis supporting each item in the proposed *Action Agenda*.

As I have said in the past, we will not comment on the *Priority Schools* plans submitted by Red Clay and Christina. However, the work undertaken by educators and administrators in both districts in developing those plans is important. This work should continue to be refined—and strengthened as appropriate, and will serve as an essential foundation for the recommendations we outline in this interim report.

We will complete the *Action Agenda* when we issue our final report in March. However, we believe that the recommendations in the Interim Report set out the best path forward for public education in Wilmington. This path has extended benefits for public education in New Castle County as well as communities throughout Delaware where there are high concentrations of low-income students with unique needs. With more than 50% of Delaware's school age students now living in poverty, the challenge of strengthening public education for students in poverty is not just a Wilmington problem.

With the submission of our Interim Report, we are beginning a robust period of public comment and are inviting input from the Wilmington community and from citizens across the state. This comment period is meant to enable a vigorous and constructive exchange of ideas that will inform our final recommendations.

The members of the Advisory Committee and I thank you for your willingness to form this group and for allowing us to work unencumbered by the controversies currently surrounding Wilmington education. As such, our focus remains on the best long-term interests of Wilmington students. We strongly believe that a quality education remains a pathway out of poverty and that ensuring all students have access to quality education requires an intentional set of actions supported by policy, resources and political will.

### Wilmington Education Advisory Committee

January 26, 2015

It's been 60 years since the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and 40 years since Delaware, by legal prescription, first attempted to address the needs of all of its students. Still thousands of Wilmington children are unable to fully benefit from a quality public education. Now is the time to act and to do so in ways that will strengthen Wilmington education for decades to come. The benefits of these actions for Delaware and its largest metropolitan center cannot be overstated.

We look forward to your consideration of the recommendations in our Interim Report.

Sincerely,



Tony Allen, Ph.D., Chairman

cc: The Honorable Mark Murphy, Secretary of Education  
The Honorable Patricia Blevins, Senate President Pro Tempore  
The Honorable Peter Schwartzkopf, Speaker of the House  
The Honorable David Sokola, Senate Education Committee Chair  
The Honorable Earl Jaques, House Education Committee Chair  
The Honorable Jea Street, New Castle County Councilman  
The Honorable Dennis Williams, Mayor of the City of Wilmington  
The Honorable Theopalis Gregory Sr., Wilmington City Council President  
The Honorable Nnamdi Chukwuocha, Wilmington City Council Education Committee Chair  
Mr. John Skrobot, President of Brandywine School Board of Education  
Dr. Mark Holodick, Superintendent of Brandywine School District  
Mr. Frederick Polaski, President of Christina School Board of Education  
Dr. Freeman Williams, Superintendent of Christina School District  
Mr. Joseph T. Laws, III, President of Colonial School Board of Education  
Dr. D. Dusty Blakey, Superintendent of Colonial School District  
Mr. Kenneth Rivera, President of Red Clay Consolidated School District Board of Education  
Dr. Mervin Daugherty, Superintendent of Red Clay Consolidated School District  
Ms. Yvette Santiago, President of New Castle County Vo-Tech School District Board of Education  
Dr. Victoria C. Gehrt, Superintendent of New Castle County Vo-Tech School District

**Statement by Wilmington City Council President Theo Gregory Concerning the Recommendations of the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee, January 27, 2015**

**Wilmington Education  
Advisory Committee**

January 26, 2015


Wilmington delegation

- The Honorable Margaret Rose Henry, State Senator
- The Honorable Robert Marshall, State Senator
- The Honorable Harris McDowell, State Senator
- The Honorable Stephanie Bolden, State Representative
- The Honorable Gerald Brady, State Representative
- The Honorable James Johnson, State Representative
- The Honorable Helene Keeley, State Representative
- The Honorable Charles Potter, State Representative

Members of the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee

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**NEWS RELEASE**

Tuesday, January 27, 2015

**Statement by Wilmington City Council President Theo Gregory Concerning the Recommendations of the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee**

"I express my thanks and appreciation today to Chair Tony Allen and the members of the Advisory Committee for their thoughtful and focused recommendations to the Governor regarding the education of our children in Wilmington. Each of the recommendations—removing the Christina and Colonial Districts from the City school equation, weighted funding for lower performing schools in Wilmington, a charter school evaluation and the creation of an Office of Education to provide Wilmington with a decision-making role in the education system—are essential to improving the educational opportunities for Wilmington's children and their achievements in the future.

Education is at the core of a multitude of issues that can and do affect the health, safety and well-being of our children, their families and Wilmington's communities. Education is at the core of our City and State's economic vitality.

We have got to get this right this time for our children and for our City's future. What happens next—such as formulating the details of the recommendations and bringing them to fruition without further delay—is crucial. I can't stress how important the details are as this current process unfolds.

The education of Wilmington's children, especially those who come from poverty or are underachieving, is a subject that has been studied and analyzed with frequency and little results. This time, we've got to get it right. The Advisory Committee's recommendations are a good first step."

John Rago  
Communications and Policy Development Director

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Twitter: [@WilmCityCouncil](https://twitter.com/WilmCityCouncil)


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Priority Schools Letter, February 10, 2015

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**FROM THE OFFICE  
OF THE MAYOR  
DENNIS P. WILLIAMS**  
55<sup>TH</sup> MAYOR OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON

**Monday, January 26, 2015**  
**Mayor Williams Supports Recommendations Made by Wilmington Education Advisory Council**

"The accessibility of a quality education is paramount to the development of our children in the City of Wilmington, as they are entitled to the opportunity to learn in a school system that not only supports their needs but is structured so they may excel.

Ensuring the opportunity for the academic success of our young people was the City's primary motivation in joining parents of students attending Maurice J. Moyer Academic Institute (Moyer Academy) in a lawsuit against the Delaware Department of Education. The lawsuit challenged the Department of Education's decision to revoke Moyer Academy's charter.

The recommendations proposed by the Wilmington Education Advisory Council serve as another step forward in acknowledging the need for major reform in Wilmington's school system. The recommendations look to strengthen education in Wilmington, and improve the manner in which city schools are operated and managed.

In particular, I support the Wilmington Education Advisory Council's recommendation to create an Office of Education and Public Policy in city government, as this would increase city involvement in Wilmington schools. In addition to increasing the engagement of city government, I also support the creation of a Wilmington Education Commission, as it would serve as an independent advisory board focusing on the improvement of education in Wilmington," said Mayor Dennis P. Williams.

Alexandra Coppadge  
Communications Director  
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**Wilmington Education  
Advisory Committee**

February 11, 2015

To all interested citizens:

**Our recommendation that the Christina and Colonial Districts no longer serve Wilmington needs to be considered in the context of strengthening all Wilmington public education in a lasting manner**

The February 10th letter from Secretary of Education Mark Murphy to Dr. Freeman Williams concerning the priority schools includes an invitation to meet with district leaders to consider the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee's recommendation that the Christina School District leave the city.


While we support Secretary Murphy's invitation to open discussions on one of our recommendations, those discussions should not be limited to the implications and deadlines for priority schools. Our recommendations have implications for all schools in Wilmington and throughout the state, including all Christina schools.

We appreciate Governor Markell's support for the overall recommendations of the Advisory Committee's Interim Report and ask that he commit to actively pursue implementation on a timetable that corresponds to the long-term best interests of Wilmington children and families.

Sincerely,

Tony Allen, Ph.D., Chairman, and members of the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee

Governor Markell Transmittal, February 11, 2015

  
STATE OF DELAWARE  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
TATNALL BUILDING, SECOND FLOOR  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BOULEVARD SOUTH  
DOVER, DELAWARE 19901

JACK A. MARKELL  
GOVERNOR

PHONE: 302-744-4101  
FAX: 302-739-2775

February 11, 2015

Wilmington Education Advisory Committee  
C/o Dr. Tony Allen, Chair

Dear Advisory Group Members,

I am writing to express my appreciation for all of your hard work over the past few months of reviewing the state of education for students in the City of Wilmington, and developing productive, actionable recommendations. You are all busy people outside of your participation on this Advisory Group, and your dedication to this effort shows your extraordinary passion for improving educational opportunities for our children.

I have read carefully the interim report that you provided, and believe that your recommendations all deserve serious consideration by my administration and the General Assembly. Indeed, they are already influencing our decision-making and presenting new options for discussion. I am looking forward to seeing the results of the public comment period now underway, and to reading your final report incorporating community input.

I also wanted you to be aware of a statement I provided to the media when you released your interim report. The following statement was not published by our major media outlets, but it reflects my appreciation for your efforts and my commitment to an ongoing conversation about your recommendations:

I appreciate the hard work of all of the committee members and their commitment to improving educational opportunities for Wilmington students. The group is tackling difficult and complicated issues, and all of their recommendations deserve full and careful consideration.

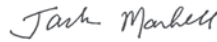
As I said in my State of the State, we must reexamine the way we pay for education, and the task force that General Assembly leaders and I are creating this year should consider the Advisory Group's proposal to provide additional funding for high-needs students. I have also heard a great deal of conversation from Wilmingtonians who want to change the way in which district lines are drawn. We should strive to provide the children of Wilmington with an excellent education system that makes it easier for parents, families, and the community to engage in their schools. Redrawing district boundaries is logistically challenging, but I am eager to work with the Advisory Group, legislators, district leaders, and the community to find a practical solution.

Given the opening of a number of charters that will be providing new opportunities for students in the fall, it is also a good time to think again about how these schools can most effectively support our youth moving forward.

The Advisory Group has provided an important forum to hear from members of the community who come from a wide range of perspectives. I am grateful for their passion for supporting Wilmington's youth and I look forward to more discussion in the coming weeks about how we can address these issues as soon as possible.

Please know how important the work you are doing is for the future of Wilmington's schools and, most importantly, for the students who attend them. I hope to have the opportunity to visit one of your upcoming meetings to express my gratitude personally and hear more directly from you.

Sincerely,



Jack A. Markell

## Wilmington Education Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

### Wilmington Education Advisory Group

Wednesday, November 5, 2014

Governor's Conference Room

12th Floor Carvel State Office Building

**Present:** Tony Allen, Ph.D.; Ivonne Antongiorgi; Marco Ramos; Shefon Taylor; Tizzy Lockman; Melissa Brown; Henry Harper, Ph.D.; Sheila Wyatt; Chandra Pitts; Meredith Griffin; Cheryl Trawick; Rosemary Banks; Nikki Castle, Ph.D.; Susan Hessling; Adriana Bohm, Ph.D.; Councilman Nnamdi Chukuocha; Meghan Wallace; Richard Smith

**Excused:** Mayor James Baker

**Guests:** Governor Jack Markell; Representative Charles Potter; Representative Kim Williams; Johnathan Dworkin, Governor's Office; Dan Rich, Ph.D., University of Delaware; Neil Kirschling, Graduate Assistant, University of Delaware; Mike Matthews, Red Clay Education Association

### Welcome & Introductions

Dr. Allen convened the meeting promptly at 5:30 p.m. Eastern and welcomed all Advisory Committee members and special guests. All introduced themselves and provided background about their work and commitment to education for all children. After all introductions, Dr. Allen turned the meeting over to Governor Markell.

### Remarks from the Governor

Governor Markell thanked the group for agreeing to serve and expressed his appreciation for what he expected to be difficult, but important, work. He emphasized that the Advisory Committee grew out of a conversation he had with Representatives Charles Potter, Stephanie Bolden and JJ Johnson and Senator Margaret Rose Henry and noted that much of the committee membership had been recommended to him by these legislators. He also noted how pleased he was that so many new faces agreed to serve. He then made three key points:

- Every child can learn and, regardless of his or her circumstance, deserves our unwavering commitment to and support in creating the best possible learning environment.
- Poverty is often a significant barrier to academic achievement. However, it has been proven elsewhere and here in Delaware that with the right comprehensive supports, poor children can learn on par with children from more financially secure homes. In other words, poverty cannot be a proxy for poor performance and our responsibility is to overcome the challenges posed by poverty.

Wilmington Education Advisory Group

Wednesday, November 5, 2014

Page Two

- Service on this committee is a major commitment and the work of the committee will be important to his education agenda and related decision-making. Governor Markell took a few questions, turned the discussion back over to Dr. Allen and excused himself from the remainder of the meeting.

### Setting the Framework

Dr. Allen then guided the conversation to determining the objectives for this committee and what it should accomplish:

- **Getting agreement on the scope of our work**
- **Determining a collective point of view of what it would take to create best-in-class opportunities to educate Wilmington city children**
- **Naming a committeeman to weigh-in during moments that matter**

Discussion centered on defining the big buckets of work. Dr. Allen gave some opening comments, the Advisory Committee brainstormed ideas and the ideas were reviewed at the end of the meeting. Below, for the committee's consideration, is the final list, including key questions to be addressed. Note that the questions are not intended to be all-inclusive.

**Governance:** What are the governance options and which one is the best model for educating city students? Why? What kind of resources would be needed for all options? What in the past has prevented each option from becoming operational? What would be needed to overcome those barriers? What would this committee need to recommend about implementing a particular option?

**Funding:** What is the current landscape of funding for students in general? How does that landscape vary by income and geography? Based on identified need, what would it take to provide a comprehensive set of academic and non-academic resources to strengthen the learning environment for Wilmington children? What are those resources and how do we know they are the right ones?

**Role of the City of Wilmington:** What role, if any, should the municipal city government play in educating Wilmington city children? Should that role be formal, e.g., an accountable governance structure and a legislative agenda that supports more structural elements of education reform? Should it be informal, e.g., a sustained advocacy voice from the mayor and City Council that takes specific positions on reform efforts and a research platform that adds to the body of knowledge? Or should it be a combination of both approaches? In Delaware and other places, what is the historical context for municipal government involvement in public education? What resources would be needed?

Wilmington Education Advisory Group  
Wednesday, November 5, 2014  
Page Three

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**Barriers to implementation:** Given the long history of under-performance of Wilmington city children, what have been the key elements of holding back real transformation for these students? Why have those elements been so prohibitive? Are there non-academic considerations that have stalled attempts at true reform? If, so what are those considerations? How has the political environment supported or run at cross-purposes to educating Wilmington city children? Has that environment changed enough to suggest that any recommendations from this or other groups would be implemented? If not, what could be done to influence the appropriate decision-makers?

**The effects of race, class and geography:** Given the preponderance of black and brown kids in the city of Wilmington and the typical performance of those children K-12, what are the academic and non-academic supports for cultural difference and sensitivities that will advance their learning? Do those supports exist in each school that serves city children? Are they effective and universally applied? Where are the gaps? What are the outcomes of Title I and other funding programs intended to support low-income kids generally, and in Wilmington in particular? What are the key performance indicators for the use of those funds? Is there a Wilmington-specific plan and/or initiative across the four districts operating in the city? What are the other models in Delaware or beyond where there are multiple school districts operating in a specific municipality? What are the impacts of the geographic limitations of those configurations?

Dr. Allen noted that the buckets of work would be disseminated (by copy of these minutes) and that he would continue to welcome feedback between meetings.

#### History of proposals to improve City of Wilmington Schools

Dr. Allen turned the remainder of the meeting over to Dr. Dan Rich, professor of Public Policy and former provost at the University of Delaware. Dr. Rich took the Advisory Committee through a thorough review of two documents, “Previous Proposals” and “Wilmington Education Data” (attached). The key points included the following:

- **The issue of access to Delaware public education for all is literally 117 years old.** In that time, there have been actions of citizen engagement and legislative activity with varying degrees of success and often at cross-purposes. In most cases, such confusion has forced legal remedy by both the U.S. Supreme Court and U.S. District Courts. The most notable actions included the forced implementation of the 1954 Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* and *Evan v. Buchanan*, when the U.S. District Court declared Delaware’s Educational Advancement Act unconstitutional in 1974 and ordered federal supervision of busing to end, which gave rise to Delaware’s Neighborhood Schools Act in 2000.

Wilmington Education Advisory Group  
Wednesday, November 5, 2014  
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- In the ensuing 14 years, there have been multiple citizen-led attempts to recommend changes to Delaware public education system, the bulk of which have focused on educating Wilmington City children. Those proposals include the Wilmington Neighborhood Schools Commission Report (2001), the Hope Commission Report (2006), the Wilmington Education Task Force Report (2008) and the Mayor Williams Education Advisory Group (2013-14). There is great consistency among the recommendations outlined in each of the reports, which raises questions of the barriers to implementation, most notably political will. Dr. Rich encouraged the Advisory Committee to look at those similarities holistically and in the context of the historical framework outlined above.
- Beware of looking at any data on the averages alone. What matters is the distribution. Dr. Rich walked the Advisory Committee through a good discussion on the growth of charter and choice, the sustained proportion of private school enrollment (at one time the second highest in the nation) and the nuances of vocational education that have allowed those schools, in some cases, to veer farther away from traditional vocational learning. He noted that while alternative school models had impacts, to varying degrees, on traditional public schools, it would not be accurate to infer that these models generally skimmed more academically prepared city kids and left underprepared kids behind. The current public education system serving children in Wilmington is composed of largely separate subsystems of traditional public schools, vo-tech schools, and charter schools.

#### Conclusion

After Dr. Rich’s presentation, Dr. Allen went back to the buckets of work as outlined above and reconfirmed the Advisory Committee areas of focus. After some discussion, it was agreed that these focal points would be disseminated (by copy of these minutes) for further review.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:35 p.m. Eastern

Wilmington Education Advisory Group  
Wednesday, November 25, 2014  
Warner Elementary School, Room 11  
Wilmington, Delaware

**Present:** Tony Allen, Ph.D.; Ivonne Antongiorgi; Shefon Taylor; Tizzy Lockman; Melissa Browne; Henry Harper, Ph.D.; Sheila Wyatt; Meredith Griffin; Cheryl Trawick; Rosemary Banks; Nikki Castle, Ph.D.; Susan Hessling; Adriana Bohm, Ph.D.; Councilman Nnamdi Chukwuocha; Meghan Wallace; Mayor James Baker

**Excused:** Chandra Pitts; Richard Smith; Marcos Ramos

**Guests:** Representative Charles Potter; Representative Kim Williams; Dan Rich, Ph.D., University of Delaware; Neil Kirschling, Graduate Assistant, University of Delaware; Elizabeth Burland, Graduate Assistant, University of Delaware; Lindsay O'Mara, Education Policy Advisory, Office of the Governor; Karen Eller

#### Welcome

Dr. Allen convened the meeting at 5:40 p.m. and welcomed Advisory Committee members and special guests (noted above). He thanked Suzy Hessling for hosting the meeting at Warner Elementary and reiterated his desire to have all meetings at schools. Dr. Allen then confirmed that chairs had been appointed for three subcommittees (previously referenced as “buckets of work”). Dr. Allen reminded the Advisory group that several of the previously identified working groups had been combined since the last meeting, leaving these three specific areas of focus:

- **Governance & The Role of the City of Wilmington**
- **Barriers to Implementation & The Role of Race, Class and Geography**
- **Funding**

Dr. Allen noted that the work of the subcommittees was to build upon and strengthen the analysis and recommendations made by previous task forces/committees addressing the challenges facing the Wilmington Schools. He then turned to reports from the respective committee chairs.

#### Governance & The Role of the City of Wilmington

*Chairs Dr. Harper and Councilman Chukwuocha* each noted that the core objectives of this committee were to position the problem of underachieving students as more than a Wilmington problem and also substantively deal with the pitfalls of the current model operating within a city of 10,000 public school children. Many of the ideas proposed for dealing with these challenges are not mutually exclusive.

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Dr. Harper noted that the problem underperforming children in Delaware — particularly those who are poor and/or students of color — is not specific to geography. As such, he posited that while our primary focus is Wilmington students, solutions — both legislative and otherwise — should extend beyond Wilmington to ensure benefit to all students across Delaware. There was some discussion about this scope of consideration relative to the charge of the Advisory group, and a concern about moving beyond the parameters of our work.

After some back and forth, all agreed that any effective legislative remedies the committee proposed would only be palatable if the benefits of those remedies extended beyond Wilmington borders. The committee will adopt this point as part of the work.

As for the four-district model, Councilman Chukwuocha noted that the work of the Education Committee of the Wilmington City Council (Councilman Chukwuocha is also the chair of that body) has been focused on the priority schools review process, a review of previous reports concerning public education in Wilmington, and community engagement and comment. He noted that this committee's work would not be focused solely on the priority schools effort, but could add significant voice to that discussion, specifically as it relates to the four-district model, and related funding for alternative configurations and supplemental supports.

There was discussion about the charge of the advisory group and if it should focus its attention on priority schools specifically. Councilman Chukwuocha noted that the committee's charge is broader than a review of the priority schools. See below for details.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Allen affirmed that the committee's charge was broader but specifically noted that the group would not ignore the priority schools discussion and would likely make a formal statement, once the group gained consensus on its position and approach.

#### Barriers to Implementation & The Role of Race, Class and Geography

*Chairs Drs. Adriana Bohm and Nikki Castle* noted that the intention of this committee was to build an action agenda that deals specifically with non-academic factors inhibiting student learning. Dr. Bohm noted that issues such as disproportionate suspension rates and undiagnosed and/or untreated psycho-social illness are often

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<sup>1</sup> Examine the quality and availability of educational opportunities available to students in the City of Wilmington; Examine social issues that are specific to the needs of students in the City of Wilmington; Examine ways to improve collaboration and information-sharing among community members, educators, administrators, policymakers, and families to facilitate improved access to high-quality educational opportunities; and Make policy recommendations consistent with the purpose and goals of this Advisory Group (Executive Order 46, Governor Jack A. Markell).

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key barriers to student achievement and reinforced the notion that all students — given the right supports — could be successful in quality learning environments. Dr. Castle talked about effective evaluative tools and enhanced oversight as better predictors of school and student success, and she noted the opportunities to take advantage of national programmatic and funding supports. She also discussed the reluctance of varying school environments to learn from each other and noted that the committee would look at the challenges to collaboration in that regard. Inherent in the comments of both chairs was the substantive impact of race, which Dr. Bohm noted as well-documented and sure to be a part of the committee's initial efforts.

#### Funding

Chairs Melissa Browne and Tizzy Lockman offered brief comments on the Funding subcommittee and outlined an interest in taking a deep look/critique at how school environments are funded today and what could be a more useful model in the future. They noted that weighted student funding, proposed in different ways by earlier commissions, would be a particular pillar of their efforts and would include a view of what could be presented as essential elements of funding of school learning environments, particularly those with high populations of low-income children.

#### Statement of Principles

Dr. Rich led a discussion of general principles to guide committee recommendations. He noted the increasingly fragmented state of public education in Wilmington, and the significant growth in the number of separate governing educational units over the last twenty years. As a result, traditional district schools, charter schools, and Vo-tech schools often operate as largely disconnected and competing subsystems with no shared responsibility for the success of all Wilmington students. The following principles address this condition.

- Wilmington students will continue to enroll in a combination of public schools that include traditional district schools, charter schools, and Vo-tech schools; these different schools fulfill diverse needs and interests of Wilmington students and their families.
- All schools in which Wilmington students are enrolled should be expected to succeed, and all schools should be expected to support the overall success of public education for all Wilmington students.
- Policies and practices for Wilmington schools should promote collaboration, shared learning, scaling-up of best practices, and mutual commitment to improvements that serve all students; the contributions of each school should strengthen the sum of learning opportunities available to Wilmington students.

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- Wilmington schools (traditional, charter and Vo-tech) should be regarded as community assets, and policies should promote a configuration of these community assets (type and number) that optimizes benefits for Wilmington students and their families.
- The configuration of Wilmington schools (traditional schools, charters, and Vo-tech) must be designed to meet the diverse learning needs of Wilmington students; we should configure schools to meet student needs, rather than expect students to fit their needs within the current configuration of schools.

Discussion highlighted these additional dimensions.

- The optimal configuration of Wilmington public schools must also consider the impact on private schools that serve Wilmington students; these private schools also should be considered community assets.
- The optimal configuration of schools must be matched by high-quality and affordable early learning programs that prepare children to enter school ready to succeed.
- The optimal configuration also must be matched by accessible and affordable post-secondary opportunities in higher education or the workforce.

#### Closing Comments: Fourth Subcommittee on Unique Needs

Meghan Wallace suggested that a subcommittee be created on the unique needs of Wilmington children and schools. After some discussion, the advisory group agreed that this subcommittee would be helpful to our efforts. Ms. Wallace and Suzy Hessling will chair the group.

#### Guest Remarks

Karen Eller, a teacher in the Christina School District, offered remarks to the committee. She urged the group to consider adding members who are currently teaching in Wilmington schools.



Wilmington Education Advisory Group  
Saturday, December 6, 2014  
Community Education Building

**Present:** Tony Allen, Ph.D.; Ivonne Antongiorgi; Marco Ramos; Shefon Taylor; Tizzy Lockman; Melissa Browne; Henry Harper, Ph.D.; Sheila Wyatt; Chandra Pitts; Meredith Griffin; Rosemary Banks; Nikki Castle, Ph.D.; Susan Hessling; Adriana Bohm, Ph.D.; Councilman Nnamdi Chukwuocha; Meghan Wallace; Richard Smith

**Excused:** Marcos Ramos; Mayor James Baker; Cheryl Trawick

**Guests:** Secretary Mark Murphy; Representative Kim Williams; Lee Davis; Mike Matthews; Raye Avery; Karen Eller; Kristen Dwyer; Neil Kirschling, University of Delaware; Elizabeth Burland, University of Delaware; Dan Rich, Ph.D., University of Delaware.

#### Welcome & Introductions

Dr. Allen convened the meeting at 8:15 am ET and welcomed all committee members and special guests. Dr. Allen introduced host Community Education Building CEO Aretha Miller, who provided brief remarks about the CEB's mission and the schools operating in CEB today, Academia Antonia Alonso and Kuumba Academy. After a few questions, Dr. Allen turned the meeting over to Secretary Mark Murphy to give a brief presentation and then engaged in discussion with the committee.

#### Remarks from Secretary Mark Murphy

Secretary Murphy discussed the importance of having high quality data and made three key points that he sees in Wilmington education.

- Education birth to age 5 is important to close the gap before it forms.
- Though there are a few success stories, it is important that we figure out how to best serve all Wilmington students.
- The education space often talks about what is happening in the present, and the fundamental structural systems get lost.

Secretary Murphy opened up the discussion to questions from the committee.

Some of the committee members were concerned with immediate action in the classroom, and questions about whether or not there is any money left from Race to the Top were raised. Secretary Murphy explained that the state had applied for a one-year extension to use the money, but the districts each had to apply for the funding extension. Christiana and Red Clay did not access the Race to the Top money in the last year. After this year, that money will not be accessible. In response to a question about why these districts did not access this money, the Secretary said that the committee would have to contact the districts directly for this information.

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In response to a question about Key Performance Indicators, Secretary Murphy made several points.

- Educator supports and professional learning communities were put in place, as well as more opportunities for students to access rigorous courses.
- They found no universal success with a particular approach, and there were implementation differences.

Secretary Murphy and Representative Kim Williams responded to a question about the class size waivers by saying that schools apply for these waivers and are approved so that they can determine a better way to use the funding.

Secretary Murphy explained that Delaware has better equity in its funding than many other states, but there are pieces missing in terms of flexibility provided to the district and the schools and how current dollars are being spent. Weighted student funding has been part of the conversation to remedy this.

Secretary Murphy then answered questions from the public. Secretary Murphy concluded with three follow-on points.

- The four-district model is not working, including the noncontiguous Christina District.
- We need to find a way to directly support Wilmington students.
- The community and the local government must have a voice and some level of authority. We must find a way to empower the local community.

#### Subcommittee Reports

##### Funding

The funding committee reported the notes from the subcommittee meeting. They determined a need for change in both the funding system and the funding allocation. In addition, there needs to be transparency in the funding that is accessible to parents to understand. They plan to have David Blowman, Deputy Secretary of Education, or Mike Jackson to discuss the funding structure. There was also discussion about the make-up of school board members and the importance of early childhood education funding. Representative Kim Williams reported the number of students that enter the districts after September 30th. The total is 6,579. They breakdown is as follows: Christina, 1,355; Brandywine, 433; Red Clay: 790; Colonial: 679

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#### Unique Needs

The unique needs group discussed school-based needs, student needs, and using the priority school plans to identify the unique needs of each of these schools.

#### Barriers to Implementation

The subgroup looking at barriers identified several topics that are important to consider in the barriers to learning. These included desegregation of schools, curricula immersion, class size waivers, full day quality pre-k, wellness centers, diversity, engaging parents, outside barriers, trauma, inter-agency collaboration, funding, and after school learning. They discussed the importance of affiliating agencies who are partnering with schools.

#### Governance

The governance subcommittee reported out the barriers to coherent governance. The group identified that something needs to be done to mobilize the political will and noted that such a clear recommendation needs to be spelled in the final report of the committee.

Dr. Allen then opened to public comment.

The meeting commenced and broke out for individual subcommittee meetings. The subcommittee chairs were asked to send reports from their committees to help with initial report drafting.

Wilmington Education Advisory Group  
Monday, December 15, 2014  
Bancroft Elementary School

**Present:** Tony Allen, Ph.D.; Ivonne Antongiorgi; Shefon Taylor; Tizzy Lockman; Melissa Browne; Henry Harper, Ph.D.; Sheila Wyatt; Chandra Pitts; Meredith Griffin; Rosemary Banks; Nikki Castle, Ph.D.; Councilman Nnamdi Chukwuocha; Meghan Wallace;

**Excused:** Marcos Ramos; Mayor James Baker; Cheryl Trawick; Shefon Taylor, Susan Hessling; Adriana Bohm, Ph.D.; Richard Smith

**Guests:** Mike Jackson, Office of the Controller General; Representative Kim Williams; Lavina Smith, Christina School District; Harold Ingram, Principal, Bancroft Middle School; Kelly Sherretz, University of Delaware; Dan Rich, Ph.D., University of Delaware.

#### Welcome & Introductions

Dr. Allen convened the meeting at 5:45 p.m. and welcomed all committee members and special guests and thanked Karen Eller for hosting. Later in the meeting, Principal Butch Ingram also greeted the committee. After introductions, Dr. Allen turned the meeting over to Mike Jackson, Deputy Controller General, Office of the Controller General.

#### Delaware Schools Financing: Mike Jackson

Mr. Jackson presented an informal presentation on public financing for Delaware schools. (See Delaware School Finance 101.) Throughout the presentation, Mr. Jackson fielded questions from the committee on a variety public financing related topics. His key takeaways can be summarized as follows:

- There is \$2 billion in revenue for Delaware Public Education. The question of more resources is an important one, but perhaps not the biggest issue. Focusing on how the current resources are allocated is critical to ensuring that teachers and students have the supports they need to be successful.
- There is a basic funding formula that drives resources to schools. While current system may be the right way to allocate resources, the formulas themselves are antiquated, rarely updated and do not take into account special student needs.
- Districts have the most flexibility in how to use of education funds and they have authority to raise additional funds through local taxes.
- Those districts with smaller assessment bases raise less money through this vehicle.
- Equalization funding is meant to alleviate this disparity, but is inhibited by a reluctance to reassess property value. **Note: The most recent reassessment in New Castle County occurred in 1983.**

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**Outline of the Action Agenda: Dan Rich, Ph.D.**

Dr. Rich reviewed the draft outline of the report and noted that input from the committee on the framework is needed. He will send the outline to the group for feedback. (See Wilmington Education Advisory Committee Report 2015 outline.)

**Close**

Dr. Allen mentioned his intention to draft an editorial on the work of the committee and our current view of educational landscape for Wilmington children. He noted that the News Journal is prepared to accept a piece and potentially publish before the New Year. The committee will have an opportunity to review and comment on the draft.

**Public Comment**

A member of the public provided a presentation to the committee on truancy and its impact on student success. The committee agreed to include the topic along with homelessness in its analysis of unique needs of Wilmington students and potentially highlight the issues in the final report.

**The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.**

Wilmington Education Advisory Group  
Monday, January 5, 2015  
Eastside Charter School Wilmington, Delaware

**Present:** Tony Allen, Ph.D.; Ivonne Antongiorgi; Tizzy Lockman; Melissa Browne; Henry Harper, Ph.D.; Sheila Wyatt; Nikki Castle, Ph.D.; Adriana Bohm, Ph.D.; Councilman Nnamdi Chukwuocha; Meghan Wallace

**Excused:** Chandra Pitts; Richard Smith; Marco Ramos; Shefon Taylor; Meredith Griffin; Rosemary Banks; Susan Hessling; Mayor James Baker; Cheryl Trawick

**Guests:** Representative Paul Baumbach; Representative Charles Potter; Representative Kim Williams; Senator Margaret Henry; Senator Brian Townsend; Dan Rich, Ph.D., University of Delaware; Neil Kirschling, Graduate Assistant, University of Delaware; Kristin Dwyer, DSEA; Karen Eller; Lamont Browne, EastSide Charter School

**Welcome and Introductions**

Dr. Allen convened the meeting at 6 p.m. Eastern and welcomed all Advisory Committee members and special guests. The guests are noted above. He thanked Melissa Browne for helping coordinate the meeting at EastSide Charter School and turned the meeting over to Lamont Browne, Head of School/Principal of EastSide Charter School.

**EastSide Charter School: Lamont Browne**

Dr. Browne delivered an informal presentation detailing the mission, education practices, and leadership principles of EastSide Charter School. His key takeaways are summarized as follows:

- The school day from Monday through Thursday is slightly longer so that students end early on Friday afternoons. Every week, this afternoon is devoted to professional development for the entire staff.
- Rather than utilize a few, long teacher observations, EastSide finds that offering teachers many, shorter observations is more beneficial for teachers' ongoing development.
- The hiring process is an all-day effort that includes a group interview led by existing teachers and a school tour and interview led by current students.
- The mental health challenges within the student population are challenging. The school has a team of individuals who supports the students in order to ensure that they are able to stay in school. These individuals include a counselor, Dean of Culture, two behavior specialists and a Family Crisis Therapist provided by the state, as well as a contracted psychologist.

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- There have been only two expulsions since Dr. Browne began at EastSide
- There are no enrollment preferences at EastSide Charter School.

#### Update on Next Steps

Dr. Allen provided an updated timeline for the committee's next steps and emphasized a commitment to publishing interim recommendations in late January. After publishing the interim recommendations, the committee will solicit public feedback in order to inform the development of final recommendations. Dr. Allen informed the group of his intention to work with the News Journal to generate online feedback. Additionally, Dr. Allen discussed submitting a letter to the governor requesting a delay any decisions on priority schools in Christina and Red Clay until after the committee's interim recommendations are made public.

#### Update on Report: Dan Rich, Ph.D.

Dr. Rich informed the committee that they would be discussing and approving sections of the report, particularly the interim recommendations, over the next two weeks. He indicated that KIDS COUNT in Delaware, housed in the Center for Community Research and Service at the University of Delaware, is willing to prepare an updated analysis of their most recent publication with an additional focus on Wilmington for specific use of the committee.

#### Close

Dr. Allen reiterated the intention to hold meetings every Monday night in January and thanked everyone for their attendance and participation.

**The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.**

Wilmington Education Advisory Group  
Monday, January 12, 2015  
Howard High School of Technology  
Wilmington, Delaware

- Present:** Tony Allen, Ph.D.; Ivonne Antongiorgi; Tizzy Lockman; Melissa Browne; Henry Harper, Ph.D.; Adriana Bohm, Ph.D.; Meghan Wallace; Shefon Taylor
- Excused:** Chandra Pitts; Richard Smith; Marco Ramos; Meredith Griffin; Rosemary Banks; Susan Hessling; Mayor James Baker; Cheryl Trawick; Sheila Wyatt; Nikki Castle, Ph.D.; Councilman Nnamdi Chukwuocha
- Guests:** Dan Rich, Ph.D., University of Delaware; Neil Kirschling, Graduate Assistant, University of Delaware; Karen Eller, Bancroft Elementary School; Daphne Evans, Delaware Readiness Teams; Gerald Allen, New Castle County Vo-Tech; Representative Kim Williams; Colleen Conaty, New Castle County Vo-Tech

#### Welcome, Updates, and Next Steps

Dr. Allen convened the meeting at 6:10 p.m. Eastern and welcomed all Advisory Committee members and special guests. The guests are noted above. Dr. Allen informed the group that he has been meeting with various elected officials to spread awareness of the committee's charge, process, bodies of work, and history of similar efforts. He also updated the group on their next steps. The committee will be voting to approve the interim report and recommendations on Monday, January 19th. Beforehand, they will be sent the draft interim report to read and offer feedback.

Additionally, Dr. Allen confirmed that The News Journal has committed to facilitating an online discussion forum to generate public feedback once the interim report is made public. The News Journal will also provide a lead--in story to set the stage and provide background information on the committee's work. During the six week feedback period, the committee also plans to hold traditional public hearings and small group discussions.

#### Committee Member Updates

Dr. Allen asked committee members and guests to share what they have been hearing, particularly in response to the letter sent on behalf of the committee to the governor. The committee members and guests noted that there are a lot of misconceptions about the committee's charge regarding Priority Schools, that many people are hopeful after reading the letter, and that many appreciate that there is a voice in the community requesting that the process be slowed down.

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#### Howard High School of Technology

Colleen Conaty, Vice Principal of Howard High School of Technology, greeted and welcomed the group. She provided a brief description of the school and its recent history. The school's enrollment continues to increase and, at 941 students, currently is at an all-time high with room to grow. Also, first choice applications in its own district have steadily grown. Instrumental to the school's success have been strong building and district leadership, setting high expectations for students, the dedication of the teachers including Teach for America corps members, and the recent building renovation. Ms. Conaty emphasized the school's efforts to invite members of the community to come in to see the school's progress and change potential negative perceptions. An active alumni association creates strong ties between the school and the city.

#### Review of Draft Interim Report

Dr. Rich reiterated the committee's process for publishing the interim report. He urged all committee members to spend time on their own going through the report and providing feedback. Dr. Rich emphasized that the interim report is meant to capture main points whereas the full report will be longer. Dr. Rich provided an overview of structure of interim report and noted that each of the committee's buckets of work will feature an action agenda – a list of recommended action steps. The action agendas demonstrates the committee's recognition that, although they are committed to maintaining long term view, there are action steps that can be taken now. The group then reviewed and discussed each action agenda, commenting on areas for potential improvement or clarity.

#### Close

**The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.**

Wilmington Education Advisory Group  
Monday, January 19, 2015  
Redding House  
Wilmington, Delaware

**Present:** Tony Allen, Ph.D.; N. Ivonne Antongiorgi; Tizzy Lockman; Melissa Browne; Henry Harper, Ph.D.; Adriana Bohm, Ph.D.; Meghan Wallace; Shefon Taylor; Chandra Pitts; Nikki Castle, Ph.D.; Councilman Nnamdi Chukwuocha; Mayor James Baker

**Excused:** Richard Smith; Marco Ramos; Meredith Griffin; Rosemary Banks; Susan Hessling; Cheryl Trawick; Sheila Wyatt;

**Guests:** Neil Kirschling, Graduate Assistant, University of Delaware; Karen Eller, Bancroft Elementary School; Donato Ruffo, New Castle County Vo-Tech School District; Representative Kim Williams; Mike Matthews, Red Clay School District; Stacey Stokes, McKean High School

#### Welcome

Dr. Allen convened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. Eastern and welcomed everyone to the Redding House, home of Louis L. Redding. He expressed gratitude to the Redding House Foundation for their accommodation and that he could not think of a more appropriate place to vote on the committee's interim set of recommendations regarding public education in Wilmington.

The committee then voted to extend membership, pending the Governor's approval, to Karen Eller, a teacher at Bancroft Elementary School who has been an active and valuable participant in the committee's discussions since very shortly after its creation.

#### Review of the Draft Interim Report

Dr. Rich thanked members of the committee for their edits, recommendations, and feedback on the draft report that they had received earlier in the week. He providing a brief overview of the current draft of the report, which included the following updates: a historical timeline, an executive summary, and graphical data. The committee then examined each section of the draft report in detail, offering suggestions for edits, giving feedback on what topics should be expanded upon for the final report, and clarifying the rationale of the some recommendations. Major topics of discussion were:

- The importance of governance being the starting point of the report, on which the recommendations for funding and meeting student needs are built upon
- The significance of the recommendations for implementation to ensure that there is a body responsible for implementation and continued oversight.

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- A concern that the recommendations regarding charter schools may be misinterpreted as “anti- charter”, when the intent is to guarantee that the state develop a strategic plan for school configuration in order to utilize public resources to best serve the children. Currently, the state conflicts with national best policy because there is no plan.
- An emphasis that the issues addressed in this report are not specific to Wilmington. For instance, a majority of the school-aged children statewide are in poverty. This is more than a “Wilmington problem”.
- The recognition that the recommendations of this committee align not only with the reports of previous bodies, but with other current initiatives.

#### Approval of Interim Recommendations

Dr. Allen emphasized the importance of considering these interim recommendations as a package meant to set the framework for a broader public discussion. There has not been a comprehensive education package put forth in the state in many years and he anticipates many important conversations will come up as a result of issuing these recommendations. He voiced the committee’s intent to be thoughtful, not incendiary, with its recommendations.

Mayor Baker made a motion to approve the interim recommendations. Tizzy Lockman seconded the motion. The committee then approved the interim recommendations by voice vote. All committee members were in favor. None opposed. None abstained.

#### Public comment

Mike Matthews thanked the committee for their work and for the letter sent to the governor. He is looking forward to seeing interim recommendations and final report.

#### Close

**The meeting adjourned at 8:30pm**

Wilmington Education Advisory Group  
Monday, February 2, 2015  
Highlands Elementary School  
Wilmington, Delaware

**Present:** Adriana Bohm, Ph.D.; Tony Allen, Ph.D. (via phone); Elizabeth Lockman; Henry Harper, Ph.D.; Melissa Browne; Shelia Wyatt; Nikki Castle, Ph.D.; Meghan Wallace; Karen Eller

**Guests:** Dan Rich, Ph.D. (via phone); Elizabeth Burland, Graduate Assistant, University of Delaware; Faith McNamara, retired Highlands teacher; Sean Barney, parent; Mike Wilson, Prekindergarten Reading Encouragement Project; Mathew Meyer, teacher; Melissa Tracy, teacher; Lee Davis, teacher; Timothy Crawl-Bey, Consultant; Barbara Land, Assistant Principle of Marbrook; Daphne Evans, Resident and Delaware Readiness Team; Erika Potts, (Partner) Communities in Schools; Jim Purcell, (Partner) Communities in Schools

#### Welcome

Acting Chair, Adriana Bohm, convened the meeting at 6:04 p.m. Eastern and welcomed all Advisory Committee members and special guests. The guests are noted above. Dr. Bohm also welcomed Tony Allen, joining the meeting virtually. Dr. Allen welcomed all the Advisory Committee members and the special guests, and thanked Dr. Bohm for presiding over the meeting.

Dr. Bohm introduced Barbara Land, Assistant Principal of Marbrook, and part of the team working with Highlands, a priority school, to develop a plan that will help their students reach accelerated levels of achievement.

#### Highlands Elementary School Priority

Barbara Land greeted the group, and provided a brief overview of her role. She discussed Highlands’ plans for developing focused and targeted ways of implementing the strategies identified to benefit their students. She provided an overview of the one-pager, which is attached, that discusses plans for improvement at Highlands. She then answered questions from the committee and the guests.

Dr. Allen thanked Ms. Land for presenting to the group, and acknowledged that though the committee and the interim report do not speak to the priority schools, the committee is in support of her team’s efforts.

Dr. Bohm turned to Tizzy Lockman and Melissa Browne for an update on social media and the ways to keep the conversation going.

#### Social Media Update

Tizzy Lockman explained that they have seen a great response on the Facebook page, with over 1,000 members. She said that there is only a small set of individuals

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who are participating and engaging, so they are working on strategies to reach more people. One strategy they have implemented is posting the action agenda and asking for feedback, and then looking for response trends.

Tizzy then explained that the next step is to move from digital outreach to in person meetings. The committee discussed reaching out to high school production outlets to assist with outreach.

Dr. Rich clarified that though the reconfiguration of the districts does not specifically apply to Brandywine School District, the other aspects of the plan apply to all schools in Wilmington, as well as the State of Delaware. He acknowledged that the committee might need to improve the communication of these ideas so they are clear to the public.

Tizzy and Melissa described that they have noticed commentary that is concerned about the report not addressing the home life as a factor to be addressed, and that might be an indication that it is important to make clear the purpose and goals of the report in the final report.

The committee discussed setting up meetings with students to discuss the recommendations, and the ongoing plans for Wilmington Education. They indicated that this should include current students, students who graduated and attended college, and students who did not make it through high school to insure that these individuals have input as well.

#### **Town Hall Meetings and News Journal Forum**

Shelia Wyatt and Karen Eller are coordinating Town Hall meetings for public comment and tracking all meetings held with other community stakeholders. Separately, there is also a big forum being planned on Wilmington Education being sponsored by the News Journal. WEAC has been asked to participate both in planning and content. Tony has accepted that invitation on behalf of WEAC and has asked Shelia and Karen to lead our portion of the effort. The forum will be held on February 24th. Details to follow in the next meeting.

#### **Legislative Committee**

Megan Wallace explained that they are beginning to create a strategic plan for the development of legislation, as many of the Committee's recommendations will require legislation. They are currently tracking bills related to education in both the House and the Senate.

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Dr. Rich clarified the recommendation that the provision that districts could raise taxes without referendum up to a specified limit would apply ONLY in the event of a reassessment of property taxes. All other increases would continue to require a referendum.

Dr. Bohm thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

**The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:24 p.m. Eastern.**

Wilmington Education Advisory Group  
Monday, February 9, 2015  
Stubbs Elementary School  
Wilmington, Delaware

- Present:** Tony Allen, Ph.D.; N. Ivonne Antongiorgi; Tizzy Lockman; Melissa Browne; Adriana Bohm, Ph.D.; Meghan Wallace; Shefon Taylor; Chandra Pitts; Councilman Nnamdi Chukwuocha; Karen Eller
- Excused:** Richard Smith; Marco Ramos; Meredith Griffin; Rosemary Banks; Susan Hessling; Cheryl Trawick; Sheila Wyatt; Nikki Castle, Ph.D.; Henry Harper, Ph.D.; Mayor James Baker
- Guests:** Neil Kirschling, University of Delaware; Elizabeth Burland, University of Delaware; Dan Rich, Ph.D., University of Delaware; Eugene Young, Delaware Elite; Kia Ervin, Communities in Schools; Latisha Bracy, Senator Chris Coons' Office; Mike Migliore, City of Wilmington; Shanika Perry, Community Partner; Tracy A Short Pinkett; Community Partner; Melissa Froemming; Parent/community advocate; Matthew Meyer, Teacher; Mike Wilson; PREP; Devon Hynson; Education Voices Inc.; Mike Matthews, Red Clay School District; Va'Shun Turner, Community activist; LaJean Thornton, Parent; Christopher Waters; Mr. Jeff Brown, Principal; Stubbs Elementary School; Melissa Brady, Assistant Principal, Stubbs Elementary School; Ken Livingston Eastside Community Center Coordinator, Children and Families First

**The meeting convened at 6:15 p.m. Eastern.**

**Presentation from Administrators of Stubbs Elementary School**

Committee members and guests were welcomed to Stubbs Elementary School by Principal Jeff Brown, Assistant Principal Melissa Brady, Eastside Community Center Coordinator Ken Livingston, and two students.

Mr. Brown highlighted many of the school's programs for engaging parents and the community. Mr. Livingston emphasized the abundance of outside organizations with which the school partners. Together with these organizations, Stubbs Elementary is able to connect families with resources in the community and host many in-house events for students and their families. Such events include bringing a parent to school, community nights, and family basketball games. Another important facet of the school's engagement is its mentoring program, a partnership with Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Delaware. Additionally, Principal Brown described offering out-of-the classroom learning opportunities such as a STEM camp and regular science trips to the Brandywine River.

Mrs. Brady then provided a snapshot into academics at Stubbs Elementary. After identifying a problem with tardiness, the school began scheduling reading classes later in the morning so students would not miss instruction time. Mrs. Brady

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shared data on reading skills and informed the committee that students at Stubbs are growing at the same average rate as the other schools in the district; however, students enter kindergarten at Stubbs in a lower academic bracket than their peers at other schools. Therefore, one of the greatest needs they have identified is for more interventionists. Mrs. Brady explained that math and reading interventionists are teachers who provide data-driven, needs-based instruction in a small group setting for a prescribed amount of time depending on intensity of need. Due to the large amount of students in need of intervention and stipulated small size of the group, Stubbs has a greater demand for interventionists.

**Updates**

Dr. Allen thanked the Stubbs Elementary team for their presentation and thanked the members of the public (noted above as guests) for attending. He then led the group in a discussion of the themes they sees emerging from feedback regarding the committee's report.

First, there is a misinterpretation that the recommendations are not addressing student performance. Dr. Allen responded that the recommendations will reduce the systematic barriers that hinder improvements in student performance.

Second, there is the notion that the problems identified in the report are unique to Wilmington and do not affect other areas of the state. The committee discussed that the education system in Wilmington impacts the city's economy, which in turn directly impact the economy of the whole state. Furthermore, the problems identified in the report are statewide. For instance, 51% of students in Delaware are low income. Dr. Rich shared that the Institute for Public Administration will be conducting an analysis for the final report to show the broader impact of the recommendations.

Third, the committee discussed clarifying its recommendations for charter schools. The committee is proposing that the state develop a strategic plan in coherence with NACSA best practices to determine the configuration of schools that would have the greatest net benefit for the students. Additionally, the same standard would be applied to traditional schools since the committee recommends that a needs assessment be conducted for the city.

Dr. Allen noted the importance of communicating these points clearly to the public in order to give them a more robust understanding of the recommendations.



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#### Engagement Updates

Tizzy Lockman informed the group that the conversation in the Facebook group “Solutions for Wilmington Schools”, which now has over 1,000 members, has continued over the past week. The committee, which has been brainstorming ways to engage more voices and broaden the discussion, then sought input from guests.

Guests recommended that the committee devote time to developing materials to facilitate public understanding of its recommendations. Although this is a community-wide effort, there is still the need to broadcast the committee’s recommendations more broadly and engage more people. For instance, one-pagers and graphical representations of the recommendations would make the report more consumable, show stakeholders why the report relates to them, and generate more discussion. The committee should emphasize that their goal is to simplify the system, an ideal that resonates with a lot of people. Mike Wilson recommended reemphasizing the principle statements from the report because they are compelling and concise.

Chandra Pitts and Dr. Allen reemphasized that the committee’s intention in engaging community feedback is not to hunker down in defense of the interim report, but to truly make improvements and develop a final report that is reflective of the community’s interests.

#### Imagine Delaware Forum

Karen Eller and Dr. Allen provided the group with information about an upcoming event hosted by the News Journal and United Way to discuss solutions for Wilmington Schools. The event, which is free and open to the public, will take place at the Chase Center on the Riverfront on February 24th, 2015. From 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. there will be an Education Expo featuring informational tables staffed by representatives from charter schools, traditional districts, education groups and community organizations will take place. From 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. there will be an Imagine Delaware Forum featuring a panel and opportunity for public discussion.

To staff the event, Untied Way is seeking 40 volunteers (21 and older). Interested individuals can contact Karen Eller at Karen.ELLER@christina.k12.de.us and she will pass your name along to the event organizers. She will also pass along the names of any organizations that are interested in receiving an invitation to the Education Expo.

The Wilmington Education Advisory Committee is hoping to host a town hall immediately following the Imagine Delaware Forum in order to generate discussion specifically around the WEAC recommendations.

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Some members of the committee and guests voiced concern that the event conflicts with the date of the Operating Referendum for Christina and Red Clay School Districts.

#### Public comment

Melissa Froemming thanked the committee members for all their hard work on the committee.

**The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m. Eastern.**

Wilmington Education Advisory Group  
Monday, March 2, 2015  
Achievement Center  
Wilmington, Delaware

- Present:** N. Ivonne Antongiorgi; Tizzy Lockman; Henry Harper, Ph.D.; Adriana Bohm, Ph.D.; Shefon Taylor; Nikki Castle, Ph.D.; Councilman Nnamdi Chukwuocha; Karen Eller
- Excused:** Tony Allen, Ph.D.; Richard Smith; Marco Ramos; Meredith Griffin; Rosemary Banks; Susan Hessling; Cheryl Trawick; Sheila Wyatt; Melissa Browne; Meghan Wallace; Chandra Pitts; Mayor James Baker
- Guests:** Dan Rich, Ph.D., University of Delaware; Elizabeth Burland, University of Delaware; Neil Kirschling, University of Delaware; Syrita McDaniel, Wilmington University; Alfred Lance, Community resident; Aaron Selekman, Educator; Ron Russo, Caesar Rodney Institute; Clint Laird, Caesar Rodney Institute; Mike Wilson, PREP; Sam Gwines, Wilmington University; Arthur Kirksey; Rob Martinelli; Delaware Today; Kia Ervin, Communities in Schools; Melissa Froemming; Kim Graham, Christina Cultural Arts Center

#### Welcome

Tizzy Lockman, who served as chair in Tony Allen's absence, convened the meeting at 6:05 p.m. Eastern. She thanked all guests for attending and led the group in a round of introductions before introducing Charles Madden, Executive Director of the Achievement Center.

#### Introduction to the Achievement Center

Charles Madden welcomed the group, thanked them for their work on the committee, and offered a brief introduction to the Achievement Center, an initiative of the Wilmington Hope Commission. He informed the group that the Achievement Center helps formerly incarcerated individuals successfully re-enter the community by providing centralized services such as assessments, job training, educational and peer support, behavioral health services, and family reunification programs. The Achievement Center's integrated, full-service approach makes it a unique re-entry program to Delaware.

#### Report Update

Dr. Dan Rich led the committee through a review of the interim report which had been marked up to reflect areas that need to be revised, clarified, and added for the final report based on the feedback that the Committee has received from its stakeholder meetings. In doing so, he also provided an overview of the interim recommendations for guests to the meeting. He informed the committee members that they would be receiving this annotated report and given the opportunity to provide feedback and roster additional changes for the final report.

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Some of the intended changes include:

- Providing a profile of the Wilmington Community
- Elaborating on each governance change with implementation timelines
- Developing a framework that could guide the funding issues involved with district consolidation and rearrangement
- Clarifying that the intent of the committee is not to propose a moratorium on charters, but rather to call for a strategic plan for their development
- Proposing a structure for the charter consortium
- Providing more detail on the content of a strategic plan for charter schools
- Elaborating on funding for early childhood education
- Increasing the narrative around vo-tech schools
- Expanding information on the implementation commission

Elizabeth Burland, a Graduate Research Assistant at the University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration, offered the committee a glimpse some of the data analysis that will be incorporated into the final report. She shared some of the data that will be used to create a snapshot of students that live in the city of Wilmington. This snapshot will include an analysis of DCAS-Math and DCAS-Reading scores, grades 3, 5, 8, and 10; race, low income, ELL, and students with disabilities information; and graduation and dropout rates. All data will be from 2014. Elizabeth Burland also provided insight into another new section of the report: district profiles. She gave a snapshot of the analysis being done on the enrollment impacts on the districts before and after the proposed redistricting. Each district will be analyzed across several indicators including some of the aforementioned data points.

#### Themes from Online Engagement

Shefon Taylor briefed the committee on the major themes that have emerged from the Facebook group "Solutions for Wilmington Schools", which now has over 1,300 members. Some of the themes included:

- There is a lack of clarity surrounding the governance redistricting recommendations. The committee could do a better job of articulating the recommendation as well as the potential impact on students, teachers, and the community.

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- There were significant conversation by community members about parent involvement/engagement and the role that it plays in reforming a school system. Some of the commentary included beliefs that if parents are not involved nothing can be done. Others believed that a comprehensive system of engagement should be embedded within all schools in order to change outcomes.
- Overall, there was strong agreement in the section for “Meeting Wilmington Student Needs”.
- Overall, people responded positively to the recommendations in “Funding Student Success”.
- It is requested that stronger language is embedded in the report regarding early childhood education and the state’s investment in it.
- Segregation concerns also came through as an ongoing thread (both racial segregation, as well as amongst class and school systems (charter, district, private).
- In addition to themes, Shefon Taylor posed additional questions that were raised by members of the Facebook group. Some of these questions include:
- How are we as a committee defining/measuring achievement or determining success?
- What type of support will be provided for parents/families?
- What is the parent’s role in educating/supporting children?
- Would redistricting be a disruption to the community?
- What is the plan for training teachers in the various needs of children living in poverty?
- Should we be focused on more money or focused on how money is being allocated and used in schools?
- How do we ensure that the money gets down to the student/teacher level?

#### Update on Imagine Delaware

Karen Eller provided the following update on the Imagine Delaware event to be held on March 9, 2015:

- A list of fifty exhibitors is nearly finalized for the Education Expo for Wilmington parents and students from 4-6pm.
- Attendees are encouraged to bring their cell phone to the panel discussion from 6:30 to 8:30pm to participate in polls.

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- The list of volunteers is being finalized but anyone interested should contact Karen immediately at Karen.ELLER@christina.k12.de.us.
- There is a link to preregister on the Solutions for Wilmington Schools Facebook page or The News Journal website
- There was a discussion of whether or not attendees need to pre-register and if they need to present identification to attend. Some indicated that advertisements for the event did not present this information consistently.

#### Update on the City of Wilmington’s proposed Office of Education and Public Policy

Councilman Nnamdi Chukwuocha shared the following:

- The Office of Education and Public Policy will help the city to develop its agenda to advocate on behalf of its students, schools, parents, and communities.
- The City Council President and City Mayor have both agreed to the office in concept.
- Currently, there is research being conducted into other cities with comparable offices to determine the best path for implementation.
- The goal is to approve a plan for the Office in the next few weeks to send to the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee to be considered for inclusion in its final report.
- Dr. Tony Allen and Dr. Dan Rich will be presenting the WEAC recommendations to the Wilmington City Council on Wednesday, March 11 from 6 to 8pm in the City Council Chamber. All are welcome to attend as the Council hopes to use this event to generate community feedback.

#### Community Meetings

Karen Eller shared a list of the meetings that have been conducted by Dr. Tony Allen and Dr. Rich on behalf of the committee to reach out to stakeholders from early education, higher education, the nonprofit sector, school administrations and school boards, parents, educators, religious organizations, charter and traditional schools, city and state government, the media, etc.

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### Process Update

Dr. Rich and Tizzy Lockman reiterated the committee's commitment to holding an open public feedback period until March 17th. The committee will publish its final report by the end of the March with changes that are responsive to and reflective of the public's feedback. The committee intends for its final report to be a platform for launching ongoing public conversation.

### Public Comment

Ron Russo commented that there is a model in Delaware for the Charter Consortium: The Delaware Association for Independent Schools, an organization that represents non-public schools. The group meets to discuss, among other things, shared services like group purchasing. He noted that Catholic school principals meet separately in addition to the larger Association meetings in order to discuss issues relevant to their schools. If the real purpose of charter schools is to improve all public schools, then there should be a consortium for all schools to collaborate in addition to having each different type of school meet separately.

Rob Martinelli sought clarity on the three to five year timeline that the committee has discussed for implementing the governance recommendations.

- Dr. Rich responded that it will take time to address and plan for the fiscal, operational, and other considerations that would result from implementing these recommendations but any longer than five years may prolong uncertainty for districts. The committee's recommendations will set the stage for short-term decisions that will move us down a path towards implementation.

Rob Martinelli also urged the committee to consider including specific goals with ways to monitor them in its final report, which Nikki Castle agreed with.

- The group discussed briefly other cities such as Boston, Denver, and New Orleans (post- Hurricane Katrina) which may offer insight for the final report.

Clint Laird asked about how the committee intends to recommend increased family and parent engagement.

- Dr. Rich and Tizzy Lockman responded that family and parent engagement will be one of the purviews of the Wilmington Office of Education and Public Policy. The committee recognized that there is no panacea but think the mobilization should come from the city and will make recommendations to unite the institutions that could make parents more supportive.

Mike Wilson commented that the data snapshot of Wilmington as a community should recognize that there are distinct sub-communities with very different makeups within the larger Wilmington community. He also urged the committee to consider suggesting diagnosing students' needs before age four.

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Mike Wilson also recalled a conversation with an administrator from a previous WEAC meeting about student growth. The committee discussed the importance of looking at growth as a metric for student success, which is not always captured in state test scores.

A guest of the committee encouraged a shift in language. Rather than seeking solutions for Wilmington schools, which implies the "buildings", the committee should seek solutions for Wilmington students.

Alfred Lance questioned the rationale behind reassessment. He raised the possibility of reassessment not increasing revenue, just redistributing the tax burden. The cost of reassessing property may not be worthwhile. Instead of reassessment, he pointed to opportunities to increase revenue by bringing investment into the city. There has been lots of work out of mayor's office and planning department along these lines. He indicated a desire to see the report and committee reference and support some of these efforts in the city to revitalize investment in the community.

### Adjournment

Tizzy Lockman thanked all guests of the committee for their comments. She indicated that the committee will take these into consideration and will decide what falls within the reasonable scope of the WEAC mandate. She expressed the group's intention to make recommendations to improve the use of the machinery and systems already in place. Ultimately, one of the main goals of WEAC will be to make the systems work better to benefit students.

**The meeting adjourned at 7:35 pm.**

Wilmington Education Advisory Committee  
Monday, March 16, 2015  
Cathedral Choir School  
Wilmington, Delaware

**Present:** Tony Allen, Ph.D.; Meredith Griffin; Melissa Browne; Meghan Wallace; N. Ivonne Antongiorgi; Tizzy Lockman; Henry Harper, Ph.D.; Adriana Bohm, Ph.D.; Shefon Taylor; Nikki Castle, Ph.D.; Karen Eller

**Excused:** Richard Smith; Marco Ramos; Rosemary Banks; Susan Hessling; Cheryl Trawick; Sheila Wyatt; Chandra Pitts; Mayor James Baker; Councilman Nnamdi Chukwuocha

**Guests:** Dan Rich, Ph.D., University of Delaware; Elizabeth Burland, University of Delaware; Neil Kirschling, Rodell Foundation; Debbie Wilson, Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League; Syvonya O. Brown, MWUL; Mike Wilson, PREP; Matthew Meyer; Kyara Panola, Community advocate and Red Clay parent; Alfred Lance, Red Clay resident; Aaron Selekmán, Red Clay educator; Tom Driscoll, Esq., Bifferato LCC; Connor Bifferato, Esq., Bifferato LLC; Arreon Harley, Cathedral Choir School of Delaware; Arthur Kirksey, parent

**Tony Allen called the meeting to order at 6:02 P.M. Eastern.**

#### The Cathedral Choir School of Delaware

Arreon Harley, Director of Music and Operations, conducted the intergenerational Cathedral Choir as they sang a welcome song for the committee. He then informed the committee that the Cathedral Choir School of Delaware, a 501(c)3 organization, is a unique after-school program that combines professional choral training, piano and voice lessons, leadership development, academic tutoring, and one-to-one mentoring. The program, which is open to students ages 7-17, has no prerequisites to admission, no fee to joining, and has never turned away a student due to lack of transportation. Due to its holistic nature, the program sees its students grow musically, socially, and academically. It boasts a 100% high school graduation rate. The Cathedral Choir School also partners with Brandywine and Red Clay school districts for a music in schools program and hosts a popular five-week summer camp option.

#### Updates from Dr. Tony Allen, Committee Chair

Dr. Allen informed the committee that he and Dr. Rich recently met with Wilmington City Council's Education, Youth, and Families Committee. They will continue to meet with stakeholders around the community and have upcoming meetings with the State Board of Education, Communities in Schools, Red Clay School Board, and parents from both Kuumba Academy and La Academia.

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#### Open Discussion Regarding Imagine Delaware

Dr. Allen prompted an open discussion regarding key impressions from the Imagine Delaware event held on Monday, March 9, 2016. Comments and impressions included the following:

- It was encouraging to see all four districts and some charters present and talking at the expo since the typical environment is usually competitive rather than collaborative.
- As tense as the conversation can be at times, it was great to see the community come together and addressing these issues to provoke thought and talk. Conflict can be healthy as a way of getting people with different perspectives to find common goals. The conversation is not black and white, although the narrative often focuses on being pro or anti charter, testing, etc.
- While the support for redistricting and funding recommendations was overwhelming, some cautioned against accepting the results at face value since the question wording was a bit binding.
- This was a great example of engagement from community but we will need to keep pushing in order to move the agenda along. This is not a new conversation so the energy from the community needs to drive political will.
- Education doesn't happen in a silo. The more we can all work together the better. The committee needs to be clearer about how its recommendations support this notion.
- Regarding funding, there is a continued call for transparency and the desire to look at what models work nationally.
- The committee needs to continue to work to articulate how student achievement is tied to redistricting. The goal is to allow teachers and principals to do better serve students by clearing up some of the systemic problems that intervene. The committee agrees that redistricting isn't a panacea. There have to be next steps that follow which are driven by the Wilmington Education Improvement Consortium.

#### Imagine Delaware Survey Summary

Paper surveys were distributed on all of the tables at the Imagine Delaware forum. Karen Eller shared themes from the responses include:

- Lots of support for redistricting and reducing number of districts in the city but there are questions and concerns about what the next steps would entail

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- Parent engagement: How do we give parents the needed tools to support families?
- Supporting early childhood and the recognition that this is a critical time.
- Looking to HeadStart as a family engagement model
- Helping parents feel welcome and needed in the school
- More utilization of and collaboration with libraries in schools
- General concerns over the “how” tied to the recommendations
- Support for the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission to aid implementation

#### Final Report updates

Dr. Rich briefed the committee on the Institute for Public Administration’s process for finishing the report. The target completion date of the final report is March 26th. The committee members will be receiving sections of the report to review as they are drafted. IPA intends to follow up in early April with another version of the same report that utilizes more visuals and may include quotations from historical Wilmington education figures. The report will follow basically the same structure with a few additions and revisions that include:

- Letter to community from Dr. Allen
- Profile of Wilmington community and Wilmington education
- Profile of what will districts look like after redistricting
- Parent engagement section
- Refined guiding principles
- More details on the Office of Education and Public Policy
- Recognition of the dimensions (regarding funding, redistricting, etc.) that have to be systematically addressed by the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission

The group then discussed potential areas of addition and revision that included the following:

- Proposing a timeline for implementation or designating an organization to propose a timeline

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- Identify ways in which the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission can play a role in helping educators to come together to discuss classroom practices
- Discussing cultural competency in terms of why it is important for students and what role professional development could play in developing it. Both the 2001 and 2008 reports discussed cultural competency and the committee discussed finding a way to talk about its importance without being prescriptive.
- Indicating how Wilmington Education Improvement Commission members will be chosen
- Determining a way to identify the needs and experiences of students. Without this information, it is difficult to find solutions.

#### Legal Counsel

Connor Bifferato, Esq. and Tom Driscoll, Esq. of Bifferato LLC shared with the committee that they have been analyzing the interim report for areas where there is potential for legal challenge. They intend to publish a memorandum for the committee that identifies potential legal questions that may arise, provides a brief legal history of redistricting in Delaware, and identifies the factors and tests that must be satisfied. Their analysis is not meant to determine the likelihood that a legal challenge would be issued or success but rather to provide the committee members with answers to the questions that they may be receiving.

#### Public Comment

Matthew Meyer shared the advice that, having experience in U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Civil Rights, it is important to do your due diligence but committee members should not shy away because the possibility of litigation will always exist.

Kyara Panola urged the committee to look at determining each student’s identity as a scholar and individual. Parents, teachers, and committee members should advocate for finding and teaching to these children based on identity. For instance, the nonprofit Health Leads looks at other factors affecting students’ abilities in school. In addition to focusing on the identity of each child as a scholar, it is important that there be a network of other organizations in the city to support the schools. There should be a culture of collaboration not competition. Lastly, Kyara advised the committee to work slow and steady, continue being patient, and build momentum rather than move too fast and alienate members of the community.

Arreon Harley agreed with the comment that school districts are not alone in the effort to support the city’s children. He shared that his only criticism of the report is

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that it is narrowly focused on what is possible in just a charter or traditional school. There is only one sentence in this report about partnering with community groups. There needs to be more intentional partnerships between schools and community organizations.

#### Closing

Dr. Allen thanked everyone for attending and participating. He reminded the group that after the report is published, April, May, and June will be important months for community involvement. This will be the time to call for political action.

**The meeting adjourned at 7:50.**

## Appendix D



## Community Outreach Meeting List

**Community Outreach Meeting List**

This table outlines the meetings held on behalf of the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee (WEAC) with the community. The purpose of these meetings was to present the committee’s interim action agenda and solicit feedback from stakeholders. This list does not include the regular meetings of the full committee, which were attended by a broad swath of community members. This list does not include meetings held between individual members of the committee and their respective networks.

Individual/Group	Title (of Individuals)
<b>Traditional School Districts</b>	
Dr. D. Dusty Blakey	Superintendent, Colonial School District
Kenneth Rivera	President, Red Clay School District Board of Education
Dr. Mervin Daugherty	Superintendent, Red Clay School District
Frederick Polaski	President, Christina School District Board of Education
Dr. Freeman Williams	Superintendent, Christina School District
Dr. Mark Holodick	Superintendent, Brandywine School District
Maurice Pritchett	Former Principal, Bancroft Elementary
Dr. Robert Andrzejewski	Former Superintendent, Red Clay School District
Colonial School District Board of Education	
Red Clay School District Board of Education	
Red Clay School District Board of Education Workshop for Parents and the Community	

Individual/Group	Title (of Individuals)
<b>Charter Schools</b>	
Dr. Kelly Davenport	Head of School, Freire Charter School
Dr. Jack Perry	Founder and Executive Director, Prestige Academy
Raye Jones Avery	Founder, Kuumba Academy
Kuumba Academy Parents and School Community	
La Academia Antonia Alonso Parents and School Community	
Kendall Massett	Executive Director, Delaware Charter Schools Network
Delaware Charter Schools Network Members:	
Chuck Taylor, President, Delaware Charter Schools Network	
Cheri Marshall, Academy of Dover	
Catherine Balsley, Ed D Campus Community Charter School	
Charles Hughes, Delaware Academy for Public Safety and Security	
Angela Davis, Delaware College Preparatory Academy	
Dr. Cristina Alvarez, Delaware Design Lab High School	
Commandant Anthony Pullella, Delaware Military Academy	
Dr. Lamont Browne, EastSide Charter School and Family Foundations Academy	
Patrick Gallucci, First State Military Academy	
Courtney Fox, First State Montessori Academy	
Kia Childs, Great Oaks Charter School – Wilmington	
Sally Maldonado, Kuumba Academy Charter School	
Teresa Gerschman, L’Academia Antonia Alonso Charter School	
Marie Lopez-Waite, Las Americas ASPIRA Academy	
Greg Meece, Newark Charter School	
Dr. Nick Manolakos, Odyssey Charter School	
Edward Emmett, Positive Outcomes Charter School	
Dr. Jack Perry, Prestige Academy	
Audrey Erchen, Providence Creek Academy	
Dr. Samuel D. Paoli, EdD The Charter School of Wilmington	
Patricia Hunter, The Delaware MET	
Salome Thomas-El, Thomas A. Edison Charter School	
Dr. Patricia Oliphant, Sussex Academy	
Ronald Russo	Former President, Charter School of Wilmington



Wilmington Education Advisory Committee

Individual/Group	Title (of Individuals)
<b>City Government</b>	
The Honorable Theopolis Gregory Sr.	President, Wilmington City Council
The Honorable Theodore Blunt	Former President, Wilmington City Council
Dr. Jacqueline D. Jenkins, Chief Strategy Advisor Cleon L. Cauley, Sr., Chief of Staff	Mayor's Office
The Honorable Nnamdi O. Chukwuocha, Chair The Honorable Michael A. Brown, Sr. The Honorable Maria D. Cabrera The Honorable Ernest "Trippi" Congo II The Honorable Hanifa G.N. Shabazz The Honorable Sherry Dorsey Walker	Wilmington City Council's Education, Youth and Families Committee
<b>New Castle County Government</b>	
The Honorable Jea Street	New Castle County Councilman
<b>State Government</b>	
The Honorable Jack Markell	Governor, State of Delaware
The Honorable Mark Murphy	Secretary of Education, Delaware Department of Education
<b>Delaware Senate</b> The Honorable Margaret Rose Henry The Honorable Harris McDowell The Honorable Robert Marshall	Members of the Wilmington Delegation to the Delaware General Assembly
<b>Delaware House of Representatives</b> The Honorable Charles Potter The Honorable Gerald Brady The Honorable Stephanie Bolden The Honorable Helene Keeley The Honorable James "J.J." Johnson	
The Honorable Peter Schwartzkopf	Speaker of the House, Delaware House of Representatives
The Honorable Valerie Longhurst	Majority Leader, Delaware House of Representatives
The Honorable Earl Jaques	Chair, House Education Committee, Delaware House of Representatives

Strengthening Wilmington Education: An Action Agenda

Individual/Group	Title (of Individuals)
<b>State Government, Cont.</b>	
The Honorable David Sokola	Chair, Senate Education Committee, Delaware Senate
<b>Senate Education Committee</b> The Honorable David Sokola, Chair The Honorable Bethany Hall-Long The Honorable Margaret Rose Henry The Honorable Ernesto Lopez The Honorable Robert Marshall The Honorable Brian Pettyjohn The Honorable Nicole Poore The Honorable Bryan Townsend	Joint Education Committee of the Delaware General Assembly
<b>House Education Committee</b> The Honorable Earl Jaques, Chair The Honorable Kimberly Williams, Vice-Chair The Honorable Michael Barbieri The Honorable Stephanie Bolden The Honorable Timothy Dukes The Honorable Debra Heffernan The Honorable Kevin Hensley The Honorable Harvey Kenton The Honorable Sean Lynn The Honorable Sean Matthews The Honorable Joseph Miro The Honorable Edward Osienski The Honorable Charles Potter The Honorable Michael Ramone	
<b>Delaware Senate</b> The Honorable Bryan Townsend	Members of the Delaware General Assembly who represent parts of New Castle County outside the City
<b>Delaware House of Representatives</b> The Honorable Kim Williams The Honorable John Kowalko The Honorable Paul Baumbach	
Jennifer Nagourney	Executive Director, Charter School Office, Delaware Department of Education
Mike Jackson	Deputy Controller General, Office of the Controller General, Delaware General Assembly

## Wilmington Education Advisory Committee

Individual/Group	Title (of Individuals)
<b>Federal Government</b>	
The Honorable Chris Coons (D-DE)	United States Senator
The Honorable Tom Carper (D-DE)	United States Senator
The Honorable John Carney (D-DE)	United State Representative
<b>Delaware State Education Association (DSEA)</b>	
Frederika Jenner	President
Jeff Taschner	Executive Director
Kristin Dwyer	Director of Legislation and Political Organizing
<b>Higher Education</b>	
University of Delaware faculty and administrators in education and public policy	
<b>Early Childhood</b>	
Delaware Early Childhood Council	
<b>State Board of Education</b>	
Dr. Teri Quinn Gray	President, State Board of Education
Donna Johnson	Executive Director, State Board of Education
Teri Quinn Gray, President Jorge L. Melendez, Vice President Gregory B. Coverdale G. Patrick Heffernan Randall L. Hughes, II Barbara B. Rutt Dr. Terry M. Whittaker	State Board of Education
<b>Community and Nonprofits</b>	
Thère du Pont	President, Longwood Foundation
Javier Torrijos	The Delaware Hispanic Commission
Dr. Paul Herdman	President and CEO, Rodel Foundation of Delaware
Bill Budinger	Founding Director, Rodel Foundation of Delaware
Laurisa Schutt	Executive Director, Teach for America

## Strengthening Wilmington Education: An Action Agenda

Individual/Group	Title (of Individuals)
<b>Community and Nonprofits, cont.</b>	
Dr. Gloria Grantham	Retired Educators for Academic Development (READ)
Shannon Griffin	American Civil Liberties Union
Gary Stockbridge	President, Delmarva Power
Board of Directors	Community Education Building (CEB)
Vision Coalition Leadership Team	Vision Coalition
Delaware Coalition of 100 Black Women	
Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League	
Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League – Young Professionals	
Latin American Community Center	
Imagine Delaware Forum on Wilmington Education	
Bethel AME Church	
Sigma Pi Phi Boule	
<b>Media</b>	
Johnnie Braxton	Channel 6 Action News
Channel 22	Broadcast the public meeting of the Wilmington City Council's Education, Youth and Families Committee
John Sweeney David Ledford	Engagement Editor, The News Journal Executive Editor, The News Journal
Anne Hoffman	Youth Media Producer/Reporter, Delaware Public Media (WDDE)
Larry Nagengast	Delaware First Media

**Appendix E**  
  
**Public Comments**

## Public Comments

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## Solutions for Wilmington Schools Facebook Group



## Frequent Themes from Public Comment & Letters (Social Media, Online Form, Emails)

### *Creating Responsive Governance*

1. Some expressed a concern in regards to the elimination of Christina and Colonial School District from the City of Wilmington. Concerns included:
  - What does this mean for leaders, teachers and children?
  - Would schools become overcrowded in Red Clay? Where will students go to middle/high school?
  - It doesn't save money and would be too big to manage.
  - Wouldn't it be better to create a Wilmington School District to concentrate the needs?
  - What about the disruption to the community?
  - Why is only Red Clay expanding?
  - Why not more of a footprint for Brandywine? What about the River to River plan that has Brandywine north and Red Clay south of the Brandywine River?

Others felt the consolidations didn't go far enough: A common sentiment on social media outlets was a call for a single district in each county (with a presumption of streamlined administrative costs as a result).
2. Some expressed concern in regards to the "moratorium" on charters for the city of Wilmington, while others were strongly supportive.
  - Con: "Charters needed for those who care strongly about education." – several advocated for the unique models charters can represent, especially as geographically closer-to-home options for students facing busing out of their communities
  - Pro: "There should be no more charters until all schools are thriving." – a couple of voices questioned whether charters should be considered a significant part of the solution, and presented information on their concerns that it represented too much of a drain on district finances and was too much about private profit-making

### *Meeting Wilmington Student Needs*

1. Overall, there was strong agreement in this section. Some of the questions that remain for members of the community include:
  - What type of support will be provided for parents/families?
  - Where is the comprehensive list of services for children 0-18 to support the additional needs that they have?
  - The role of the parent was at the forefront of many of the comments.
    - What is the parent's role in educating/supporting children?
  - What is the plan for training teachers in the various needs of children living in poverty?
  - Is it fair to blame the teachers for the challenges that come with student poverty? More seemed against this idea than in favor of it.
  - What will the supports look like based on the financial increases? Will they be defined for schools (psychologist, social worker, etc.)?
2. There were significant conversation by community members about parent involvement/engagement and the role that it plays in reforming a school system.
  - Some of the commentary included beliefs that if parents are not involved nothing can be done. Others believed that a comprehensive system of engagement should be embedded within all schools in order to change outcomes.

### *Funding Student Success*

1. Overall, people responded positively to the recommendation to restructure funding weights. A few thoughts/questions from the committee in terms of implementation.
  - Funding should be provided for specific programs to support student needs and they should be monitored. Specific goals/outcomes should be defined.
  - Should we focus on more money or focused on how money is allocated and used in schools?
  - Where is the transparency to make sure funds are being spent effec-

tively? (This concern most commonly reflected a disdain for administrative top-heaviness and high admin salaries in both districts and charters.)

- How do we ensure that the money gets down to the student/teacher level?
  - Will more affluent schools, or those with fewer needy students, be losing funding in order for lower income/needier schools to get more? Several mentioned this would be unacceptable as those schools struggle without resources to some degree as well.
2. Concerns were expressed in regards to reassessment:
- Would affect the housing market and current high rate of foreclosures in increasing property taxes?
  - Will people in Wilmington pay their fair share?
  - Will this really result in net gains in funding flowing to school budgets?
3. It is requested that stronger language is embedded in the report regarding early childhood education and the state's investment in it.
- What might a Wilmington early education plan look like?

**Additional Areas**

1. Family Dysfunction was the dominant ongoing thread in all venues – even broader than parent involvement—many people engaged in a conversation of the socialization of school, the expectations schools have for caregivers, and the blame needing to be placed on the parent.
- School climate (rooted in family dysfunction) and concerns about schools being weak on discipline was oft-cited in broader social media by those who have opted out of public schools
2. Segregation concerns also came through as an ongoing thread (both racial segregation, as well as amongst class and school systems (charter, district, private). Comments/Questions posed:
- Some called for neighborhood schools to “return” while others insisted they are strongly implemented and are the cause of current reseg and imbalances, especially in city schools.

- There was a debate over whether forced busing still exists, since some students are assigned outside of their communities, but choice is common both in favor of and against leaving one's neighborhood. Are we busing too much or not enough?
- Charters and traditional public schools need to come together to achieve an excellent outcome for all.
- Does the school have the structural capacity to manage the current state of need in the education setting (not just academics – social barriers/challenges)?
- “Middle class minorities should stay in urban environments to help change them.”
- “Integration was bad for AA families in Wilmington.”
- “This is not about race but about poverty and lack of values. Those that are not challenged by those issues should not be forced to co-mingle with those that do.”
- Need to look at why NCC has the highest rate of school age students in the nation going to non-public schools?
  - How does this affect the tax base/voting choices of parents living in districts?

3. Student Achievement/Outcomes

- How are we as a committee defining/measuring achievement or determining success?
- There was significant conversation on the validity of current measures of student success, in particular standardized tests such as DCAS & Smarter Balanced.
- Some feel this is an important indicators of where schools are falling short for students or serving them unevenly, while many felt this is a harmful and punitive distraction from healthy school practices, and advocate for new and different metrics with which we can paint a more accurate picture of school success.

Imagine Delaware Invitation

**We're pleased to invite you:**

**Imagine Delaware**  
**OPEN FORUM**  
**March 9 • 6:30-8:30 p.m.**  
 The Chase Center on the Riverfront  
 Opening remarks by Gov. Jack Markell.  
 Join moderator David Ledford, The News Journal executive editor, along with panelists:

 Tony Allen, Ph.D. Chair of the Wilmington Education Advisory Council, senior Bank of America executive	 Merv Daugherty, Ed.D. Superintendent, Red Clay School District	 Mike Matthews Warner Elementary School Teacher, President of Red Clay Education Association
 David Sokola State Senator, Chair of the Senate Education Committee	 Lamont Browne, Ed.D. Head of School, Eastside and Family Foundations Academy charter schools	 Tizzy Lockman Wilmington mother and UD public policy graduate student

Please join us from 4:00 to 6:00 pm for an education expo with 50 public charter and district schools, as well as community organizations. This is a great opportunity for parents to learn new ways to support their children, and also to learn about and apply to public schools this fall.

The open forum "Seeking Solutions for Wilmington Schools" starts at 6:30 pm.

This important event is free and open to the public. Bring your smartphone or tablet to participate in live polls during the forum.

**Register today at [delawareonline.com/imagine](http://delawareonline.com/imagine) or call (302) 324-2632.**

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 OF DELAWARE

Partner organizations: Brooks Fellowship, Christina Cultural Arts Center, Delaware Grantmakers Association, Interdenominational Ministers Action Council, Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League, and Teach For America-Delaware.

Imagine Delaware Survey Sample

2015 Imagine Delaware Forum	Seeking Solutions for Wilmington Schools	Attendee Survey
Name (Optional): _____ Email (Optional): _____		
Parent _____ Educator _____ Community/State Advocate _____ Other: _____		
<b>Place of Residency</b>	Suburban _____ City _____	
<b>District You Reside In</b>	Brandywine _____ Christina _____ Red Clay _____ Other _____	
<b>If you have a child(ren) what types of school(s) do they attend?</b>	Traditional Public _____ Charter _____ Vo-Tech _____ Private _____	
	Pre-School Program _____ Other _____	
<b>Please Choose One of the Following Regarding School Choice</b>	Choice _____ Attends School Within District You Reside In _____	
Please take a moment to review the 4 key areas of Focus in the <i>Wilmington Education Advisory Committee</i> Interim Report. These are issues of broad and urgent community concern, and they are critical to strengthening the overall quality of public education in Wilmington. Please take a moment to provide feedback and/or questions on any of the 4 key areas and themes from the community.		
Creating Responsive Governance		Focus Area #1
The governance of Wilmington public education is fragmented and dysfunctional. More coherent and responsive governance requires actions on three fronts.		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traditional school districts operating in Wilmington should have a more streamlined configuration that better supports continuous improvement and community responsiveness.</li> <li>Charter schools should be guided by a new vision of responsibility for the overall effectiveness of public education that promotes shared capacity, collaboration, and best practices among all Wilmington schools.</li> <li>The Wilmington community and its city government should be engaged partners in the governance of Wilmington public education.</li> </ol>		
Questions/Comments: _____		
_____		
_____		
Meeting Wilmington Student Needs		Focus Area #2
The needs of students in poverty must be addressed through stronger alignment of needed supports and services starting in early childhood and extending through entry into a career or higher education.		
Questions/Comments: _____		
_____		
_____		
Other Themes in Focus Area #2		Concerns from the Community
There were significant conversation by community members about parent involvement/engagement and the role that it plays in reforming a school system. Some of the commentary included beliefs that if parents are not involved nothing can be done. Others believed that a comprehensive system of engagement should be embedded within all schools in order to change outcomes. How can we achieve this?		
Questions/Comments: _____		
_____		
_____		

Funding Student Success	Focus Area #3
Strengthening Wilmington education requires funding adjustments in four areas: 1) an allocation of funds to schools with high concentrations of students in poverty; 2) an improved revenue base to support the overall costs of public education; 3) transitional resources to effectively implement district realignment; and, 4) funds for early childhood and other programs needed to meet the needs of low-income students.	
<b>Questions/Comments:</b> _____ _____ _____	
Other Themes in Focus Area #3	Concerns from the Community
Should there be additional allocation of funds for schools with high concentrations of students in poverty and English language learners?	
<b>Questions/Comments:</b> _____ _____ _____	
Implementing Change	Focus Area #4
A broadly representative, cross-sector Commission, outside of the current agencies of state government, should lead the planning and implementation of the recommendations in this report.	
<b>Questions/Comments:</b> _____ _____ _____	
Please Share your Feedback Below	
<b>Additional Concerns about Wilmington Education:</b> _____ _____ _____	
<b>Additional Proposals for Improving Wilmington Education:</b> _____ _____ _____	
<i>Thank you for you questions and comments.</i>	

**Appendix F**  
  
**Community and Institutional Responses  
to the Interim Report**



**Community and Institutional Responses to the Interim Report**

Christina School District Board of Education ..... 153

Retired Educators for Academic Development (READ) ..... 154

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Delaware Charter Schools Network ..... 183

Red Clay Consolidated School Board ..... 187

**Christina School District Board of Education**

**Christina School District Board of Education Resolution on the  
Wilmington Education Advisory Council (WEAC) Interim  
Recommendations issued 26 January 2015**

Whereas the Christina School District serves 2 non-contiguous portions of New Castle county including 5 schools and one program in the city of Wilmington Delaware, and,

Whereas the Christina School District Board of Education recognizes that the court ordered assignment of Wilmington’s schools to 4 districts in New Castle county is now suboptimal and antithetical to the local control of the city of Wilmington, Delaware by the city of Wilmington, Delaware, and,

Whereas, the Christina School District Board of Education recognizes the inherently appropriate benefits of local control in allowing a community to serve its own youth and that such local control is clearly in line with Delaware laws regarding neighborhood schools, therefore,

Be it resolved that the Christina School District Board of Education hereby supports the preliminary findings of the WEAC and pledges our full support to assuring the realization the aspirational goals of the citizens and stakeholders of Wilmington, Delaware to exercise self-determination, fiscal independence, and the exercise of selecting which LEAs are best suited to control and deliver responsive schools to its communities within the city of Wilmington, Delaware.

X \_\_\_\_\_  
Frederick Polaski- President

X \_\_\_\_\_  
Harrie Ellen Minnehan- Vice President

as affirmed by the CSD BOE on 10 February 2015

## Retired Educators for Academic Development (READ)

READ's Response to:

*Strengthening Wilmington Education: An Interim Report*

**The READ Team:**

Bebe Coker

Dr. Joe Johnson

Dr. Gloria Grantham

Dr. Robert Andrzejewski

Maurice Pritchett

Ted Blunt

Charles Baldwin

March 5, 2015

The READ Team commends the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee on its comprehensive Interim Report which is timely, and appears to touch all aspects of the educational issues faced by Wilmington's governing bodies, its communities, its parents and, most importantly, its school-aged children. As a result of the 1978 court ordered desegregation, Wilmington's children/students have been seeking relief from the burdens of a fractured city, and the subsequent elimination of its previously governing body, from participation in critical educational decisions. READ offers the following responses to this Interim Report, for review by all interested parties. Interim Report quotes are italicized; READ's responses are bolded.

---

*Creating Responsive Governance*

**Reconfiguring school districts serving Wilmington's school-aged youth is only a part of solving the teaching and learning problems that many of them face**

---

*"Meeting Wilmington Student Needs*

*The needs of students in poverty must be addressed through stronger alignment of needed supports and services starting in early childhood and extending through entry into a career or higher education."*

**"Needed supports and services" must be clearly defined or "a stronger alignment" could mean more of what has already failed. If this report is to guide changes in the way Wilmington's school age-residents are taught to read, write, compute mathematics and speak, in order to increase their capacity for persistence through graduation as college and career ready, then "new and appropriate" alignments of their identified needed supports and services must be recognized and funded. Such needs and supports are imperative and must be specific to individuals, as well as target groups.**

*"Funding Student Success*

*Strengthening Wilmington education requires funding adjustments in four areas: 1) an allocation of funds to schools with high concentrations of students in poverty; 2) an improved revenue base to support the overall costs of public education; 3) transitional resources to effectively implement district realignment; and, 4) funds for early childhood and other programs needed to meet the needs of low-income students."*

**The "other programs" referenced in this statement should follow this protocol: each program should not only be designated to address particular student learning needs, but it should have funds allocated to it in order to measure success. All funds must be linked to programs for teaching and learning.**

---

*The governor and state legislature should approve a weighted student funding formula or a modification to the current unit count formula that incorporates allocations for schools with high concentrations of students in poverty and English language learners, and that expands special education status to grades K-3.*

**Any policy regarding the suggested expansion for special education status should be approached with caution. Questions should be asked with rational answers supplied and it should be understood that not all impoverished children have special learning needs. The classification after 3rd grade status is important, as young children need time to develop, which is why the classification status is currently in place. It is a safeguard against early misclassification.**

**Funding an urban curriculum will likely ensure a more accurate referrals process and reduce the number of Special Education students, often misclassified based upon behavior. The expansion of K-3 special education status must rely upon policy that protects children by using it as an option used on an individual basis.**

**Before this funding is allocated and spent, it should be clearly aligned with children/students' identified learning needs, used exclusively for those needs and monitored to ensure the funding is serving its intended purpose. Funding should be released in increments according to a well-written plan for the dramatic acceleration of impoverished children/students' reading and language arts, mathematics and citizenship skills. Proof of learning should be measured by mastery of the daily learning activities and not exclusively by standardized exams. Teachers' daily lessons should reflect the plan for acceleration and should not be tied to a pacing guide.**

---

*Funding adjustments must be made to support the cost of district reconfiguration.*

**Reconfiguration should be put on hold until further review and analysis is conducted to determine the relationship between districts currently overseeing Wilmington schools and the academic performance of Wilmington's children/**

students in those schools. Another reconfiguration may need to be considered since current districts have not demonstrated that Wilmington's students have been successfully served over their tenure of oversight.

Child poverty rates are higher than ever as are their school failure rates. The New Castle County School District began in 1978 as a single district but the city of Wilmington was still divided into four areas. In 1981 the four areas: I, II, III, IV were reconfigured into four school districts: Brandywine, Red Clay, Christina and Colonial respectively, and Wilmington's children in large numbers have failed throughout. The organization of districts and schools is important, but we cannot afford to simply hand off half of the schools in Wilmington to Red Clay, with its history of failure of impoverished students within its Wilmington schools. In this sense, it cannot just be the reconfiguration that will be relied upon to solve the problems of academic failure. We must think through and determine exactly how the reconfiguration will change the teaching and learning process.

Funding reconfiguration for the 11 Wilmington schools should be considered based upon the cost of teaching children in those schools to read, write, compute mathematics, participate in scholarly activities, be exposed to the arts, and become good citizens who serve their school community (model service learning).

---

*Implementing Change*

*A broadly representative, cross-sector Commission, outside of the current agencies of state government, should lead the planning and implementation of the recommendations in this report.*

*The governor and state legislature should establish the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission (WEIC) to oversee implementation and to advise on additional policy and program improvements to strengthen Wilmington education. The commission should be an independent body operating outside of the Department of Education and should report to the governor and state legislature annually. The commission should sunset after five years.*

**READ strongly supports this recommendation for the establishment of WEIC. READ also recommends that some of its members be appointed to work with other education stakeholders on WEIC.**

READ also strongly recommends that current staffing levels and teacher experience be examined for schools serving Wilmington children in the future. Current policies regarding teacher preparation and certification need to be reviewed and aligned with the educational needs of Wilmington's children/students. For example, questions need to be asked such as who is hired to teach and why (case for seasoned teachers in primary grades, and

effective vs. qualified teachers, and equity vs. sameness, and responsibility vs. accountability, and qualifications for teaching in Delaware, which covers urban and rural student needs). This teacher qualification and experience review must be comprehensive and look at all policies in this critical area of focus or little or nothing will change in the way we hire teachers. At the end of the day we must care most about what children learn and have the political will to realign policies that support children's learning rather than what best serve the adults with whom they interact.

---

*Creating Responsive Governance*

*Strengthening Wilmington education requires more coherent and responsive governance of Wilmington public schools. Improved governance will not solve all the problems facing public education in Wilmington, but it should be the starting point. Without changing the governance of Wilmington public education, all other improvements will be made more difficult or simply not possible. This has been the conclusion of every working group focused on Wilmington education since 2001. All have proposed the need to create a system of governance that is streamlined, more responsive to the needs of Wilmington's children and their families, and more deeply connected with the community that it serves. A range of proposals has been offered—from district consolidation to the creation of a Wilmington charter district—but none has been implemented. Indeed, the fragmentation of Wilmington public education governance has become more acute.*

**READ's Teach for Delaware proposal offers suggestions here for uniting both public and charter schools. In Wilmington there should be no competing ideology. The philosophy and guiding principles should rest solely with equality and responsibility. Wilmington students should receive an equal education and Teach for Delaware defines equal. The Plan presents the concept of equal so that all children are exposed to the educational opportunities that benefit them.**

---

*Reconfiguring Wilmington School Districts*

*The configuration of the four traditional school districts with split responsibilities for Wilmington students is a product of a forty-year-old court decision to achieve metropolitan school desegregation. State policies, specifically the development of options to promote charters and choice (1996) and the Neighborhood Schools Act (2000)<sup>5</sup>, have overtaken the original rationale for this configuration. Wilmington students were expected to benefit from this configuration, which includes one of only four discontinuous districts among the 14,000 districts in the nation. In fact, Wilmington students have experienced—and still experience—the greatest burden from this configuration.*

<sup>5</sup>Neighborhood Schools Act of 2000, 72 Del. Laws, c.287 §2 (2000). School Choice

READ concurs with the report that Wilmington students were to benefit from this desegregation configuration, but instead "...have experienced-and

still experience-the greatest burden from this configuration”. Further, READ recognizes this statement as the foundation for responding to the needs of the children/students in Wilmington with dramatic and immediate changes to the ways in which their academic learning, social development, appreciation for self, property and community may begin to ease the devastation caused by the public school system during this time. Large achievement gaps, low graduation rates, high numbers of dropouts and graduates who are neither college nor career ready are outcomes that students have demonstrated. The past 38 years have inadvertently produced too many failures and too little hope for too many students to dream beyond a life in the street.

Therefore, READ stands firm in the belief that reconfiguration is not necessarily a solution to the problem: business as usual continues in the districts under consideration for a new future for Wilmington children. To this end, the recommended reconfiguration raises questions of capacity for developing the kind of governance and educational plan necessary to administer schools and teach to the third generation of urban learners whose districts have not helped Wilmington’s students achieve at high levels in the past.

If the burden of insufficient funding and alignment of needed resources is to be lifted for Wilmington students a dramatic approach for relief should not be left to any one or two school districts regardless of how Wilmington is reconfigured. While a plan for moving from four districts to two may provide better governance and possibly funding, the teaching and learning aspect of this reconfiguration must be scrutinized if students are to make improvements.

For example, data indicate that Wilmington students currently attending schools in the Red Clay and Brandywine school districts lag behind their suburban counterparts by up to and exceeding 25 points. For example, North Star boasts proficiency in reading at the 3rd grade level at 95% and math, 93%, Proficient, while their counterparts at Shortlidge Elementary report 3rd grade proficiency in reading at 28% and in math, 29%. Reconfiguration should be considered with caution.

Further, until the State, the school districts, the City of Wilmington’s governing bodies, the universities and other state departments collectively agree that the city’s schools are in crisis, and all units must play their role in solving this crisis, there will be no relief, and the burden of the past 38 years will continue for the city’s school-age children/students.

Clearly, the State of Delaware must be held accountable for its lack of support for the children of Wilmington as the State is responsible for the policies and regulations that often impede learning opportunities for the students. For example, the State sets targets set for every subgroup of students throughout the State. In the Partnership Zone schools, the bar for African American children who attended those schools was set so low that students in some PZ and Focus

Schools exceeded the goals they were not scheduled to reach for the next five years. (See RTTT data for PZ schools, 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013).

---

*Wilmington has been divided as a community, the role of schools as community assets has been diminished, and the largest city in our state has no traditional public high school within its boundaries. Most important, the current configuration does not effectively address the acute educational challenges faced by many Wilmington students. Indeed, the split of responsibilities makes addressing those challenges more difficult. The citizens and families of the city are not well served by a disconnected arrangement of school governance that makes their own engagement with education more cumbersome—and often beyond their practical reach.*

Neither the current configuration nor the recommended configuration supported in this Report offer hope that the citizens and families of the City will be well served without a dramatic change in the way schools in Wilmington are governed. New policies must be drafted that focuses entirely on the learning needs of the city’s impoverished and underachieving pre-K-12th grade children/students. Specifically, unless Red Clay and/or Brandywine is willing to completely change the way in which it currently educates Wilmington’s children/students, the reconfiguration is moot.

---

*As a community, Wilmington does not benefit from a public education governance structure built around four districts, none of which has a primary responsibility for the education of Wilmington’s children.*

If, or when, the two-district plan is adopted, a contingency must be put in place that ensures the teaching and learning process is common to all Wilmington Schools. To any new configuration, a Superintendent of Curriculum and Standards for Wilmington Public Schools position needs to be added to ensure that the city schools are no longer just an addition to the suburban districts, but are united under an Urban cooperative which creates an inclusivity and pride among the eleven public schools; that will ensure dramatic approaches to teaching and learning that address the problems currently associated with student performance. Too many Wilmington school children, now under jurisdiction of suburban districts are not reading or performing on grade level and these children need to be governed under purview of one specific academic leader who specializes in urban education. Districts can no longer use funding as an excuse for the learning issues facing urban youth.

---

#### *Evaluating Alternatives*

*In evaluating alternatives to the current district configuration, the Advisory Committee recognizes that many factors must be considered. Any solution to the fragmentation of districts in Wilmington will have impacts and implications for students and families*

*in other parts of New Castle County. A change in configuration also will generate transition costs. Most important, any proposal for district reconfiguration must contribute to the overall coherence and responsiveness of public education governance over the long term; it must offer a lasting and stable outcome.*

*A recommended proposal must meet the following objectives:*

- *Streamline governance by reducing the number of districts operating in Wilmington*

**In addition to the configuration of districts in Wilmington, there is a lack of understanding of teaching and learning needed for urban student success. City children from Wilmington were expected to fit into a predominately suburban culture and curriculum. Even when they attended schools in Wilmington, those schools reflected the suburban way of teaching and when students did not learn that way, or could not learn that way, their schools failed them, by not helping too many of them master the skill of reading.**

**Therefore, READ team recommends that the two-district configuration, should it occur, must be committed and held accountable for educating children in Wilmington with a high-quality student-centered plan developed from the needs of the child. This plan must connect teachers, school leaders and all support services directly to a sophisticated learning plan with appropriate levels of funding to maximize the return on the investment, funding for achievement.**

**Wilmington children have had both the Red Clay and Brandywine educational experience, but they have not had the urban educational experience to answer their learning needs with hope of performing at the same levels as their suburban counterparts. Both districts must be willing to embrace the expertise of a curriculum led by an experienced Superintendent of Curriculum and Standards who has responsibility for, and authority to, help shape the teaching and learning environment of the city schools.**

**To this end, the current MOU for six-Priority schools needs to be reexamined in light of the fact that Wilmington only has eleven schools ranging from Pre-K-8th grades. What is at stake here is equality, and the State of Delaware cannot focus on six schools when the other five are also priority by the State's own criteria. For Example: If the MOU addresses Highlands, Shortlidge, Warner, Bancroft, Stubbs and Bayard, how does the state not prioritize Elbert-Palmer at 90% low income (while the school may have made AYP, it has a 38% suspension rate. There are only 246 students enrolled but the actual number of students suspended was 94; the total number of suspensions was 306 (with infractions ranging from 105 disorderly conduct and fighting, 97 offensive touching of a student infractions); Pulaski at 81% low income, The only school in the city of Wilmington with income less than 50% is P.S. DuPont Middle School, and that school did not make AYP in 2014.**

State of DE District and School Profile Data 2013-2014

*Delaware and Wilmington require a new vision of the role and responsibilities of charter schools framed by a state plan, grounded in national best practices, and focused on sharing effective educational innovations and practices with all public schools. That new vision should be matched with the creation of a new entity that actively supports initiatives to fulfill this vision.*

**READ recommends that until such time as the aforementioned statement is approved for action, no new charters should be granted.**

---

*Meeting Wilmington Student Needs*

*All previous working groups on Wilmington education, beginning with the 2001 report, *They Matter Most: Investing in Wilmington's Children and Delaware's Future*, have highlighted the unique needs of students in poverty and the challenges facing schools with concentrated poverty. The 2001 report summarizes the challenges by pointing out that low-income children in high-poverty schools (schools with more than 40% low-income students), perform worse academically, read less, have lower attendance rates, are more likely to have serious developmental delays and untreated health problems, have higher rates of student behavior problems, and experience a lack of family involvement. Students in schools with lower concentrations of poverty do not face these challenges to the same extent. The 2001 working group and those after have called for actions to address the needs of schools with high concentrations of students in poverty.*

**There is no mention of the quality of teaching and learning necessary to address the academic needs of the children. For example, not reading at grade level is a crisis, a crisis that must be addressed: all eleven Wilmington schools are in crisis.**

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*The relationship between poverty and education is complex. On the one hand, education has long been recognized as the pathway out of poverty and for some Wilmington students this is the case. On the other hand, poverty—in all the dimensions that accompany life in low-income families and neighborhoods—is the most dominant force limiting the educational success of many children. The relationships among education, poverty, and race are critical to the prospects of growing numbers of Delaware children and the communities in which they live. This is the case for Wilmington.*

**READ challenges the statement in the paragraph above “On the other hand, poverty—in all the dimensions that accompany life in low-income families and neighborhoods—is the most dominant force limiting the educational success of many children.**

**While poverty is a limiting force, the failure of the educational system to address the specific needs of children who live within it are really at fault; schools can**

still be great equalizers in terms of opportunity, but they must adopt teaching and learning practices that are effective despite poverty.

Otherwise, many children are condemned to failure and deprived of all educational entitlements that make a difference: teachers, school leaders, policy, governance, and finally, hope. This is the case for teachers with a skill-set for teaching all children to learn how to learn.

*Simply adding services without alignment and integration would be costly and ineffective. A systemic change is needed, and our recommendations focus on the starting points for that change, beginning with a comprehensive implementation plan. The plan should be the mandated responsibility of the existing State of Delaware Interagency Resource Management Committee (IRMC), which already has responsibility under the Delaware Code for the coordination and integration of state programs and services, and includes the secretaries of the state Departments of Education; Health and Social Services; and Services for Children, Youth and Their Families as well as the Office of Management and Budget and the Office of the Controller General. The role of IRMC should now be expanded.*

**This statement is support for the organization of schools to better respond to the needs of the children. The entire structure needs an upgrade. For example, school rules and practices are not aligned with the stages and phases of student development, and, in particular, another configuration of the daily scheduling and operation of schools should be mentioned and suggested here to meet the academic needs of students of poverty.**

**However, teaching and learning must be the point of origin for any plan of action: all actions and supports should be aligned in service of teaching and learning.**

*In addition, the capacity of community institutions across all sectors should be mobilized to support the delivery of support services at each stage of student development. As first steps, our proposals seek to take better advantage of organizations and institutions already in place, including, the Office of Early Learning, Early Childhood Council, and Wilmington Early Childhood Council (which include a wide range of community institutions serving children such as Nemours, United Way of Delaware, Children & Families First), Commission on Early Education and the Economy, Delaware P-20 Council, state Council of Higher Education Presidents, State and New Castle County Chambers of Commerce, and Delaware Business Roundtable.*

**Again, all of these services can and should support the teaching and learning initiative, which will focus both the funds and the efforts of these organizations so that they work together to achieve one goal – that all children learn.**

*Action Agenda*

1. *The governor and state legislature should mandate the IRMC to develop and implement a comprehensive plan for state and local services, including partnerships with private and nonprofit institutions, which will create a community of support for low-income children and their families. The plan also should address the needs of schools in which large percentages of low-income children enroll. The plan, including initial recommendations for program and policy changes and funding requirements, should be submitted by the IRMC to the governor and state legislature in January 2016. The IRMC also should provide the governor and state legislature with an annual report on the implementation and operation of the plan.*
2. *Recent improvements in early childhood programs should be accelerated. The Early Childhood Council, Office of Early Learning, and Wilmington Early Childhood Council should develop an early childhood community plan for Wilmington that would provide access to high-quality early childhood programs and services for all children. This initiative should align with the state's already approved early childhood strategic plan<sup>12</sup>. A key step will be the development of a citywide partnership that includes all providers (family and center-based), Early Head Start, Head Start, school districts, and higher education. This initiative should be supported actively by the Governor's Commission on Early Education and the Economy, with the shared goal of working with providers to establish easily accessible and affordable high-quality services (including needed screenings and interventions to identify and address developmental needs) for all Wilmington children. This initiative should be coordinated with the existing Early Childhood Readiness Teams and should also include a formal partnership among early childhood providers and districts and charters serving Wilmington to facilitate the effective transition of children from early childhood to K-12 education.*

**If teaching and learning take center stage, the training and creation of strong teaching and learning staff will be paramount to success. Programs are only as good as those who operate them and strong staff is required to produce career and college ready students.**

<sup>14</sup> *The Wilmington Education Task Force Study Committee (2008, April). Report of the Wilmington Education Task Force.*

*In our view, the funding issues fall into four categories: 1) an allocation formula for public school operating funds that responds to the added resource needs of schools with high percentages of low-income students; 2) a sufficient revenue base to support the overall rising costs of the public education system; 3) an array of transition and capital resources needed to effectively implement the proposed district realignment; and, 4) an allocation of funding for the additional programs and services, such as high-quality early childhood programs, required to meet the needs of students in poverty.*

*Implementing Change*

*The recommendations of earlier Wilmington education working groups have not*

been implemented. There are many reasons for the lack of action. One of the most important reasons is the fractured nature of governance responsibilities for public education in Wilmington, which works against the actions needed for its own improvement. Leaving responsibility for implementation to be worked out through the typical operations of the current governance system is a guarantee that little change will occur. While the governor and state legislature ultimately have responsibility for acting on the recommendations provided by the Advisory Committee, their ability to carry out that responsibility over a number of years requires that implementation plans be developed and that the implementation process be monitored and evaluated. These responsibilities should not be left within the existing agencies of state government. A broadly representative, cross-sector commission mandated by the governor and state legislature is required to work with the various governance units to develop and seek approval for the implementation plans and monitor the process of implementation. The mandate to this commission should apply to all recommended changes from this report and to further recommended actions for the continuous improvement of Wilmington public education.

**The recommended actions should include the following: That the State’s Six-Priority-School MOUs submitted to the two New Castle School Districts be put on hold until further analysis occurs regarding how best to educate Wilmington’s children/students. It is important that the State reconsider a 6-Schools initiative when the city only has 11 schools. Providing assistance to six schools and leaving 5 schools unattended would further fracture the “governance responsibilities”, the very topic of the Implementing Change paragraph above. The role of the State must be one of equality for all of Wilmington’s students; the state should not participate in prioritizing one-half of the schools and leaving the other half to chance, when poverty and failure are just as evident in the five schools not selected. This gives the appearance that the state’s choice of priority schools was arbitrary or worse, divisionary, which is counter to the recommended reconfiguration proposal, as it further divides Wilmington schools.**

Respectfully Submitted:

**The READ Team:**

Bebe Coker  
 Dr. Joe Johnson  
 Dr. Gloria Grantham  
 Dr. Robert Andrzejewski  
 Maurice Pritchett  
 Ted Blunt  
 Charles Baldwin

**The Vision Coalition of Delaware**



March 6, 2015

Tony Allen  
 Chair, Wilmington Education Advisory Committee

Dear Dr. Allen and the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee,

We are writing in response to *Strengthening Wilmington Education: An Interim Report* released by the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee on January 26, 2015. We would like to thank you for the time and effort you have spent discussing opportunities for strengthening Wilmington education and for compiling a set of interim recommendations for the community to review. The broad representation of community voices in this group has been essential to bringing together a strong and realistic plan that is representative of the many voices of our community. It is important to find solutions to these difficult issues that have been challenging our largest city for decades, and we look forward to working together to provide the best opportunities for our students.

The Vision Coalition is comprised of education, government, business, and civic leaders from throughout Delaware who came together in 2006 to establish *Vision 2015*, a bold plan to provide a world-class education for all students. Individually, members of the Coalition have been extensively involved in Delaware education for decades. Together, we have been meeting regularly for nearly a decade to align efforts, evaluate progress, and sustain momentum of this work. Last year, we worked to engage and unify Delawareans around education to understand how we can come together to best support the next generation of Delawareans. Through this process we have considered many of the same issues discussed in your report and appreciate your consideration of our feedback. Overall, we are supportive of the efforts of the committee, and we hope you will take the following items into consideration before issuing the final report.

We believe the following recommendations from the Committee’s report will have the most positive impact on Delaware’s students.

- **Strengthen system alignment, support, and collaboration:** We believe that our system must find ways to enable collaboration between early learning organizations, the K-12 system, higher education and the workforce. In addition, our charter and district school boards statewide would benefit from finding more ways to share services and create efficiencies. We also support greater coherence in the governing structures to support the on-going improvement of Wilmington education. We encourage the Committee to recommend a common framework of expectations for all public schools: traditional, charter, and vo-tech.
- **Develop a plan for determining the optimal mix of traditional, charter and vo-tech schools:** We support the idea of conducting a needs assessment and developing a strategic plan to better understand the Delaware education landscape. These tools

could be used to align work currently underway and help guide the state's decision-making toward ensuring schools have the greatest impact on students.

- **Integration of services for students, families, and schools:** We support integrating and aligning services to our state's students to create a seamless academic experience for students from early learning, through K-12 and post-secondary and career opportunities. In order to be successful it is essential that we continue to build on and expand the good work already underway, such as the work of the Delaware Readiness teams. Moving forward, we must continue investing in this work to increase quality and support the development of schools in our high-need communities, including increased investment in early learning.
- **Implementation of a weighted student funding formula:** The Vision Coalition has supported a funding system that allocates money based on student needs for almost a decade. Our current funding system does not provide students with the supports they need in order to be successful. Delaware is one of only four states that does not provide additional resources for English language learners, and one of approximately 15 states that does not provide additional resources for low-income students. We support a comprehensive change which will provide increased school and district autonomy to make decisions closer to the student, and increase flexibility, efficiency, and transparency for the system as a whole.
- **Property tax reassessment:** This has been a consistent recommendation made by various groups for at least a decade, including: Vision 2015 (2006), the LEAD Committee (2008), the Legislative Task Force on Property Tax Reassessment (2009) and the Equalization Committee (2014). We believe this would help achieve a more equitable distribution of resources and better equip the funding equalization formula to work as intended.
- **Collaboration among all schools:** We are supportive of increased collaboration and scaling what works between all schools in the system, not just charter schools, and we believe capacity is needed to enable collaboration. We are proud of the work being done by organizations across the state to increase this collaboration. The Vision Coalition created Schools That Lead (formerly the Vision Network), a collaborative of traditional and charter schools, and we believe collaboration will be critical to strengthening the system. We hope that the Committee will consider a proposal that encourages or incentivizes *all schools* to share resources and practices that demonstrate results for students.

The Coalition hopes you will also consider the inclusion of the following:

- **Ensure all students, particularly those in high-need schools, have access to highly effective educators:** It is essential to assure that all teachers are prepared to meet the needs of each of their students. This includes engaging families, developing the cultural competencies, and supporting student social-emotional development. We believe timely, relevant professional development support must be delivered for all staff in every high-need school to effectively prepare educators to meet students' needs. It is also important to provide high-need schools with increased recruitment and selection

support-- and to develop teams of educators to provide additional capacity to these schools.

- **Deepen Family and Community Engagement:** We must develop and provide resources for student and family engagement models, and we must encourage the use of two-way communication strategies between schools and families to best connect our schools with the communities they serve.

As a state we have a responsibility to provide our youngest citizens with the greatest opportunities to succeed. Implementation of the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee's recommendations will strengthen the education system and the opportunities available to Delaware's students. The goals of this effort align with the focus of the Vision Coalition and the proposals we are developing for student success over the coming decades. Thank you for your dedication to this important work and for considering our feedback as you work to develop a final set of recommendations. We look forward to continuing to work together to improve opportunities for Delaware's students.

Sincerely,



Ernest Dianastasis, Managing Director, CAI (Computer Aid, Inc.), Chair

On behalf of the members of the Leadership Team

- H. Raye Jones Avery, Executive Director, Christina Cultural Arts Center
- Susan Bunting, Superintendent, Indian River School District
- Paul A. Herdman, President and CEO, Rodel Foundation of Delaware
- Mark Holdick, Superintendent, Brandywine School District
- Frederika Jenner, President, Delaware State Education Association
- Kurt Landgraf, former President and CEO, ETS
- Mark Murphy, Secretary, Delaware Department of Education
- Daniel Rich, Professor of Public Policy, University of Delaware
- John H. Taylor, Jr., President and CEO, Delaware Public Policy Institute



## Delaware Early Childhood Council



### Delaware Early Childhood Council

March 12, 2015

Dr. Tony Allen, Chair  
Wilmington Education Advisory Committee

Dear Dr. Allen:

Thank you for the work of the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee and for focusing on early childhood, where decades of research tells us the most rapid pace of human development occurs and where our investments can truly pay dividends for our community in the future.

The Early Childhood Council is a Governor-appointed body whose mission is to promote the development of a comprehensive and coordinated early childhood system, birth to eight, which provides the highest quality services and environment for Delaware's children and their families.

Council members met on March 10 to discuss the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee's **Strengthening Wilmington Education: Interim Report**. Members present were supportive of the guiding principles adopted by the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee. Many of the goals of the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee align closely with those of the Delaware Early Childhood Council. Our 2013-18 Strategic Plan, *Sustaining Early Success*, includes many of the items in the interim recommendations:

- aligned and effective early learning system;
- support for children's healthy social-emotional development;
- strengthened family, community, and school engagement in early learning;
- strengthened governance, service integration and funding;
- implementing continual improvement in state services; and
- mobilizing community partnerships and public commitment.

The group agreed that collaboration, integration, and planning are necessary to supporting our earliest learners, and appreciate the inclusion of the Council, as well as other important bodies with governance authority, such as the IRMC. In our meeting, we discussed opportunities to strengthen the interim recommendations as follows:

#### EARLY CHILDHOOD INVESTMENTS AND INITIATIVES

- **Assert the importance of participation in the state's quality rating and improvement system, Stars for Early Success.** Participating in this system enables providers of early learning to receive support to improve, as well as increased subsidy when they do.
- **Strengthen role of institutions of higher education in supporting Wilmington children.** We believe there are opportunities to strengthen the support of student teachers, ensuring that they have experience in urban child care settings so that they can be prepared to be successful.
- **Ensure that the full range of services is considered, including home visiting and mental health services.** While we believe increased investment is essential to child care and the workforce,

those programs do not reach all children, and they need support to meet the social emotional needs of young children.

- **Leverage the Readiness Teams**, particularly in the areas of parent engagement, data sharing and shared PD across early learning and K-12 systems, and in community development.
- **Review policies for opportunities to build a stronger continuum of services.** Some programs may be allowed to be used for age groups beyond their current use; for example, some home visiting programs are focused on birth to three. Ensuring families and children receive support from birth to age eight will be essential to ensuring that a strong foundation is truly established for future success.

#### SUPPORTING THE WILMINGTON EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCIL (WECEC) TO DEVELOP A COORDINATED PLAN AND COORDINATE THE CITYWIDE PARTNERSHIP

- **Provide resources to the Wilmington Early Care and Education Council so they can take the lead on the recommended plan for Wilmington early learning.** The WECEC should take the lead, starting by updating their former plan and working in alignment with the ECC and Office of Early Learning. Existing resources may be able to be directed to support this effort.
- **Leverage existing capacity and ensure coordination as WECEC develops the plan:** To ensure coordination, avoid duplication of effort, and leverage existing resources, the following should be engaged: home visiting programs, Project LAUNCH, the CMMI health work, Healthy Neighborhoods, Nemours BrightStart!, and other existing initiatives.
- **Provide support to WECEC to develop the citywide partnership recommended**, and encourage them to continue work with provider groups, charters, districts, and other partners to: support quality improvement, provide support networks, share PD and resources, establish connections and share data with districts.
- **Reorganize the support of and funding for the WECEC to be part of the Office of Education and Public Policy in the City—and ensure there is early childhood expertise in the office.**

#### EARLY LEARNING EXPERTISE AND REPRESENTATION

- **Ensure districts identify someone as the point person for early learning who has expertise in early learning.** As districts expand to serve younger children and as we are focused on a birth to age 8 system, it is important that districts are represented in these conversations by someone with clear authority.
- **Appoint representatives of districts serving Wilmington children to WECEC.**
- **Assess policy opportunities to strengthen elementary school principals' expertise in early childhood.** Other states have required a minimum level of preparation before certifying candidates, and there may be other opportunities to increase leadership capacity.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to our youngest learners. Please let us know how we can help implement these recommendations to make change on these important issues.

Sincerely,

*Mary Kate Mouser*


Mary Kate Mouser, Chair

*Madeleine Bayard*

Madeleine Bayard, Co-Chair

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March 12, 2015

Dr. Tony Allen, Chair  
 Wilmington Education Advisory Committee

Dr. Allen and the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee,


On behalf of the Rodel Foundation of Delaware, I would like to thank you for the dedication and thoughtfulness that went into producing *Strengthening Wilmington Education: An Interim Report*. As I have shared with you directly, I feel as though the Committee has done a great job of threading a complex set of needles. The effectiveness of public education in Wilmington, our largest city and economic center, is critical for our entire state and strengthening Wilmington public education will strengthen Delaware. In addition to expressing Rodel's support of the Committee's efforts, the intent of this letter is to suggest additional considerations for the Committee as you refine the recommendations for your final report.


In regard to **governance**, while the proposed redrawing of the lines make good intuitive sense, we suggest that:

- Additional analysis be done before committing to what's been proposed. The Committee must consider the implications of redistricting on feeder patterns, school facilities, teacher contracts, and tax revenue to determine the best path forward.
- The committee consider ways to strengthen the training and selection of those in governing roles. The training for the roles is insufficient, and there are no requisite requirements for school board members in law, finance or management, when these skills are essential to the governing of such complex public bodies. Short of appointing some portion of these positions, we suggest that the Committee consider ways to increase the volume of voters engaged in the process by recommending that school board elections occur at the same time as general elections. This would increase transparency and accessibility of school board elections for city residents.

In regard to **strategic planning**, we agree that this needs to take place, but would underscore that:

- A state strategic plan be completed for *all* schools, not just charter schools. A growing number of specialized programs and magnet schools already exist, so as we look to get smarter about how to expend our limited public dollars, we believe the analysis should be holistic.
- This analysis should take into account what our children will need in the decades to come. If this is a strategic opportunity, we should be thinking about how these schools are designed to best position the next generation to maximize technology (e.g. assessing technology capacity); to have integrated experiences with higher education and business (e.g. if more classes are online or on a work site or through a college, we should redesign our buildings to accommodate that); if more





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wraparound services are needed as the demands of our community change, those organizations should be considered in the design of future schools as well.


- This shouldn't just be about the addition of new schools; it should be about how we can retrofit our current schools as well. The plan should be informed by an independently conducted needs assessment that identifies demand for charter schools and other specialized options that may be in high demand with the thought that the high demand, highly effective, or strategically important new priorities (e.g. STEM) should expand, while those that are not should change or be retooled.
- The needs assessment should determine capacity of all city schools and inventory existing charter and district schools to determine enrollment, available space, and gaps in specialized or high-quality programs.
- The needs assessment should look at this range of educational offerings from a parent perspective with an eye toward how the system can offer both equity and excellence in its educational offerings from every neighborhood in the city.

In regard to **charter growth specifically**, while we agree with the strategic planning process, with the caveats above, we believe that the report should acknowledge that the state has made recent systemic changes in line with NACSA recommendations that have made the application process more rigorous, that has worked to close underperforming schools and raised the bar on new entrants.

In regard to **collaboration**, we are supportive of improved collaboration between charter schools; in fact, we have helped start organizations that have created opportunities for collaboration. However, the implementation of that collaboration, we would argue:

- Should be organic and not a one size fits all approach. Our experience is that schools must see a mutual benefit and be aligned with others with whom they collaborate. A forced marriage of schools will likely not yield the efficiencies envisioned.
- Additional resources are needed to support start-up efforts such as these. To achieve the goal of increased cooperation, schools need to be incentivized. Building new capacities actually cost more on the front end, but can pay dividends in the long run. So, there should be an expectation that any real cross-school collaboration will not be cost neutral.
- Rather than create a new organization, we suggest that we leverage collaborations that are already gaining traction such as BRINC, Schools that Lead, and the charter school collaborative implementing the Teaching Excellence Framework.
- To achieve efficiencies citywide, we recommend applying these same strategies to districts as well, such as coordinating back office services, technology purchasing, and professional development.

In regard to **funding**, we are in full support of a comprehensive shift from the unit system to a funding system that allocates money based on student needs. We believe schools and districts should be given the most ownership in deciding how to utilize their funds. A weighted student funding system would give



## Wilmington Education Strategy Think Tank

March 13, 2015

Dear Dr. Allen and the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee,

We, the members of the Wilmington Education Strategy Think Tank (WESTT) have greatly appreciated the interim report issued by the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee this past January.

Our group of concerned citizens has been working for some time to develop, prioritize and advance specific goals for the benefit of Wilmington students, including (1) the reduction of districts that serve the city, (2) the development of an equitable, weighted funding formula addressing student need and (3) the establishment of an authoritative role for Wilmington in the continuous improvement of the education of its residents. We are pleased to see these priorities reflected in the recommendations, supported by viable action steps and resource oriented proposals.


There are certain elements WESTT would like to see more explicitly called for:

1. Ensuring that Wilmington students have access to effective administrative leaders and teachers that are reflective of the diversity of the students they serve,
2. Support for the provision of strengthened resources for family engagement, such as those currently being sought by Senator Chris Coons through the recently introduced bipartisan Family Engagement in Education Act,
3. Consideration for an infrastructure planning role for the city in considering charter location and its impact on operations and services.
4. Correction of the historical timeline to reflect the Wilmington City Council's adoption by ordinance of the Neighborhood Schools Report of 2001.

As elected and civic leaders in Wilmington, WESTT fully endorses and intends to monitor the implementation of the current recommendations.

- WESTT has already retained a consultant to aid us in crafting proposals for a weighted student funding formula, with the support of the Mayor's Office and Wilmington City Council in cooperation with several community partners.
- WESTT, presumably with the cooperation of the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee, intends to garner the necessary support for enabling state legislation authorizing the City of Wilmington to generate revenue to operate the Wilmington Office of Education & Public Policy.
- WESTT will support the establishment of the Wilmington Education Alliance and the Wilmington Office of Education & Public Policy, as described in the attached proposal.

We take seriously our responsibility to facilitate the best possible opportunities for our youngest citizens to succeed. We thank the members of the Committee



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schools and districts the flexibility to make funding decisions that would have the greatest impact on student needs. In moving to a wholesale shift we offer the following in terms of making this shift:


- While there may be a need to make some short term allocations to better support the students in our high need schools, we strongly encourage the state to not just layer on additional dollars to the unit count system as part of a long term strategy.
- There should be a phased in strategy that may start with some additional allocations on top of our current system, but we should be designing in 2015 for a complete transition to a student based (vs "unit" or adult-based system) in the next two to three years. The unit system still locks our schools into a cookie cutter model that assumes a physical person in front of a centrally-determined number of students designed in the 1940's. As technology increases and the ease of online courses grow, schools will need to be able to make decisions about how to configure their class sizes in ways that best meet the needs of their students. Some students may need small class-sizes for certain courses, but may want to take AP physics online, our funding system should accommodate this. Our unit count does not. Changes to the funding system need to be phased in to ensure all schools and students have the appropriate supports. These short-term and long-term solutions will make the allocation of education funding more equitable, simple, and transparent, and ultimately better utilize state funds to improve the education of all Delaware students.

Lastly, in regard to **implementation**, we are supportive of the concept of the Wilmington Education Improvement Consortium to oversee implementation but strongly recommend that:


- The Committee designate an organization to provide support. Without sufficient capacity and available resources, it will not be possible to sustain the Consortium.
- The Committee identify a process and timeline for developing a budget to ensure that the Consortium can effectively enact its charge.

The Rodel Foundation appreciates all of the efforts made by the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee to include the public in its conversations around these important issues. I believe that the Committee's report and public engagement efforts are contributing positively to the public discussion toward solutions, and we seek to contribute as well. The Committee has our continued commitment of support. Please let us know how we can help moving forward.

Sincerely,



Paul A. Herdman, Ed.D.  
President and CEO, Rodel Foundation of Delaware



Supporting World Class Schools for Delaware

for doing the same and seeing the value in our expertise and we look forward to working together toward these ends.

Sincerely,  
The Wilmington Education Strategy Think Tank

Raye Jones Avery  
*Executive Director, Christina Cultural Arts Center*

Nnamdi Chukwuocha  
*Wilmington City Councilman & Chair of Education, Youth & Families Committee*

Theopalis K. Gregory, Sr.  
President, Wilmington City Council

Shannon Griffin  
*Community Organizer, ACLU of Delaware*

Jacqueline Jenkins  
*Chief Strategy Advisor, Office of the Mayor of the City of Wilmington*

Maurice Pritchett  
*Chief Executive Officer, Pritchett Associates*

Jea P. Street  
*New Castle County Councilman*

Michelle Taylor  
*President & Executive Director, United Way of Delaware*

WILMINGTON EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCE  
DRAFT CONCEPT OUTLINE  
March 13, 2015

**Mission.** The Alliance is an advisory body bringing together a variety of stakeholders concerned with the provision of high quality educational opportunities for students in Wilmington.

**Establishment.** This broad group will include 15–20 representatives of the community as well as key private and public organizations, in an equitable distribution. The existence of the body should be established through legislation to alter the city charter (using a commission format), which will clearly delineate membership composition.

**Membership Appointment.**

<i>Design #1</i>	<i>Design #2</i>	<i>Design #3</i>
<b>City Authority:</b> Mayor, City Council hold the sole responsibility to appoint members representing the range of required roles, each appointing half of the body’s membership roles	<b>Community Authority:</b> Designated community organizations (ie. DSEA, LEAs, State Chamber of Commerce, PTA) hold the sole responsibility to appoint their own representatives to fill membership roles	<b>Hybrid Authority:</b> Mayor, City Council & designated community organizations hold joint responsibility to appoint representatives to fill membership roles
<i>Option: City Council hearing/approval required to confirm nominated appointees</i>		

**Function.** The group will select the 5–7 person executive board by election or appointment which will govern the direction of the Wilmington Office of Education & Public Policy.

**WEAC Alignment.** The Alliance will serve a fundamental role in monitoring the implementation of the recommendations of the Governorappointed **Wilmington Education Advisory Committee (WEAC)**, as it specifically calls for the creation of the Alliance to “support the continuous improvement of education for Wilmington students”.

WILMINGTON EDUCATION & PUBLIC POLICY OFFICE  
DRAFT CONCEPT OUTLINE  
March 13, 2015

**Mission.** In order to ensure that our children are able to equitably access high quality education, it will take more than books and school buildings. It will take an investment in our children—not just of money, but a serious commitment of time, thought and collaborative effort. This is the charge of the **Wilmington Education & Public Policy Office (the Office)**: to offer solutions to educational issues both inside and outside of classrooms to serve this city’s children.

The Office will strengthen Wilmington’s educational outcomes by improving public policy through:

- **Advocacy**
- **Communication**
- **Opportunity**
- **Innovation**
- **Research**

(For detail, see Scope of Work).

**Oversight & Structure.** The Office, guided by the *Wilmington Education Alliance* and serving as its administration, will serve as a formal think tank and advocacy agency, providing robust leadership, service and support to improve access to quality educational and enrichment services for all of Wilmington’s students. On behalf of the City of Wilmington, the Office seeks to ensure its students a bright, self-determined future as productive members of society knowing this will have a positive ripple effect on our city, county, state and beyond by advancing policies and practices for continual improvement of the educational system that serves them. While it remains to be determined, it is expected that the Alliance will elect a representative governing board that will be responsible for the oversight of the Office, including the selection of an founding Executive Director who will determine necessary staffing structure with board approval.

**WEAC Alignment.** The Office will serve a fundamental role in the implementation of the recommendations of the Governor-appointed **Wilmington Education Advisory Committee (WEAC)**. The group, which issued interim recommendations for strengthening Wilmington schools in January 2015, specifically calls for the creation of the Office to “support the continuous improvement of education for Wilmington students”. The Office will develop alongside the WEAC-recommended **Wilmington Education Improvement Commission (WEIC)** in its oversight and advisement work, and be positioned to take over that role upon WEIC’s 5year sunset point. The Office will have under its purview the WEAC’s pillar recommendations of creating/maintaining responsive school governance, monitoring policies such

as equitable funding, and enabling the engagement of educational stakeholders to ensure student needs are being met. The ways in which the operations of the Office would align with the WEAC recommendations are noted in each section, below.

**Scope of Work.** In addition to offering administrative support for the activities of the Wilmington Education Alliance, the Office will accomplish its mission by facilitating:

1. **ADVOCACY** – Identifying policy in the best interests of Wilmington’s students, promoting these to agencies on every level, holding them accountable for suitably enforcing current policy aiding the community in developing their ability to advocate for themselves. The Office will work with appropriate partners and divide its original work into the following focus areas:
  - **Family & Community Engagement** – seeing that schools are wholly, respectfully and meaningfully supporting student families through connection to appropriate resources engaging student family and neighboring populations in school activity and decision making through appropriate, existing partners.
  - **Access to Educational Excellence** – to support the staff and leadership of each and every educational entity in the City of Wilmington in providing top notch services to benefit the full range of student potential, needs and interests through appropriate, existing partners.
  - **Climate & Discipline** – working on behalf of students’ rights to safe educational environments, as well as to a fair and respectful discipline process that maximizes restorative, inschool remedies through appropriate, existing partners.
  - **Equity & Diversity** – ensuring the diversity of administrators and teachers serving Wilmington students, working to safeguard the civil rights of our students with continued attention to the impact of socioeconomic isolation across the school system and its disproportionate impact on life outcomes for Wilmington students, as well as promoting the appreciation and integration of students from a wide diversity of backgrounds through appropriate, existing partners.

**WEAC Alignment for Advocacy:**

- WEAC recommends that the Office “play a leadership role in strengthening parent engagement in student learning, beginning in early childhood and extending through college and career choice” and to “support parent advocacy for students with special needs, and mobilize crosssector community resources to strengthen the support for lowincome families and Wilmington schools with high concentrations of lowincome students”.
- This area addresses:
  - **meeting Wilmington student needs** by working through qualified part-

ners, being a watchdog for the implementation of appropriate policy such as **funding student success**.

- **responsive governance** by encouraging family selfadvocacy skills, involvement and delivering advocacy on students’ rights issues of advocacy and programming.
2. **COMMUNICATION** – sharing a clear vision for urban education; communicating research findings and policy recommendations to decisionmakers at all levels, especially to the public; encouraging common transparency at all levels.
- Website: simple portal to help parents navigate Wilmington’s education, opportunity and policy landscape
  - Hold public forums and generate print publications
  - WEA’s Annual “State of Wilmington Education”

**WEAC Alignment for Communication:**

- This area supports all of the advocacy activities enumerated above—addressing **meeting student needs, funding student success** and particularly **creating responsive governance** through enhanced transparency of process.
3. **OPPORTUNITY** – connecting students, families and schools to out-of-school enrichment and support, college & career planning, scholarship and program funds.
- Advertise available opportunities
  - Host an interactive database of enrichment opportunities
  - Facilitate scholarship and program grant opportunities

**WEAC Alignment for Opportunity:**

- This area is primarily concerned with **meeting Wilmington student** needs by working with all appropriate partners in closing existing gaps in student access to needed services but also has a role to play in **funding student success** as it will be in a position to deliver additional funds to programmatic opportunities.
4. **INNOVATION** – working with LEAs, as necessary, to support their ability to deliver forward-looking programs which fill identified gaps in the educational landscape; working with institutions of higher education to improve training and professional development for urban teachers.

**WEAC Alignment for Innovation:**

- Have a liaison appointed to work with the **WEAC**-recommended Wilmington Charter Consortium “to engage the Wilmington community in its deliberations

and decisions” and collaborate “in the overall planning and development of the city’s educational programs and services”; this would also apply to traditional district school boards assigned to serve Wilmington students.

- This area addresses **responsive governance**, particularly in the area of ecosystemoriented charter development and oversight as well as professional development and programmatic partnering in order to enable educators in all school types to collaborate and better **meet Wilmington student needs**.
5. **RESEARCH** – coordinating original research through expert partners regarding the status of the education system as it impacts the students of Wilmington, particularly in the above outlined areas offering response and perspective on studies and proposals that concern the same development of original proposals to influence and shape policy impacting educational opportunities for Wilmington students.
- *School Quality Analysis* – establishing independent set of quality metrics that go beyond test score data alone, in order to highlight schools’ full range of success and growth potential in addressing community needs/wants (acknowledging the demands of School Choice); also allows Office to hold LEAs/DOE and other relevant agencies accountable in systematic way
  - Conducts surveys of the Wilmington community as needed
  - Issues white papers and briefs as needed

**WEAC Alignment for Research:**

This area supports all of the advocacy activities enumerated above addressing **meeting student needs, funding student success** and **creating responsive governance**.

- Support LEAs, businesses and nongovernmental entities in connecting highquality programmatic offerings to Wilmington students
- Support urban administrator/educator professional development opportunities (possible DSEA partnership for websitebased teacher collaboration portal?)
- Serve as a charter authorizer; solicit applicants based on comprehensive plan/list of needs that will be complementary to current landscape

**Model Offices:**

Office of Urban Education (Beloit, Kenosha, Milwaukee, and Racine), <http://oue.dpi.wi.gov/>

Denver Office of Children’s Affairs, [www.denvergov.org/educationandchildren](http://www.denvergov.org/educationandchildren)

Office of Education Innovation (Indianapolis), <http://oei.indy.gov/>


Mayor's Office of Education Initiatives (Houston), <http://www.houstontx.gov/education/>

Mayor's Office of Education (Philadelphia), <http://www.phila.gov/education/>

**Family Engagement Support Models:**

- Boston Public Schools – Office of Family & Student Engagement; <http://bps-families.org/>
- Maryland Department of Education – Division of Student, Family and School Support; <http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/student-schoolsvcs/index.html>
- New Jersey (example of an outside organization but supported in part by NJ Department of Health and Senior Services Division of Family Health Services Special Child Health and Early Intervention Services Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, Inc.: <http://www.spanadvocacy.org/content/aboutspan>

**City of Wilmington-Education, Youth and Families Committee**



**City of Wilmington**  
Nnamdi O. Chukwuocha  
City Council Member, 1st District

Louis L. Redding City/County Building  
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Wilmington, Delaware 19801-3537  
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fax (302) 571-4071  
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March 19, 2015

Dr. Tony Allen, Chairman  
Wilmington Education Advisory Committee

The Education, Youth and Families committee thanks the Wilmington Education Advisory Council for its work on behalf of our students and for its informative presentation before our committee. The committee is in support of the WEAC interim recommendations.

It is clear that the four-district model that provides the base of the public education system within our city is not an efficient and effective method to meet the needs of our students, families and communities. Our committee supports the WEAC's recommendation to reduce the number of districts operating within the city. In order to establish this two district model the committee believes that it is imperative that city specific dialog and planning occur with both Red Clay and Brandywine School Districts.

As our city develops its role in ensuring that the children of Wilmington are receiving the best possible educational opportunities, the establishment of the Wilmington Education Alliance and the Office of Education and Public Policy are essential to our city having an active and contributing leadership role in advancing the educational outcomes for our students.

Local and national studies have shown that meeting the needs of our students takes an investment in terms of assessment and the commitment of resources. The recommendation to move toward a weighted/ student based funding formula would help to assure that our students have the school and classroom based supports that are needed to promote their growth and development.

The Education, Youth and Families committee and our full council recently passed a resolution requesting a moratorium on charter schools being placed within the city. Our resolution works in harmony with the WEAC's recommendation of establishing city and statewide plans for charter schools before any additional charters are approved. This will guarantee that there are no unintentional hardships in our city and its communities, in which charters are housed.

Committee Chair  
Education, Youth & Families

Committee Member  
Housing, Licenses & Inspections  
Public Works & Transportation

Residence  
303 W. Lea Blvd.  
Wilmington, Delaware 19802  
phone (302) 762-5146

Finally, the recommendation of establishing through the Delaware Code the Wilmington education improvement Commission that will monitor the implementation of the recommendations is crucial. The proposed realignment of the IRMC to coordinate collaboration between agencies to more effectively and efficiently meet the needs of Wilmington students will help to add the needed measures to make changes sustainable.

The Education, Youth and Families committee supports these core recommendations and believe they will truly promote a much needed change in the educational direction of our city's children.

Submitted by: Wilmington City Council-Education, Youth and Families Committee

Nnamdi O. Chukwuocha, Chair Dr. Hanifa Shabazz Sherry Dorsey-Walker

Maria Cabrera Michael Brown, Sr. Ernest "Trippi" Congo

## Delaware Charter Schools Network



Nurture. Inspire. Support.

100 West 10th Street  
Suite 308  
Wilmington, DE 19801  
302.778.5999

March 25, 2015

Dear Wilmington Education Advisory Committee,

Thank you, Tony and Dan, for meeting with Delaware's charter leaders to discuss the WEAC Interim Report and recommendations, especially as they pertain to our schools and the work that we do. We also thank the full committee for their work over the last months that led to this report. Many of Delaware's children continue to have unmet educational needs and this report and the work you have begun will hopefully drive change that must occur if we are to change their trajectory in life.

This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passing of the charter law in Delaware. In those 20 years, not only has the educational landscape of DE changed, but our charter community has grown considerably to serve, at this time, 10% of the public school student population in our state. The largest concentration of our schools is in New Castle County with the biggest grouping located in the City of Wilmington. Although located in the City, the children in those schools do come from all over the County.

We are encouraged by the dialogue that this committee has initiated in Delaware and believe that a good number of the WEAC recommendations have potential, with political will, financial resources, and community supports, to make a difference. That said, we cannot state that we agree with all of your assumptions around charter schools. However, we would like to be a part of the dialogue and solutions for the educational needs that we can all agree are there. To that end, we would like to offer some of our ideas that we believe could bring the outcomes that we all wish to see – excellent educational opportunities for all of Delaware's children, especially those that have traditionally been underserved.

At the March State Board of Education meeting, Governor Markell and the Board announced that they were moving forward with one of your recommendations and in fact, as you noted Tony, improved on it. We also do not believe that our children can wait and will be moving forward in our own way based on one of your recommendations. In your interim report, you recommend that:

*Given that most Wilmington charters operate outside of school districts, an institutional arrangement needs to be established through which coordination of efficient and effective services and sustained collaboration on best practices is supported and delivered. (WEAC Interim Report, Pursuing a New Vision for Wilmington Charter Schools, p. 16)*

Charter schools are given flexibility in exchange for a higher level of accountability. Requiring that charter schools be a part of an institutional arrangement does not honor this agreement. However, we do believe in collaboration and that sharing services is a benefit for our schools that helps the children we serve. While we do have a good number of large scale collaborations with each other, including an Urban Charter Collaborative created Alternative Teacher Evaluation, Statewide School Walkthroughs, and Principal / Peer Mentoring, many of our collaborations are on a smaller scale, occurring daily in

www.DECCharterNetwork.org



phone calls and emails for support not just between charter schools, but across all public schools. Yet as with all good things, we know that more can and should be done.

Each of us has the main responsibility of making sure that the teachers and students in our building reach their full potential, so to collaborate and work together on a more consistent basis and at a larger scale, we need an organization to coordinate our efforts. We believe that continuing to work with and through the existing Delaware Charter Schools Network (DCSN) is the best and quickest way for this. Creating another organization in our State dilutes the strength and funding for all. While the primary role of the DCSN is to advocate for our schools, our movement, and especially the children that we serve, the DCSN is also our Charter Support Organization. In that role, DCSN has created opportunities for collaboration that have been useful for all of our schools across the state as well as working with our authorizers at the Delaware Department of Education and Red Clay, our State and the City of Wilmington, District and Vo-Tech Superintendents, and community organizations across Delaware for the benefit of all in the charter school community.

As noted above, we believe that we must move forward now for our children and we commit to the following:

1. To collaborate, all parties must be involved and willing. With that in mind, we will work together and with our Delaware education counterparts across all types of schools including: District, Magnet, Vocational – Technical, Parochial, and Independent schools to develop a collaboration plan for how we can all work together for the educational benefit of all of our children.
2. Develop a strategic plan for how our charter schools can grow, share resources, and coordinate to meet the needs of the teachers, families, communities, and children that we serve.
3. Create Leadership connections, systems, and structures to support all charter school leaders with an emphasis on new school leaders.
4. Work with DCSN and the Delaware Department of Education to transform the Charter School Expo into a Choice Expo that would showcase all of Delaware's schools including: District, Magnet, Vocational – Technical, Parochial, and Independent schools.
5. Support DCSN in the development and capacity building effort for a defined role within the existing organization that will allow DCSN to serve as a facilitator of collaboration around professional development, nonacademic supports, liaison to other non-charter schools and the City of Wilmington. We cannot do this work alone. Nor can we financially support the initial funding that will be required to build capacity for this work. So while we commit to moving forward, we ask that you help us access the financial resources that you pointed to in your report.

*Initial funding for the Consortium should be provided by the State of Delaware as well as from private sources. (WEAC Interim Report, Pursuing a New Vision for Wilmington Charter Schools, p. 17)*

www.DECCharterNetwork.org

Finally, you note:

*Charter schools should be guided by a new vision of responsibility for the overall effectiveness of public education that promotes shared capacity, collaboration, and best practices among all Wilmington schools. (WEAC Interim Report, Executive Summary, p. 2)*

While we understand that our schools serve a large number of students from the City of Wilmington, we are not the only public schools that do. While we also understand that there is a deserving and absolute need that this committee has been charged to meet, the committee also acknowledged that there is need throughout our State. Therefore, we suggest that the responsibility for the overall effectiveness of public education must be shared by all schools serving our students not just in the City, but across the State. Only with a shared sense and belief of responsibility for excellent educational outcomes for all children, will we be able to reach that worthy goal. We must all be willing to share and learn with and from each other so that the children that we all serve can reap the benefits. We are ready and willing to share, collaborate, coordinate, and move forward for our children and look forward to working with all schools to meet the needs of all of Delaware's children.

Thank you,

Cheri Marshall  
Academy of Dover

Chuck Taylor  
President, Delaware Charter Schools Network

Catherine Balsley, Ed D  
Campus Community Charter School

Charles Hughes  
Delaware Academy for Public Safety and Security

Angela Davis  
Delaware College Preparatory Academy

Dr. Cristina Alvarez  
Delaware Design Lab High School

Commandant Anthony Pulella  
Delaware Military Academy

Dr. Lamont Browne  
EastSide Charter School  
Family Foundations Academy

Patrick Gallucci  
First State Military Academy

Courtney Fox  
First State Montessori Academy

Kia Childs  
Great Oaks Charter School – Wilmington

Sally Maldonado  
Kuumba Academy Charter School

www.DECCharterNetwork.org

Red Clay Consolidated School Board

Teresa Gerschman L'Academia Antonia Alonso Charter School	Margie Lopez-Waite Las Americas ASPIRA Academy
Greg Meece Newark Charter School	Dr. Nick Manolacos Odyssey Charter School
Edward Emmett Positive Outcomes Charter School	Dr. Jack Perry Prestige Academy
Audrey Erschen Providence Creek Academy	Dr. Samuel D. Paoli, Ed D The Charter School of Wilmington
Patricia Hunter The Delaware MET	Salome Thomas-El Thomas A. Edison Charter School
Dr. Patricia Oliphant Sussex Academy	

www.D E C h a r t e r N e t w o r k . o r g

Wilmington Education  
Advisory Committee

April 17, 2015

All:

On Wednesday, April 15th, the Red Clay Consolidated School Board passed a resolution supporting the recommendations outlined in the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee's Final Report. In offering that support, the school board called for three things:

- A clear funding path and commitment before any such recommendations are implemented;
- Participation from the Red Clay School community in any transition efforts needed to move forward, including formal roles in the proposed Commission charged with the implementing the recommendations; and
- "Adequate time to implement any and all necessary changes."

To be clear and unequivocal, WE AGREE!

The Wilmington Education Advisory Committee has always been of the opinion that our recommendations should be taken as a package. Simply redrawing lines without consideration of a comprehensive path for school reform that included funding, parent and community engagement, wraparound services and statewide, strategic resource allocation for low-income students and their families is of no value to ensuring quality education for all kids. This resolution supports our view in full.

As you might recall, the Christina School District issued a resolution in late February endorsing the interim recommendations. Taken together, we believe the case for action remains strong and continue to call upon the General Assembly and the Governor to act and to do so now.

Onward,



Tony Allen, Ph.D.  
Chairman  
Wilmington Education Advisory Committee

Email: [tonyallen@comcast.net](mailto:tonyallen@comcast.net) Phone: 302.290.1445

**Resolution:** Proposed Changes to the Boundaries of the Christina and Red Clay Consolidated School Districts

**Subject:** Legislative Action for Realignment of School District in the City of Wilmington

**WHEREAS**, the Red Clay Consolidated School District Board of Education recognizes the importance of the Wilmington Educational Advisory Committee Report to realign student assignments by eliminating Christina and Colonial School Districts from within the City of Wilmington and to assign these students to Red Clay Consolidated School District;

**WHEREAS**, the funding allocation and unit count realignment to address high need student groups is essential to the WEAC plan to move forward. Additional funding must be established prior to any realignment agreement. All sources of funding must be explored including tax pool, equalization, federal funding as well as reassessment and the method of local funding;

**WHEREAS**, the funding allocation for building maintenance and renovations must be adjusted to ensure facilities are able to meet the educational needs of students and staff before the transition occurs;

**WHEREAS**, the realignment of the school district attendance zones must occur in a lengthy and thoughtful manner to allow for appropriate planning with feeder patterns, staffing and hiring procedures, transportation, nutrition, unit counts, student transitions, etc.;

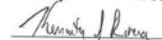
**WHEREAS**, the realignment of the school districts into Red Clay will give the school district authority (from outside agencies) for the planning and operations of the schools within the school board policy, district guidelines and framework of the plan.

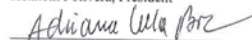
**BE IT RESOLVED THAT**, we respectfully request that representatives of Red Clay Consolidated School District be represented on the proposed Wilmington Education Improvement Commission (WEIC) so that we can work, inclusive of other stakeholders, on a thoughtful and comprehensive long-term solution which will encourage the success of all students involved with the implementation of the WEAC recommendations.

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT**, the Red Clay Consolidated School District endorses the WEAC recommendations with the (1) provision of funding, (2) Red Clay involvement in WEIC, and (3) adequate time to implement any and all necessary changes.

**Submitted by:**

Red Clay Consolidated School District Board of Education


  
Kenneth J. Rivera, President

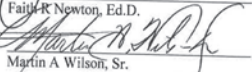
  
Adriana Leela Bohm, Ph.D.

Catherine H. Thompson, Esquire

  
Kenneth R. Woods

  
Michael Biccio, Vice President

  
Fajal R. Newton, Ed.D.

  
Martin A. Wilson, Sr.

Action: RCCSD Board of Education Meeting  
Date: April 15, 2015

## Appendix G

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## Press Clips

**Press Clips**

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**Governor Creates Community Advisory Group to Support Wilmington Students**

**Source: Delaware.Gov**

**Date Posted: Thursday, September 25, 2014**

<http://news.delaware.gov/2014/09/25/governor-creates-community-advisory-group-to-support-wilmington-students/>

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*Group will provide important perspective on needs of City youth and the schools they attend*

Wilmington, DE – Following through on a recommendation earlier this month from city legislators in the General Assembly, Governor Markell issued an Executive Order today to bring together community leaders, parents, teachers, and others active in Wilmington education to provide suggestions and feedback on ways to improve educational opportunities for city youth.

E.O. 46 establishes the City of Wilmington Education Advisory Group, which will be comprised of at least 15 members appointed by the Governor in consultation with elected representatives from the city. The group, which is the result of a conversation the Governor had with Representative Charles Potter (D-Wilmington North), Representative Stephanie T. Bolden (D-Wilmington East), Representative James “J.J.” Johnson (D-New Castle), and Senator Margaret Rose Henry (D-Wilmington East), will offer input to the Governor and the Department of Education. Members are tasked with addressing educational outcomes, community involvement and family engagement in schools, social services and access to extracurricular activities.

“While we have seen improvements in college attendance and dropout rates, as well as increases in students who meet their individual growth goals throughout the state, we have not seen enough progress in schools serving our highest-need youth in Wilmington,” said Governor Markell. “We must not accept a status quo in which students in our most disadvantaged communities fall further and further behind each year.

“Working with community leaders, activists, parents, teachers, and family members is essential to combating the inequalities that plague many City schools. I thank Senator Henry, Representative Potter, Representative Bolden, and Representative Johnson who suggested that I create this advisory group, and I look forward to working with this group to give Wilmington children the quality education that every Delaware child deserves.”

The perspective of the task force would complement increased funding available to help turn around the six lowest performing schools in the state, all located in the City of Wilmington. The Governor recently announced an initiative that would invest about \$6 million in additional funding in these “Priority Schools,” while ensuring the schools have outstanding leadership and increased flexibility to implement proven strategies to help disadvantaged students, and holding them accountable for making improvements. In addition, the Children’s Department has won a \$4 million federal grant to support the social and emotional development of young children in some of these same communities.

“I have been approached by parents of students and other city residents who care deeply about the education our children receive and who can offer valuable insights to improve opportunities for our children,” said Rep. Potter. “I appreciate the Governor’s support of giving the community a stronger voice in their children’s education and thank him for working over the past few weeks to quickly establish this advisory group.”

“Too many of the children in our city communities are not getting the education they need,” said Sen. Henry. “We need to see more progress for our children, especially at our schools that struggle the most. And we will only make things better if we give the people who live in the communities the chance to communicate their concerns and suggestions. I applaud the creation of this advisory group and look forward to the members of our community finally having an effective way to make themselves heard.”

The Governor announced that the group will be chaired by Dr. Tony Allen, founding President of the Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League and a strong advocate for underprivileged children in Wilmington and a longtime Wilmington resident who has helped lead Bank of America’s community service efforts during his many years at the company. In 2012, Allen co-orchestrated the donation of a 450,000 square-foot Bank of America building to the Longwood Foundation to build a campus of schools designed to eliminate the achievement gap for 2,500 inner-city children.

“While I am humbled to accept the role, doing nothing is simply not an option,” said Allen. “Our City—and our state—cannot afford one more generation of underprepared young citizens without the skills to meet the challenges of the digital age and no incentive to succeed. The notion that these kids are un-teachable because of where they come from is wrong. It has already been proven that where ever public officials, school leaders and citizens have the will and the commitment to help those children succeed; they have, in fact, succeeded. We should set the standard.”

## Wilmington Education Advisory Group Meetings Announced

**Source: Delaware.Gov**

**Date Posted: Friday, November 21, 2014**

<http://news.delaware.gov/2014/11/21/wilmington-education-advisory-group-meetings-announced/>

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*Wide array of Wilmington Educators, Parents and Community Leaders Selected to Serve*

Wilmington, DE – Today, Wilmington Education Advisory Group Chairman Tony Allen announced the members of the advisory committee formed by Governor Markell through Executive Order 46. The body was created to advise the Governor and his administration on how best to strengthen educational opportunities for all Wilmington students and to support family engagement.

The group convened for the first time earlier this month, and began to review options considered by earlier groups and commissions to improve access to quality public education options. The group will build upon this earlier work and extend it to meet the challenges now facing Wilmington students and families. The group has tasked itself with putting forward clear, actionable, recommendations that address both structural and programmatic barriers impeding the progress of many Wilmington students, especially low-income students. These barriers not only diminish student achievement in school, they also limit lifelong opportunities for productive and rewarding lives and work.

Dr. Allen, a long-time Wilmington resident, civic leader and bank executive offered the following on the work of the committee, “The work of this advisory group is important, but it is not new. There is more than 100 years of evidence suggesting that low-income children – from urban and rural environments – can succeed at very high levels but need more in the way academic and non-academic supports to realize their full potential. Over the last 20 years, there have been specific, consistent recommendations offered in support of the success and well-being of Wilmington children. Now is the time to translate agreement on recommendations into actions that are implemented.”

The group’s first meeting took place on November 5, 2014, and information on that session is posted here. The group includes the following citizens:

- Norma Ivonne Antongiorgi – La Academia Antonia Alonso Charter School board member, retired Wilmington teacher
- Mayor James Baker – Former Mayor of the City of Wilmington, Chairman Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League
- Rosemary Banks – retired Wilmington teacher
- Adriana Bohm, Ph.D. – Wilmington parent and School Board Member

- Melissa Browne – Wilmington parent and Pre-K Lead Planner, Relay Graduate School of Education
- Nikki Castle, Ph.D. – research evaluator and founder, Eastside Charter School
- Councilman Nnamdi Chukwuocha – education committee chair, Wilmington City Council
- The Reverend Meredith Griffin, D.Min. – education committee chair, Interdenominational Ministers Action Council (IMAC)
- Henry Harper, Ph.D. – retired superintendent
- Susan Hessling – teacher at Warner Elementary
- Elizabeth Lockman – Wilmington parent and community advocate
- Chandra Pitts – Wilmington parent, community activist, Executive Director of One Village Alliance
- Marco Ramos – Program Coordinator, Latin American Community Center
- Richard “Mouse” Smith – President, Delaware NAACP
- Shefon Taylor – Wilmington parent and Public Allies Alumna
- Cheryl Trawick – retired Wilmington administrator
- Meghan Wallace – former special education teacher
- Shelia Wyatt – retired Wilmington teacher

The following schedule of upcoming meetings of the Advisory Group in Wilmington:

- Monday, November 24th from 5:30pm to 7:30pm at Warner Elementary School
- Saturday, December 6th from 8:00am – 12pm at the Community Education Building
- Tuesday, December 9th from 5:30pm to 7:30pm (location to be announced)
- Tuesday December 16th from 5:30pm to 7:30pm (location TBA)

## Time to Define Wilmington’s Education Possibilities

**Delaware Voice Tony Allen in The News Journal**

**10:30 a.m. EST**

**December 28, 2014**

<http://www.delawareonline.com/story/opinion/contributors/2014/12/28/time-define-wilmingtons-education-possibilities/20965943/>

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Today, I write with great care. Like many, my ability to opine on the promise of Wilmington and its challenges is well documented. However, in my lifetime, changing Wilmington has not been easy. In key areas of neighborhood redevelopment, violence prevention, promoting healthy lifestyles and true educational reform, the impact of any initiative never seems to be enough, never spreads itself across the full spectrum of our citizenry and never sustains itself from generation to generation.

The clearest example of this is the access to quality education for all Wilmington children. After 40 years of reforms, thousands of Wilmington children, most of them poor, black or Latino, still do not have access to quality public schools. Judged on most outcomes – truancy, graduation rates, unemployment, college attendance, socio-emotional well-being, drug use, homelessness, arrests and test scores – these children have become data points for a system of failure. And despite how often we blame each other – politicians, parents, educational advocates, community and business leaders, unions, educational administrators, teachers – we are all responsible.

In 1974, the prevailing interpretation of Brown in Delaware was that physical proximity in the interest of access and excellence was paramount. In other words, there were both academic and moral advantages to creating racially diverse schools. A noble goal to be sure, but hollow without recognizing that exceptional learning requires more than a working knowledge of who was in your homeroom. That system persisted for 25 years with a distinct disadvantage to those city kids who spent three years in a neighborhood school and nine years somewhere between I-95, Kirkwood Highway, New Castle Avenue and 202. In that time, charter, choice and an evolved Vocational school system emerged and allowed for new, but limited educational options.

Ultimately, in 2000, when the Neighborhood Schools Act knocked down the idea that simple integration was more important than exceptional learning, a series of working groups documented the challenges facing Wilmington public education and offered recommendations ranging from district reorganization to changes in school funding. With few exceptions, none of these recommendations were acted upon.

Today’s reality is even more challenging.

Wilmington students are now served by four traditional school districts, one Vo-Tech district, and 12 charter schools. Each represents a separate governing authority. Four more charters are authorized to start 2015. At that time, responsibility for educating 10,000 Wilmington students will be divided among 21 governing units. The districts and charters typically compete for students and public dollars, rarely collaborate on programs and practices, and operate without any agreed-upon vision for Wilmington children.

In that context, the governor and Secretary of Education have already challenged

two districts to accept plans to transform six low-performing, urban schools. The ACLU has filed with the U.S. Office of Civil Rights claiming that the State's charter law has re-segregated Wilmington schools. The mayor of Wilmington has filed suit against the State to hold open a charter school deemed to be failing its students. And in the not-so-distant background, Wilmington has attracted unwanted national attention for its level of violent crime, much of which can be attributed to former students the system was never ready for and ultimately failed.

In September, Gov. Markell formed the Wilmington Educational Advisory Committee. The committee's mandate is to recommend how best to strengthen educational opportunities for all Wilmington students. The committee includes a diverse array of educators, parents, advocates and community activists and much of our time together has been spent trying to build on the work of earlier commissions, all of whom deliberated over the same issues, came up with similar recommendations but never found traction in the way of implementation.

To that end, early next year, we will issue an "Action Agenda," that incorporates and builds upon proposals of the past 20 years, offering legislative and policy recommendations to the governor to pursue in the upcoming session of the General Assembly and note specifically what we believe to be the structural and programmatic barriers to student success including the impact of race, class and geography. The committee has adopted six principles to guide its analysis.

- A combination of public schools that include traditional district schools, charter schools, and Vo-tech schools will continue to serve Wilmington students.
- All Wilmington schools should receive the human and financial resources needed to support student success.
- There should be agreed measures for student success that apply to all schools.
- Policies and practices for Wilmington schools should promote collaboration, shared learning and a mutual commitment to improvements that serve all students.
- Wilmington schools should be regarded as community assets, governed in some way by the communities they serve.
- Wilmington schools need allies. They need community and business partnerships and active parent engagement to address the complex social and health needs of many of the city's children.

Central to Delaware's long-term viability is our only metropolitan city's ability to educate its citizens and attract others to call Delaware home. In that regard, we need a broad-based, cross-sector coalition to act boldly and without equivocation, right now. Continuing on our current path is not an option.

*Dr. Tony Allen is the chairman of the Governor's Wilmington Educational Advisory Committee, an executive with Bank of America and a Whitney M. Young Awardee for Advancing Racial Equality, the National Urban League's highest honor. He was educated in Delaware public schools and is long-time Wilmington resident.*

## Committee: Take Christina, Colonial out of Wilmington

**Matthew Albright, The News Journal**

**7:35 a.m. EST**

**January 27, 2015**

<http://www.delawareonline.com/story/news/education/2015/01/26/committee-take-christina-colonial-wilmington/22344233/>

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A committee created to find ways to improve education in Wilmington has recommended drastic changes such as removing two school districts from the city, rethinking charter schools and overhauling how schools are funded.

The Wilmington Education Advisory Council aims to provide a better future for inner-city students by helping them find a path to escape chronic violence and poverty.

"Now is the time to act and to do so in ways that will strengthen Wilmington education for decades to come," wrote Tony Allen, a senior Bank of America executive and the council's chairman, in a letter to school and city leaders. "The benefits of these actions for Delaware and its largest metropolitan center cannot be overstated."

Created by Gov. Jack Markell last year, the council is made up of 20 educators, business leaders, city officials and community activists. It is the latest in a long struggle both to save Wilmington's youth from an unrelenting tide of shootings and to improve urban schools that many feel are under-performing.

The proposed solutions includes several controversial ideas:

- Removing the Christina and Colonial School Districts from the city.
- Placing a hold on the approval of new charter schools until the state can design a comprehensive plan for how they should grow.
- Changing the way schools are funded in Delaware to funnel more resources to high-poverty schools.
- Creating an office of education in Wilmington government to give city officials more say in what happens in schools.

The interim report comes right after a particularly bloody weekend for Wilmington youth – at least six teenagers were shot, and two died.

Before the committee makes its final recommendations to Markell and the General Assembly, it is seeking widespread input from the community.

In his letter, Allen acknowledged that his group is hardly the first to attempt grand changes.

"It's been 60 years since the 'Brown' decision [which ultimately led to Wilmington's school district being split into four suburban districts] and 40 years since Delaware, by legal prescription, first attempted to address the needs of all its students," he wrote. "Still, thousands of Wilmington children are unable to fully benefit from a quality public education."

Still, Allen says the recent rush of action on schools has built "momentum," that the committee hopes will lend urgency to their cause.

"There are so many things going on in Wilmington education right now that,

regardless of what side you're on in any of them, I think everyone is saying 'something needs to be done,' he said.

#### **Fewer districts in the city**

First, the report says the city needs to streamline a system of governance that is "fragmented and dysfunctional"

Wilmington is currently served by four traditional school districts, Red Clay, Brandywine, Christina and Colonial, and by the New Castle County Vo-tech district. That system is a legacy of desegregation, when officials split the city in four and spread urban students among their suburban peers in an attempt to mix white and black students.

But many in the city have long complained that this arrangement prevents a coherent, unified vision for city schools. They have also lamented the fact that most city high school students have to take buses into the suburbs.

The council's solution is to take city schools out of the hands of Christina and Colonial. Red Clay would get all of Christina's schools. Colonial does not have any schools in the city, just students.

That would make Red Clay easily the state's largest school district, serving mostly city kids.

Not counting the charter schools Red Clay authorizes, Christina is the largest public school district in Delaware, serving 16,721 kids. Red Clay is a close second, serving 16,539.

Counting the charter schools it authorizes, Red Clay is the largest. The commission argues Red Clay is uniquely suited to control most of the city schools since it is the only district with experience overseeing charters.

Many have argued Christina's attendance zones don't make any sense because it has a non-contiguous "island" in the city's east side that is not connected to its suburban schools in Newark. The committee's research found the district is one of only four in the country with non-contiguous boundaries.

Colonial has less than 150 city students and does not operate schools in the city limits, the report points out, but buses them out into the suburbs.

Red Clay and Christina were the districts targeted by the state's highly controversial "Priority Schools" plan to put top-notch principals and teachers in six city schools and give them flexibility from many district rules.

Christina, especially the Christina School Board, has a reputation for clashing with the state, sometimes attempting to derail state leaders' plans.

Its board only barely approved an agreement over Priority Schools last week, a month after Red Clay did so. And the district lost its final year of federal Race to the Top funding after it refused to implement a state plan for big teacher bonuses.

John Young, the board member who has most vocally criticized the state, says he's not necessarily opposed to Christina leaving the city.

"It is difficult to argue against this articulation for improved local control as Christina's non-contiguous relationship with Wilmington has been less than ideal for almost 40 years," Young said. "However, the findings in this report are complex and will require tremendous political will from all involved parties. I am uncertain, outside of this obviously dedicated group, where that will may be found."

Young says it would be "a huge lift" to change districts as the report recommends. The state would have to decide what would happen to students who are currently bused to Christina's suburban middle and high school students, for example.

Christina Superintendent Freeman Williams said it would be "premature" for district officials to comment on the report until they had time to digest it, but said the district is "committed to engaging fully in the discussion over these proposals."

Colonial's assistant superintendent, Carlton Lampkins, also said the state needs to be careful.

"There's always some hurdle or some unintended consequence of doing these kinds of moves. It's like what happened with desegregation," Lampkins said. "If it does come down to it, will the families have a choice? Do our parents want to leave us? They may decide they don't."

#### **Plan for charter schools needed**

The group argues charter schools have further fragmented school leadership in Wilmington.

Charters have seen explosive growth in the city over the past few years. Last school year, charters served about 1,100 high school students, while next school year they are projected to serve 1,758, the report says.

Some lawmakers, traditional school leaders and Wilmington officials have publicly worried that rapid growth is sapping students and resources from traditional school districts and further dividing the city's educational voice.

Last week, Wilmington City Council asked the state to place a moratorium on new charter schools. The ACLU has also filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights seeking to prevent new charter schools from opening, arguing they are contributing to resegregation.

The committee wants the state to develop a plan with the desired number of traditional, vo-tech and charter schools, so that the city is making smart decisions about whether charters are meeting needs. Until that plan is developed, the committee says the state should stop approving new charters.

Charter supporters say they're willing to work with the state, but don't think it's wise to limit options.

"While we agree that a plan for our state, including an understanding of the current education landscape, is needed, we do not believe that limiting school choice is the way to make it happen," Kendall Massett, executive director of the Delaware Charter Schools Network, said in a written statement. "The charter process already requires that a need be exhibited for a particular school to open. All approved charters have met that requirement."

#### **Funding and other changes**

The committee also acknowledged long complaints from city officials that they do not have a voice in educational issues. To fix that, the report recommends creating an Office of Education and Public Policy in city government which would engage parents, advocate for special needs students and mobilize community support.

The state also needs to seriously rethink how it funds schools, the committee said. Throughout the Priority Schools debate, many teachers and district leaders



have said procedural tweaks and organizational changes can't make up for a lack of resources. It takes more money and programs, they say, to serve inner-city kids, who often deal with poverty, hunger, violence and absentee parents.

The committee wants to see a "weighted funding formula," which would give high-poverty schools more resources to deal with those challenges. That would mean less, however, for low-poverty public schools, barring a massive infusion of new money.

Another problem, the report says, is that property values have not been re-assessed in 30 years, which means some taxpayers are underpaying into a key revenue source for local districts.

Though it acknowledged that a re-assessment would face stiff opposition from homeowners, the committee says it would broaden and stabilize the funding base for schools.

In a statement posted on the city website, Mayor Dennis Williams said he supported the council's recommendations.

"The recommendations proposed by the Wilmington Education Advisory Council serve as another step forward in acknowledging the need for major reform in Wilmington's school system," Williams said. "In particular, I support the Wilmington Education Advisory Council's recommendation to create an Office of Education and Public Policy in city government, as this would increase city involvement in Wilmington schools."

## A Plan to End the Education Quagmire

"Our View", The News Journal Editorial

7:20 a.m. EST

January 27, 2015

<http://www.delawareonline.com/story/opinion/editorials/2015/01/26/plan-end-education-quagmire/22378865/?from=global&sessionKey=&autologin>

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"Strengthening Wilmington Education: An Interim Report" should be homework for all Delaware citizens. A special committee appointed by the governor offered ideas that go beyond the boundaries of Wilmington. The report is especially strong on how the structure of our education system often fails to serve the children.

The Wilmington Education Advisory Committee wants the state to reconsider the boundaries of the school districts that currently cover Wilmington. It also wants the state to re-examine the way Delaware funds schools, with the idea that the schools' low-income students attend should get special attention. The committee also asks the state and the school districts to rethink their approach to charter schools and to hold off creating more of them until that process is finished. Another of the committee's suggestions is that Wilmington residents have more of a say in the governance of their schools.

"Strengthening Wilmington Education" comes at an important time. The state Department of Education has designated six Wilmington schools as "priority schools," meaning that they need to be turned around. The proposal ignited controversy, with opponents heaping scorn on state school leaders. One, Christina, barely reached an agreement on the plan.

It is interesting that the committee recommends that the state sever Christina district from Wilmington. However, the suggestion makes sense. The division of the city into four school districts goes back to federal court's desegregation order in the late 1970s. A look at a district map shows how out of place Christina district is. The bulk of the Christina district is in the Newark area. Its Wilmington portion is not contiguous. It stands out like a small island amid other districts. The committee also recommends cutting ties with the Colonial District. Colonial at present does not have any schools in the city, so that should not be a problem. We believe the committee's recommendations are the correct ones.

We also agree the state should reconsider funding of schools. The failure of many students in public schools owes more to poverty than anything else. Classroom teachers need help from specialists and classroom aides to bridge the learning gaps.

The committee is eloquent on the tone of the current debate over schools. "This confrontational dialogue, which has generally focused on how one group can hold another group accountable, is now an embedded feature of Wilmington education," the members said. There will be no progress until that scapegoating disappears.

There is much to discuss about this report. We urge you to read it and join the discussion. Wilmington, New Castle County, and, in fact, all Delaware can make real progress if we make this a collaborative dialogue instead of a confrontational one.

## With Wilmington Schools at Crossroads, TNJ to Host Forum

David Ledford, Executive Editor of *The News Journal*

8:32 p.m. EST

February 13, 2015

<http://www.delawareonline.com/story/news/education/2015/02/10/city-schools-crossroads-tnj-host-forum/23212233/>

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This is a seminal moment for education in Delaware, with Wilmington's public schools at the heart of a passionate debate about how best to improve student achievement.

There's enormous energy focused on new approaches to teaching, new approaches to funding schools, changes to district boundaries and improvements in charter schools.

Sure there is disagreement on what the future should look like. Some educators and school board members strongly disagree with the approach Gov. Jack Markell and Education Secretary Mark Murphy are pushing – especially the notion of mandating that teachers reapply for their jobs and that only elite, highly paid principals run schools that have struggled with low test scores.

The administration points to pockets of greatness statewide, suggesting that Delaware adopt these innovative methods to better prepare our children for a competitive future in the global economy.

We invite you to join us Tuesday, Feb. 24 at the Chase Center in Wilmington when we partner with the United Way of Delaware, the Rodel Foundation and five other community partners to present a panel discussion aimed at imagining a better future for our children attending public schools.

The forum runs from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. But the doors of the Chase Center open at 4 p.m. for the educational expo, where parents and students will have the opportunity to speak with representatives of some 50 schools and organizations about educational offerings and after-school programs. Among the groups who've already committed: Boys and Girls Club of Delaware; Children and Families First; Christina Cultural Arts Center and the state's Office of Early Learning.

Community engagement on education is more robust today than at any time during the past decade. Now is the time for all Delawareans to recognize that Wilmington's struggling schools are a problem for citizens statewide, not just those in the inner city, says Michelle Taylor, United Way's president and chief executive officer.

She adds that too often people remove themselves from the children attending the city's public schools, when in truth "they're all our kids."

Gov. Markell will kick off the forum with introductory remarks. I'll moderate a panel of six experts including Bank of America executive Tony Allen, who led the Wilmington Education Advisory Council that recommended removing Christina and Colonial school districts from city schools, rethinking charter schools and overhauling how schools are funded.

The two-hour forum is focused on issues affecting city schools. But given that lessons learned from innovative approaches in Wilmington could be applied statewide,

this is a teachable moment for all Delawareans.

Those attending the free forum will be afforded an opportunity to ask questions of panelists and make their views known through digital surveys conducted at the event. The event will be live-streamed at [delawareonline.com](http://delawareonline.com). And the Chase cafeteria will be open for refreshments.

You can preregister to attend at [delawareonline.com/imagine](http://delawareonline.com/imagine).

Among the issues we'll examine:

**Priority Schools:** Since September the state has advocated for its plan to improve six inner-city Wilmington schools in the Christina and Red Clay school districts, schools with some of the state's lowest test scores. State officials want to get elite school leaders in place, free them from most district rules and split about \$2.8 million among the schools to fund innovative changes.

The districts balked at those plans, though. On Tuesday, after a contentious, months-long debate between the state and Christina school board, the Department of Education sent it a letter telling Christina it must choose by Feb. 27 whether to close its three Priority Schools – Stubbs and Bancroft elementaries and Bayard Middle – or hand them over to charter schools or other education management organizations.

In January, Red Clay School District approved a plan for its Priority Schools: Elementary schools Warner, Shortlidge and Highlands would use a "community campus model" allowing teachers to intensely focus on a few grades.

**Changing District Boundaries** would bring more cohesion to city schools, the Wilmington Education Advisory Council believes. Created by the governor to find ways to improve education in Wilmington, the council recommended its dramatic changes to chart a better future for inner-city students by helping them find a path to escape chronic violence and poverty.

**Weighted Funding** would give high-poverty schools more resources to deal with challenges. Council recommendations did not explain where money for this move would come from.

**Fragmented Governance** in city schools must be considered when looking at reforms, the council maintained. Counting charters, traditional schools and vo-tech schools, there are 18 different local governing bodies. And that doesn't count groups like the state Board of Education and state and federal Departments of Education, all of which also influence school policy in Wilmington.

## How Can Divided Wilmington Schools Share Innovations?

**Matthew Albright, The News Journal**

**7:39 a.m. EDT**

**March 9, 2015**

<http://www.delawareonline.com/story/news/local/2015/03/08/can-divided-wilmington-schools-share-innovations/24612209/>

[Excerpts from full article]

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...There is no shortage of innovative ideas in Wilmington's schools. Its vo-techs, traditional public schools and many charters seem to be overflowing with them.

The problem, many educators say, is that too few of those great ideas are being shared.

Some of those walls are ideological, philosophical and emotional.

When it comes to the rift between traditional public and charter schools, it might be all three causes.

That's especially true of charter schools and traditional schools, which, as the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee sees it, have worked together either poorly or not at all.

"While there is sharing across some charters, it generally involves a small number of charters and not all of those that might benefit," the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee's interim report says. "Sharing between state-authorized charters and traditional districts is virtually nonexistent."

...In the 2012-2013 school year, there were 3,080 seats available in Wilmington charter schools. By 2019-2020, even if no new schools are approved, there could be almost 7,000 as the schools add grades, according to projections in the Committee report.

"The starting point for improvements is the recognition that charter schools are an important part of public education in Wilmington and will become even more important in the decades ahead," the Committee report says. "Precisely because of this importance, it is critical that they operate in ways that support the overall improvement of public education."

Though there's little the Committee can do to ease tensions between educators at traditional schools and charters, it has recommended a few structural changes that might help create a less polarized system.

Its report acknowledges that there needs to be a plan for how charter schools should grow in the city. Instead of approving charters just to have more charters, the report recommends the state place a hold on new approvals until it can develop a strategic plan for how they will complement the larger public education system.

That plan should detail what types of charters would improve work going on in the rest of the public school system, the Committee said.

Dr. Lamont Browne, head of school/principal, of EastSide Charter School, sits in a classroom taking notes as kindergarten teacher Aneya Hunt is evaluated by Rachel Staub, director of early education at EastSide.

"We certainly are not against charter schools, but we do think there needs to be

a plan," said Tony Allen, the Committee's chair and a Bank of America executive. "I think most other places that have charter schools, and I mean something like 90 percent of them, have a plan for what charters are going to be approved and where."

Allen points out that the National Association of Charter School Authorizers recommends having such a plan in place.

The charter issue is one reason why the Committee has recommended that the Red Clay School District take over most Wilmington schools in its proposal for redistricting.

Red Clay is the only school district in Delaware that authorizes charter schools. The rest, including most of the charters in Wilmington, are authorized by the state.

Allen says it makes sense that district schools and charters aren't working well when both are managed by completely different organizations. So it would help collaboration between charters and traditional schools to have a district with experience doing so.

"We certainly do work with the charters we have to see what good ideas we can take to scale in the rest of our schools," said Red Clay Superintendent Merv Daugherty.

The Committee is recommending the creation of a Wilmington Charter Consortium, which would not only offer assistance to charter school operators but would also act as a liaison to help bring charter school innovations to other schools.

It is also requesting the creation of a Wilmington Education Improvement Commission that would, among other things, help policymakers find programs that are working and implement them more system-wide.

To be certain, the Committee and even charter leaders like Browne do not think this collaboration is a one-way street; just as districts could learn some things from charters, districts have done things that could work well in charters.

"There are just an incredible number of innovative things happening in schools," said Secretary of Education Mark Murphy. "I think there's this negative perception of Wilmington schools, but there are lots of really exciting things happening..."

## For City Schools, A Call for Reinforcements

**Matthew Albright, The News Journal**

**3:23 p.m. EDT**

**March 8, 2015**

<http://www.delawareonline.com/story/news/education/2015/03/06/city-schools-call-reinforcements/24534629/>

[Excerpts from full article]

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...Elizabeth Lockman, a Wilmington parent who sits on the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee sent her child to a high-poverty Wilmington school even though her family is middle-class. She acknowledges that's relatively rare these days because most parents believe those schools can't handle the crime and poverty-induced problems they face and send them to private or charter schools.

"If we had a system that allowed us to address those disparities, I think it would speak to those parents who are on the fence about making that decision," she said. "It's a really hard decision to send your child to a school when you know it has those kinds of needs."

There are few who disagree that these things would help schools. But one question has gone unanswered for years: How do you pay for it?

The Committee hopes it has an answer.

Its interim report calls for what many teachers and advocates have long pushed, a weighted funding formula that would give high-poverty schools more staff and other resources.

The state's current system of distributing funding, called "unit count," has become archaic and does not account for the additional challenges of urban schools, the Committee says.

Each school earns a certain number of "units" based on the number of students, and each unit comes with a set amount of state cash. Special education "units" earn districts more money, because special education students require additional services.

State leaders are considering overhauling that system, creating a task force and a small pilot project in some districts, and the Committee report supports those efforts.

"The Governor believes that we cannot best serve students today with an education funding system developed 75 years ago," wrote Jonathon Dworkin, a spokesman for Gov. Jack Markell.

But even if unit count remains in place, the group is calling for it to be tweaked so that schools with high populations of students in poverty, students learning English and special needs students get additional money.

"We think the best solution is to come up with a new system," said Tony Allen, chairman of the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee. "But we realize that's a pretty big challenge politically. So at the very least, we're asking the state to come up with some way to acknowledge the challenges these schools face."

If the state can manage to create a system that funnels more money to high-poverty schools, it would not just impact Wilmington. Urban Dover schools and rural schools downstate would all see help dealing with their own needs.

But unless the new system takes money from more affluent suburban schools so city schools can afford the extra resources – a politically risky move – poverty-weighted funding would require a significant infusion of new money into the system...

The Committee's recommendations include one specific way to raise new revenues for districts, but it could prove politically unpopular. It is asking the state to require counties to re-assess property taxes.

School districts get about 60 percent of their funding from the state, and about 30 from local property taxes and about 10 percent from the federal government.

Property values have not been reassessed since 1983 in New Castle County, 1987 in Kent County and 1974 in Sussex County. That means that many property owners' tax bills don't actually reflect the market value of their property.

If property rates were reassessed, many tax bills would increase and districts could have a significant infusion of new cash.

The Committee is proposing not only reassessing property values, but requiring assessments be updated regularly.

That's something education officials have long sought.

"We're over 30 years past due on this," said Daugherty "Honestly, this situation we're in, people from outside the state look at it and they can't believe it."

Sokola has long pushed for property tax reassessments, but has seen "monkey wrenches thrown in" at the last minute that doomed the proposals.

"There are some weird dynamics that push back against that. I think it really should be its own separate issue, but I realize it often gets tied to all the rest of the debate over money," Sokola said. "I've got to believe there's a lawsuit coming at some point. It's just clear that we're not doing what we're supposed to."

Many taxpayers are obviously hesitant to see their property taxes go up. Voters in the Christina School District shot down, by an almost three-to-one margin last month, a tax hike to fund operating costs. Over the past few years, several districts have seen their tax requests slapped down and been forced to ask voters for much more modest increases.

"Look, we realize that what we're asking for is going to take political will," Allen said. "But we believe now is the time for Delaware to make this happen. It's in the best interest of kids not just in Wilmington, but across the whole state."

## Schools Forum Brings Energy for Change

**Matthew Albright, The News Journal**

**8:44 a.m. EDT**

**March 10, 2015**

<http://www.delawareonline.com/story/news/education/2015/03/09/schools-forum-brings-energy-change/24680565/>

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Streamlining Wilmington's complicated educational system, giving low-income students more resources and uniting the city's divided voices are all tough tasks, but there just might be enough energy to make those changes happen.

That's the message six panelists had for an audience of more than 700 during an Imagine Delaware forum hosted by the News Journal, the United Way and other organizations at the Chase Center on the Riverfront.

The panel came after an expo that featured more than 54 vendors - schools districts, charter schools and community organizations ranging from the Boy Scouts to the Delaware Association of School Psychologists. Each provided information to hundreds of parents, grandparents and students.

The big question on everyone's mind and the overall theme of the forum was: How can we improve education in the City of Wilmington and lift its students out of their challenging circumstances?

The discussion covered many topics, especially when it came time for audience questions. But much of it centered around several of the biggest proposals recommended by the Delaware (sic) Education Advisory Committee.

That group called for redistricting so the Christina and Colonial school districts would be removed from Wilmington and their schools and students in the city limits be given to the Red Clay School District. Brandywine would keep its city students.

"We believe that Wilmington schools have a divided voice," said Tony Allen, the Committee's chairman, who sat on the panel. "We believe that there needs to be a more unified, streamlined voice, and that starts with a simpler governance structure.

Gov. Jack Markell, who gave an introductory speech before the panel discussion, expressed support for all of those proposals, and called for urgency in implementing them. He called for the General Assembly to pass legislation that would remove Christina's schools from the city.

"It is absolutely true that poverty creates enormous, enormous challenges," Markell said. "I, like many of you, refuse to say we can't improve schools as long as poverty exists. That's a recipe for the status quo."

No one on the panel voiced opposition to redistricting - and a live poll of the audience on their phones overwhelmingly showed support - but some panelists did say that time is needed for such a big change to happen.

"It's easy to say to 'turn them over,' but the details are extremely important," said panelist Merv Daugherty, superintendent of Red Clay School District. "In our district, when everybody's at the table, the lift is a lot easier. To think that Red Clay can do this alone is not the case. We are going to have to have strong support."

A spokesman for Markell emphasized that the governor called for legislation on

redistricting to be passed this year, but did not have a timeline in mind for when the transition would occur.

The panelists also supported, as did the audience, finding more funding for high-poverty schools.

"I think we have this big problem that some of the more middle-class families are looking at these schools and they have the perception that kids' needs aren't being met," said Elizabeth Lockman, a parent who sat on the panel. "If you have it where these schools have smaller class sizes and their needs are being better addressed, you might find more parents make the decision to send their children there..."

## **Markell: No More Charters Until Strategic Plan Exists**

**Matthew Albright, The News Journal**

**6:21 p.m. EDT**

**March 19, 2015**

<http://www.delawareonline.com/story/news/education/2015/03/19/markell-state-needs-plan-charter-school-growth/25034283/>

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No new charter schools should be approved to open until Delaware figures out what its students need and creates a plan for how all its schools can meet those needs, Gov. Jack Markell said Thursday.

Markell said the state Department of Education and State Board of Education will do a “comprehensive needs assessment” to see what students need and what services they might not be getting now.

As examples, he said the study might find that there are too few seats in technical programs or that rural schools downstate need help meeting a growing population of students who speak English as a second language.

Once that study is completed, the state will craft a plan for how all schools can move to meet those needs.

The plan will include all schools, but the governor and other state leaders focused on charters.

“As the interest in charters continue to grow, we’ve got to make sure the schools that are opening are the right ones for our families,” Markell said.

Markell said the state should not authorize any new charters until the plan is in place. Charters that are already authorized would still be allowed to open.

The move is essentially a statewide version of a recommendation made by the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee, which Markell created to find solutions for city schools.

The committee said charters are an important part of Wilmington’s educational landscape, but there needs to be a plan to make sure new charters were meeting needs and that the city wasn’t simply getting new charters for the sake of having new charters.

Tony Allen, the committee’s chairman, praised the governor’s announcement Thursday. He pointed out that many previous committees like his have made recommendations that went unfulfilled.

“There is no question that charter schools will remain a critical part of public education in Delaware and that many students throughout the state will be served by them, and in many cases served well,” Allen said. “However, we cannot continue to operate two systems with little interaction and coordination and expect the quality benefits that all of our children deserve. It is our hope that a plan for charter schools extends itself to public education in Delaware broadly and forces stronger collaboration across the traditional district, charter and vo-tech boundaries.”

There has been explosive growth in the city’s charter sector and more growth is expected. In the 2012-2013 school year, there were 3,080 seats available in Wilmington charter schools. By 2019-2020, even if no new schools are approved, there could be almost 7,000 as the schools add grades, according to projections in the committee report.

The growth of charters has worried some traditional school advocates who say the schools are sapping high-performing students and resources from their schools.

Kendall Massett, executive director of the Delaware Charter Schools Network, said she was not worried the planning process would shut the door for charter schools.

“I think there are enough gaps out there that there is plenty of room for charters to be a solution,” Massett said.

Massett said she thinks the planning process would show some existing charter schools with huge wait lists should be expanded or replicated.

“If we look at some of these schools and say, ‘parents really want this,’ maybe the lesson we learn is that we should be offering more of that kind of opportunity,” she said.

**Appendix H**  
  
**Glossary Of Terms**

**American Community Survey** – An ongoing survey that provides data every year—giving communities the current information they need to plan investments and services. Information from the survey generates data that help determine how more than \$400 billion in federal and state funds are distributed each year.

**Charter Schools** – Public schools authorized by Del. C., Title 14, Chapter 5. Created to improve student learning; encourage the use of different and innovative or proven school environments and teaching and learning methods; provide parents and students with improved measures of school performance and greater opportunities in choosing public schools within and outside their school districts; and to provide for a well-educated community.<sup>1</sup>

**Charter School Act** – Enacted in 1995 and authorized by Del. C., Title 14, Chapter 5. The act allows citizens to create and run public charter schools.

**Children & Family First** – Established in 1884, Children & Families First serves over 30,000 children and families each year. Their services are child-centered and family-focused, forming a comprehensive continuum of quality social, educational, and mental health services. Its mission is to help families develop solutions to meet challenges and embrace opportunities.

**Delaware School Choice Program** – Creates educational opportunities by allowing parents to send their children to any school in the state of Delaware.

**Delaware State Board of Education** – Comprising seven members appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Delaware Senate its mission, in collaboration with community and stakeholders, is to serve as the primary voice for Delaware citizens on education policy to create a world-class education system for every student.

**Delaware Interagency Resources Management Committee (IRMC)** – Has administrative responsibility for establishing a comprehensive and coordinated early childhood system. Membership includes the secretary of the Department of Education (chairperson); secretary of the Department of Health and Social Services; secretary of the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families; director of the Office of Management and Budget; the controller general; and, chair of the Early Childhood Council (ex officio).

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<sup>1</sup> [www.doe.k12.de.us/domain/151](http://www.doe.k12.de.us/domain/151)

**Delaware Early Childhood Council (ECC)** – The State Advisory Council on Early Childhood for children from birth to eight years of age. The ECC is charged with carrying out all of the functions designated in the federal Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 and other functions as assigned by the governor, state legislature, and the state's Interagency Resource Management Committee. The ECC primarily comprises private-sector members, but includes public-sector members from the Departments of Health and Social Services; Services for Children, Youth and Their Families; and Education. The 19 members of the council are appointed by the governor.

**Delaware Stars for Early Success** – Delaware's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) administered by the Delaware Department of Education. A QRIS is a method to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and education and school-age settings. The goal of Delaware Stars is to invest in participating programs to increase access to high-quality care for all of Delaware's children, especially those from low-income families.<sup>2</sup>

**Delaware P-20 Council** – Established in 2003 by Executive Order 47 and placed into statute in 2005, the Delaware P-20 Council is an inclusive organization designed to align Delaware's education efforts across all grade levels from early childhood to post-secondary.

**Delaware Charter School Network** – Provides advocacy and support for the charter school movement and charter schools in Delaware.<sup>3</sup>

**Early Childhood Readiness Teams** – Families, early childhood programs, educators, and community and business leaders make up **Delaware Readiness Teams** to help build strong links connecting children from birth to grade 3 and beyond so they are ready for school and life.

**Early Head Start** – The reauthorization of the Head Start Act in 1994 made it possible to establish Early Head Start as a program to serve infants and toddlers under the age of 3 and pregnant women. Early Head Start provides early, continuous, intensive, and comprehensive child development and family support services to low-income infants and toddlers and their families as well as pregnant women and their families.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.delawarestars.udel.edu](http://www.delawarestars.udel.edu)

<sup>3</sup> [www.decharternetwork.org](http://www.decharternetwork.org)



**GIS Mapping** – A Geographic Information System (GIS) is a computer system that allows you to map, model, query, and analyze large quantities of data within a single database according to their locations. GIS gives you the power to create maps.

**Head Start** – Head Start promotes the school readiness of young children from low-income families through agencies in their local community. The Head Start program is authorized by the Improving Head Start Readiness Act of 2007.

**Innovative Schools** – A nonprofit resource center for Delaware public schools.

**KIDS COUNT of Delaware** – KIDS COUNT is a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation to track the well-being of children in the United States. By providing high-quality data and trend analysis through its KIDS COUNT Data Center, the foundation seeks to enrich local, state, and national discussions concerning ways to secure better futures for all children.

**Magnet School** – A public school offering special instruction and programs not available elsewhere and designed to attract a more diverse student body from throughout a school district.

**National Association of Charter Authorizers (NACSA)** – The only organization in the nation working to improve the policies and practices of authorizers—the organizations designated to approve, monitor, renew, and, if necessary, close charter schools. NACSA provides professional development, practical resources, consulting, and policy guidance to authorizers. It also advocates for laws and policies that raise the bar for excellence among authorizers and the schools they charter.<sup>4</sup>

**Referendum** – The principle or practice of referring measures proposed or passed by a legislative body to the vote of the electorate for approval or rejection.

**School Choice Act** – The School Choice Act allowed parents to send their children to any school in the state.

**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** – Part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, SNAP offers nutrition assistance to millions of eligible, low-income individuals and families and provides economic benefits to communities.

**Sustaining Early Success: Delaware’s Strategic Plan for a Comprehensive Early Childhood System** – Delaware’s early childhood strategic plan. The strategic goals include (1) a healthy start for all children, (2) high-quality early childhood programs and professionals, (3) an aligned and effective early learning system—birth through 3rd grade, and (4) sustained system improvement.

**Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)** – Designed to help needy families achieve self-sufficiency. States receive block grants to design and operate programs that accomplish one of the purposes of the TANF program.

**Vision 2015** – Education plan from 2006 that set high expectations across the board: setting high sights; investing in early childhood education; developing and supporting great teachers; empowering principals to be great school leaders; encouraging innovation and requiring accountability; and establishing a simple and fair funding system.

**Wilmington City Government** – The city’s elected officials and its public institutions.

**Wilmington Early Childhood Council** – The council promotes the development of a comprehensive and coordinated early childhood system, birth to eight, which provides the highest-quality services and environment for Delaware’s children and their families.

**Wilmington Neighborhood School Committee** – Representatives of Wilmington communities, school board members, government officials, and businesses. Its goals: to build high expectations and rigorous standards that apply to all educators, parents, and children.

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<sup>4</sup> [www.qualitycharters.org/about-nacsa/why-nacsa.html](http://www.qualitycharters.org/about-nacsa/why-nacsa.html)

**Appendix I**  
  
**Legal Review**

Legal Review

To: Wilmington Education Advisory Committee  
 From: Ian Connor Bifferato and Thomas F. Driscoll III  
 Date: March 24, 2015  
 Re: Application of Desegregation Litigation to Proposed School Redistricting

MEMORANDUM

As part of its mandate to recommend proposals to strengthen public education for students in the City of Wilmington, the Wilmington Educational Advisory Committee (the "Committee") has appropriately sought a review of its proposals through the lens of Delaware's history of addressing school desegregation, as first set forth by the Delaware Court of Chancery in *Bulah v. Gebhart* and *Belton v. Gebhart* and the United States Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954). Delaware courts have long been involved in the implementation of the desegregation, dating back to the 1950s. In the 1970s the District Court for the District of Delaware took over the charge from the state of Delaware of implementing the U.S. Supreme Court's mandate to implement desegregation. It is through the history of the federal court's oversight of desegregation in Delaware that the body of authority that must now be taken into consideration. In addressing the challenges of desegregation in Delaware, these courts adopted a test to determine whether *de jure* segregation exists. It is important to note that the circumstances, demographics, make-up of the schools and districts of the 1970s, and therefore the very context for early desegregation litigation are very different from current circumstances. Previously the courts attempted to dismantle a system of segregation, and after decades the courts ultimately found that desegregation was successfully achieved. Now, the Committee proposes a modification to these districts, in accordance with its mandate, in order to improve educational opportunities offered to Wilmington's children.

Litigation History of Delaware Public School Desegregation<sup>1</sup>

In 1952, prior to the United States Supreme Court's historic decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954), the Delaware Court of Chancery ordered desegregation in Delaware schools. *Belton v. Gebhart*, 87 A.2d 862 (Del. Ch. 1952).<sup>2</sup> This decision was appealed and ultimately consolidated with *Brown v. Board of Education*. Famously, in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the United States Supreme Court found that racial segregation of public schools which denied children equal educational opportunities was a violation of the students' Fourteenth Amendment equal protection.

In 1957, protracted litigation over the desegregation of Delaware's public schools that would last for the next 40 years began in the United States District Court for the District of Delaware. That same year, in *Evans v. Buchanan*, the District Court required the State Board of Education (the "Board") to submit a plan "providing for the admittance, enrollment and education on a racially nondiscriminatory basis, for the Fall Term of 1957, of pupils in all public school districts of the State of Delaware which heretofore have not admitted pupils under a plan of desegregation approved by the State Board of Education." 152 F. Supp. 886, 889 (D. Del. 1957). The Board's plan, as submitted, was ultimately rejected, and the Court ordered the Board to "provide for full integration of all grades of the public schools of Delaware commencing with the Fall term 1961." *Evans v. Ennis*, 281 F.2d 385, 390 (3rd Cir. 1960). In

<sup>1</sup> While this memorandum summarizes the litigation history, more detailed histories of the proceedings are available in *Evans v. Buchanan*, 379 F. Supp. 1218, 1220-21 (D. Del. 1974) and *Coalition to Save Our Children v. State Bd. of Educ.*, 90 F.3d 752 (3d Cir. 1996).

<sup>2</sup> The Chancery Court consolidated *Belton v. Gebhart* with another action captioned *Bulah v. Gebhart* for purposes of trial, and accordingly the *Belton* decision relates to both actions.

1961 a modified plan for desegregation was approved. *Evans v. Buchanan*, 195 F. Supp. 321, 322-323 (D. Del. 1961).

Notwithstanding the approval of this plan, segregation continued. In 1974, the Delaware District Court found that the provisions of Educational Advancement Act of 1968, which blocked desegregation of Wilmington and suburban schools, were unconstitutional and ordered the Board to again submit a plan for desegregation. *Evans v. Buchanan*, 379 F. Supp. 1218, 1233 (D. Del. 1974). In 1978, the District Court rejected the state and school district's proposed plans entered a remedial order regarding desegregation. *Evans v. Buchanan*, 447 F. Supp. 982 (D. Del. 1978). This order created one unified school district combining eleven existing districts and implemented a 9-3 plan which includes "reassignment of all students from the geographic area of the predominantly black districts to the geographic area of the predominantly white districts for nine years and reassignment of all students from the geographic area of the predominantly white districts to the geographic area of the predominantly black districts for three consecutive years." *Id.* at 989. Furthermore, the 1978 order required "(1) an in-service training program for teachers; (2) an affirmative reading and communication skills program; (3) new curriculum offerings; (4) a nondiscriminatory counseling and guidance program; (5) a human relations pro-gram; (6) codes of conduct providing for nondiscriminatory discipline; (7) the reassignment of faculty and staff; and (8) nondiscriminatory guidelines for construction and maintenance of school buildings." *Coalition to Save Our Children*, 90 F.3d at 757 (citing *Evans v. Buchanan*, 582 F.2d 750, 770-774 (3d Cir. 1978)).

In 1981, the District Court approved a plan to divide the one school district into four districts, but judicial oversight of the school districts continued. *Evans v. Buchanan*, 512 F. Supp. 839 (D. Del. 1981). In 1990, the District Court found that Red Clay school district had not

complied with the 1978 order. *Coalition to Save Our Children v. Buchanan*, 744 F. Supp. 582, 587-93 (D. Del. 1990).

It was not until 1995 that the District Court at last determined that the four school districts in New Castle County had finally achieved unitary status. *Coalition to Save Our Children v. State Board of Education*, 901 F. Supp. 784 (D. Del. 1995)

**Delaware Public Schools Achieve Unitary Status**

In 1996, the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit affirmed the Delaware District Court's determination that Delaware's public schools had achieved unitary status, bringing to a close both Federal Court supervision of Delaware's public schools and four decades of litigation over desegregation. *Coalition to Save Our Children v. State Bd. of Educ.*, 90 F.3d 752 (3d Cir. 1996). In reaching their decisions both the Third Circuit and the District Court below examined factors set forth by the United States Supreme Court in *Green v. County School Board*, 391 U.S. 430 (1968).

In *Green*, the Supreme Court reviewed a Virginia school district's efforts to desegregate its public schools and found those efforts completely ineffective. 391 U.S. 430. "[T]he *Green* Court also made clear that in examining the problem of racial imbalance in our schools, we are to look 'not just to the composition of student bodies . . . but to every facet of school operations -- faculty, staff, transportation, extracurricular activities and facilities.'" *Coalition to Save Our Children*, 90 F.3d at 760 (quoting *Green*, 391 U.S. at 435).

Almost 30 years later, in *Coalition to Save Our Children*, the Third Circuit and the District Court applied the *Green* factors to determine whether Delaware public schools had achieved racial balance and to whether the Delaware public school system violated students' equal protection rights. The Courts examined the *Green* factors to see whether racial balance

had been achieved in “student assignment, faculty and staff assignment, transportation, extracurricular activities, and facilities.” *Coalition to Save Our Children v. State Bd. of Educ.*, 901 F. Supp. 784, 796 (D. Del. 1995).<sup>3</sup> In analyzing these factors for racial balance the Court relied upon extensive expert and factual evidence provided by the school districts examining specific factual data with regard to racial make-up of schools, classrooms, faculty and staff (at this time the racial balance with respect to transportation and facilities was unchallenged). *See* 90 F.3d at 762-769; 901 F. Supp. at 796-822.

When analyzing whether the school districts had achieved racial balance with respect to student assignment with respect to schools, the Court relied upon an expert who used an “index of dissimilarity”, which “compared the racial balance in the four districts to a national sample of 76 similar districts, analyzing both the percentage of students in schools with certain variances and the percentage of schools themselves within certain variances” and demonstrated that Delaware schools “are much less racially imbalanced than . . . [the] national comparison group.”<sup>4</sup> *Coalition to Save Our Children*, 90 F.3d at 761-62. The second aspect of student assignment which the Court examined was racial balance in the classroom, which the Court determined was also satisfied by the school districts. *Id.* at 766. Furthermore, while a racial balance is required, the Third Circuit has previously made clear with respect to Delaware schools that there is no quota system and the Court “specifically [held] that no particular racial balance will be required in any school, grade,

<sup>3</sup> The Third Circuit identified the *Green* factors as “student assignments, faculty, staff, facilities and resources, transportation, and extra-curricular activities.” *Coalition to Save Our Children*, 90 F.3d at 761. “Resources” is not separately analyzed from facilities in the District Court or Third Circuit opinion, or *Green* itself, but it is worth noting its inclusion as a factor.

<sup>4</sup> “The Index of Dissimilarity indicates how races in a school district are distributed across schools. The scale extends from “0,” representing perfect racial balance, to “1,” representing complete racial imbalance. The actual figure represents the proportion of black students who would have to be reassigned to white schools, assuming no whites were reassigned, in order to achieve the same proportion in each school as in the district as a whole. Thus, for example, Red Clay peaked with over a .2 ratio of racial imbalance, while Colonial had the best racial balance, indicated by its scant .05 Index of Dissimilarity between 1983 and 1986.” *Coalition to Save Our Children*, 90 F.3d at 762, n. 7.

or classroom.” *Evans v. Buchanan*, 555 F.2d 373, 380 (3d Cir. 1977). This is consistent with the United States Supreme Court, which previously held the same. *Milliken v. Bradley*, 418 U.S. 717, 740-41 (1974).

With respect to faculty and staff assignments, “the district court found that the districts closely monitor the racial composition of their faculties and do not hesitate to block transfers and to make reassignments, overriding seniority where necessary, to ensure diverse racial representation at each school.” *Coalition to Save Our Children*, 90 F.3d at 766-7. Furthermore, “the districts hired minority candidates at rates two to four times greater than the available percentage of minorities in regional and national pools.” *Id.* at 767. Thus, the Third Circuit determined the District Court “did not clearly err in finding that the school districts had demonstrated good faith efforts to integrate the faculties of the schools.” *Id.* Next, the Court examined “the racial balance among the ‘non-professional’ or ‘classified’ staff, which includes bus drivers, bus aides, secretarial and clerical positions, paraprofessionals, custodial employees, and food service workers” and determined that “it was not clearly erroneous for the court to conclude that the districts have eliminated to the extent practicable any residual racial identifiability in the schools with respect to these employees.” *Id.* at 767-8.

Next, with respect to extracurricular activities, it was “undisputed, however, that all extracurricular activities within the four districts are open to students of all races.” *Id.* at 768. As the Third Circuit explained “[w]e believe that a school district’s extracurricular activities are unitary if they ‘are available to all students within the School District regardless of race.’” *Id.* at 769 (quoting *Singleton v. Jackson Mun. Separate Sch. Dist.*, 541 F. Supp. 904, 908 (S.D. Miss. 1981)).

In addition to the *Green* factors, the Third Circuit looked to see whether Delaware schools had complied with the ancillary relief proscribed in the 1978 District Court order: "(1) an in-service training program for teachers; (2) an affirmative reading and communication skills program; (3) new curriculum offerings; (4) a nondiscriminatory counseling and guidance program; (5) a human relations pro-gram; (6) codes of conduct providing for nondiscriminatory discipline; (7) the reassignment of faculty and staff; and (8) nondiscriminatory guidelines for construction and maintenance of school buildings." *Coalition to Save Our Children*, 90 F.3d at 757 (citing *Evans v. Buchanan*, 582 F.2d 750, 770-774 (3d Cir. 1978)). The Court found that the school districts had at last complied with this order.

Accordingly, in light of the above determinations, the District Court, affirmed by the Third Circuit, relinquished control of Delaware's public schools and found that the school districts had acted in good faith to desegregate Delaware's public schools and to achieve racial balance.

**The Committee's Proposed Redistricting**

Today, following the judicially determined achievement of unitary status in Delaware's public schools, the Committee has proposed significant modifications to New Castle County's four school districts to better serve the educational needs of students living in the City of Wilmington. The foregoing case-law and discussion is relevant for an examination of the proposed redistricting, but given the different facts and circumstances that gave rise to the original decisions it is difficult to definitively determine exactly how relevant. The extensive case history recited herein applies to the dismantling of a discriminatory system. Now rather than approaching Wilmington's schools from a unification perspective, the goal of the modified districts is substantially improved educational opportunities for all Delaware students; the

Committee's motivations are driven by improvement of education standards and therefore opportunities, rather than being motivated by racial parity. The proposals set forth by the Committee appear to respect the Delaware courts' and U.S. Supreme Court's mandate for nondiscriminatory policies, nevertheless, any redistricting must take into consideration the potential for review under the standards set forth by those courts.

Ultimately, more specific demographic information regarding the *effect* of the Committee's proposals and further analysis of the means, manner and results of the Committee's proposals that are implemented is required. The body of available authority is unequivocal that the modified school districts must not violate students' Fourteenth Amendment equal protection rights. Modified school districts, which maintain racial balance with respect to the *Green* factors, would likely satisfy students' equal protection rights. Because the inquiry into racial balance is necessarily result oriented, fact specific and, in the past, determined from data from schools and school districts, it is likely not possible to ascertain the racial balance at any school or school district without implementation of specific Committee proposals and consideration of data regarding the racial balance of each school and district under the new alignment. Application of the *Green* factors and determination of unification and integration is a circumstance and fact based inquiry rather than an intent and goal driven determination.

The Delaware District Court that determined that Delaware's public schools achieved unitary status relied, in part, upon a "school desegregation expert." *Coalition to Save Our Children*, 90 F.3d at 761. So, while there is not a bright line test *per se* which can be relied upon to demonstrate racial balance with respect to the *Green* factors, an analysis by an independent, third party neutral expert on demographics of specific, proposed changes as a result of redistricting and as applied to the *Green* factors would be beneficial to demonstrate that the

Committee's proposed changes are consistent with existing common law respecting the desegregation of Delaware's schools.

As we recognized as we began this review, we should conclude it with a recognition that the context of *Green* and the Delaware courts' application of the *Green* factors does and will not exist again in Delaware. It may be that any generation that does not learn from history may be doomed to repeat it, and therefore we are constrained to rely on the *Green* factors to inform the discussion of possible outcomes. Specific data regarding student assignments at schools and classrooms, faculty and staff assignments, extracurricular activities, transportation and facilities will inform a review of proposed redistricting, but we must assume that this will be the beginning of the inquiry and not the end.

## Appendix J



### WEAC 2015 Legislative Priorities

## 2015 Legislative Priorities

Wilmington Education  
Advisory Committee

### 2015 Legislative Priorities

**Members of the 148<sup>th</sup> Session of the Delaware General Assembly:**

From the very beginning of its work through the delivery of its final report, the members of the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee (WEAC) knew that meaningful change would require this: **Action in Legislative Hall.** WEAC has generated significant momentum during the last nine months. WEAC sponsored community forums with thousands of interested constituents, weekly public meetings and community meetings, online coalitions in social media, and one-on-one discussions with hundreds of key decision-makers. Our analysis and recommendations have received broad-based support and encouragement. Now it is time to act. Over the next six weeks the 62 members of the General Assembly must lead the way.

In that context, today we are issuing our priorities for this legislative session. These are based on the recommendations outlined in the WEAC final report. There are a number of legislative proposals already in process that we fully support as well as two new proposals that we believe are central to the next steps in our journey. The new proposals are as follows:

- A proposed bill to establish the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission (WEIC) in code with specific functions to implement the short- and longer-term recommendations outlined in the Advisory Committee's report.
- An amendment to Delaware Code that allows the State Board of Education to redraw district lines in accordance with a resource, transition and implementation plan developed by WEIC under a specified and limited timetable and subject to confirmation by the General Assembly and the Governor.

It's our intention that the work on these two proposals would progress consecutively. First, the WEIC would develop a transition, resource and implementation (timeline/action) plan for streamlining district governance of Wilmington education as outlined in the Advisory Committee's final report. That plan would be submitted to the State Board of Education for approval by December 31, 2015 and then would need to be confirmed by vote of the General Assembly.

The State Board would act only after the General Assembly has consented by joint resolution and the Governor has affirmed. While WEIC would develop the plans, the power to move forward with those plans would be given to the State Board by the General Assembly.

Note that WEIC would be a standalone entity separate from any state department, include representatives from every affected district and comprise representation from parents, students, teachers, community leaders, and union participation. The Commission would sunset in 2020.

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Wilmington Education  
Advisory Committee

May 12, 2015  
Page Two

Our other priorities, all of which stem from the recommendations outlined in the WEAC final report, include the following:

- HB 30 (Representative Williams) — to fill the gap in special education funding Kindergarten through the third grade
- HB 117 (Representative Heffernan) — to change the unit count to provide more support for schools with high concentrations of students in poverty; and
- A specific portion of HB 56 (Representative Potter) — to require a comprehensive needs assessment and strategic plan before any more charters are authorized. Governor Markell signed this bill into law in early May.

With the help of Council President Gregory and Councilman Chukwuocha, we are also looking for some legislative support for the proposed Office of Education and Public Policy.

Attached is a published version of our final report. The content is what we submitted to the Governor and to the General Assembly on March 31, while the design includes more photos and graphics, and some historical anecdotes dating back to Delaware's involvement in *Brown v. Board (1954)*. We have also included quotes from a range of stakeholders and constituents including parents, teachers and students. For a soft copy, visit our Facebook page, [Solutions for Wilmington Schools](#).

Now is an important time! **Don't miss the moment!** Thank you.

Sincerely,



Tony Allen, Ph.D.  
Wilmington Education Advisory Committee Chair & Members

Email: [tonyallen@comcast.net](mailto:tonyallen@comcast.net) Phone: 302.290.1445



Legislation Passed



SPONSOR: Rep. Keeley & Sen. Henry & Sen. Marshall  
 Reps. Barbieri, Baumbach, Bolden, Brady, Dukes, Heffernan, J.  
 Johnson, Kenton, Lynn, Matthews, Miro, Osienski, Potter,  
 Viola, K. Williams; Sens. McDowell, Townsend

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
 148th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

HOUSE BILL NO. 148  
 AS AMENDED BY  
 HOUSE AMENDMENT NO. 1  
 AND  
 SENATE AMENDMENT NO. 1

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE:

Section 1. Amend § 1008, Title 14 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strike through and insertions as shown by underline as follows:

§ 1008 ~~Creation of interim boards~~ Wilmington Education Improvement Commission.

(a) The Wilmington Education Improvement Commission (WEIC) shall advise the Governor and General Assembly on the planning, recommending, and implementing improvements to the quality and availability of education for children in Pre-K through grade 12 in the City of Wilmington and for which such changes maybe be instructive for addressing needs of all schools within the State with high concentrations of children living in poverty, English language learners, or both. Membership on the WEIC shall be limited to 23 members with full voting rights, including a Chairperson and two Vice-Chairpersons, who shall be appointed according to subsection (d) of this section. At a minimum, the WEIC shall be composed of the following members (or their designees, who shall have full voting rights), who shall be appointed by the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons, and when appropriate, in consultation with the appropriate board, agency, or authority from whom the member is drawn, including, but not limited to:

1. A member of the Delaware State Senate, appointed by the President Pro Tempore, and a member of the Delaware House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker;

2. A representative of the School Board of the Red Clay Consolidated School District;

- 3. A representative of the School Board of the Christina School District;
  - 4. A representative of the School Board of the Colonial School District;
  - 5. A representative of the School Board of Brandywine School District;
  - 6. The chair of the Education Committee of the Wilmington City Council;
  - 7. A representative of the Mavor of the City of Wilmington;
  - 8. Two charter school representatives, one located inside the existing boundaries of the City of Wilmington and serving Wilmington students, and one located outside of the City of Wilmington, in New Castle County, serving both Wilmington and County children;
  - 9. Two high school students attending public school, one living in the City of Wilmington, one living outside of the City of Wilmington in New Castle County;
  - 10. Two public school parents, one of a student living in the City of Wilmington, one of a student living outside of the City in New Castle County;
  - 11. Two teachers from the school districts and charter schools, one teaching inside the City of Wilmington, one teaching in New Castle County;
  - 12. A representative from the Delaware State Education Association that represents teachers and/or educational support staff in districts that serve Wilmington students; and
  - 13. Other community leaders or representatives of the Wilmington and greater New Castle County community and educational interests.
- (b) An affirmative vote of a majority of all voting members shall be required to take action.
- (c) Meetings of the WEIC and all WEIC committees shall be public, unless designated for executive session. Voting membership in WEIC shall be limited to subsection (a) of this section.
- (d) The Governor shall appoint a Chairperson and two Vice-Chairpersons. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons shall lead the activities of the WEIC, including WEIC's coordination with State leaders and agencies and with public education and community stakeholders. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons shall be selected based on, but not limited to, the following criteria:
- 1. A parent of a public school student living within the city limits of Wilmington;
  - 2. A school board official from the districts serving Wilmington students; and
  - 3. A community leader not otherwise affiliated with any school district, charter school, or governmental body.
- (e) The WEIC shall convene regularly-scheduled public meetings, and shall meet at least 6 times annually.

(f) The WEIC may form an executive committee from its members. The WEIC shall form standing committees to develop recommendations for consideration by the full Commission including, but not limited to committees on: 1) redistricting; 2) charter schools; 3) serving low income and English language learning students; and 4) funding.

(g) The WEIC shall work with and across all governmental agencies, educational entities, and private and nonprofit institutions to promote and support the implementation of all recommended changes from the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee (WEAC). The WEIC also will also monitor the progress of implementation and recommend policies and actions to the Governor and General Assembly to facilitate progress and to promote the continuous improvement of public education. The WEIC shall develop a transition, resource and implementation plan, for presentation to and approval by the State Board of Education, for the provision of necessary services to schools and students affected by the implementation of the changes recommended by WEAC. WEIC shall also develop a resource plan regarding transitional resources to effectively implement school district realignment. Both the transition plan and resource plan must be submitted first to the State Board of Education and then to the General Assembly and the Governor for final approval. Both are due for submission and related action by December 31, 2015.

(h) The WEIC shall report to the Governor, President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House at least once each fiscal year. Each report shall include:

1. A summary of the work and actions completed by WEIC to accomplish its purposes as stated above; and
2. Recommendations of the WEIC about whether and how to further implement, promote, and achieve the recommendations of the WEAC.


(i) The WEIC shall be staffed by the University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration. The staff shall be managed by a WEIC policy director from the Institute for Public Administration, approved by the Chairperson of WEIC.

(k) The WEIC shall conclude its operations by June 30, 2021.

Section 2. This bill shall take effect upon its enactment.

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HD : SLT : APS:5361480070  
LC : BCG : RAY:5351480025



SPONSOR: Sen. Henry & Rep. Potter & Rep. Jaques  
Sens. Bushweller, Marshall, McDowell, Pettyjohn,  
Townsend, Reps. Baumbach, Bolden, J. Johnson, Keeley,  
Osinski, B. Short

DELAWARE STATE SENATE  
148th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE BILL NO. 122

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14, CHAPTER 10 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO EDUCATION AND THE REORGANIZATION AND CHANGING OF SCHOOL DISTRICT BOUNDARIES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE:

1 Section 1. Amend § 1026, Title 14 of the Delaware Code by making insertions as shown by underlining and deletions  
2 as shown by strike through as follows:

3 § 1026. Changing boundaries; vocational-technical school districts; City of Wilmington.

4 (a) The State Board of Education may, in accordance with this section, change or alter the boundaries of any  
5 reorganized school district except the reorganized district of the City of Wilmington, the boundaries of which shall at all  
6 times be the same as the boundaries of the City of Wilmington.

7 (b) Before making changes in the boundaries of a reorganized school district, the State Board of Education shall  
8 consult with the school boards of the districts affected by the proposed change. Thereafter, the State Board of Education  
9 shall submit for approval or rejection the question of the change of boundary to the qualified voters of the district or  
10 districts affected at a special referendum to be held for that purpose, after 2 weeks' notice of the referendum and proposed  
11 change has been posted at the school or schools of the district or districts affected. The referendum shall be conducted in  
12 each district by the school board of the district. Any person who possesses the qualifications prescribed in § 1077 of this  
13 title may vote at the referendum. The question shall be determined by a majority of the total vote cast in each district  
14 affected. Each school board shall immediately certify to the State Board of Education the result of the referendum in the  
15 district.

16 (c) Subject to subsection (a) of this section, the State Board of Education may change or alter the boundaries of any  
17 reorganized school district without a referendum of the voters if the written consent of the owners of the real property to be  
18 transferred has been obtained and if also the school boards of the districts affected by such change or alteration have  
19 adopted resolutions favoring such change or alteration.

20 ~~(d) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections (b) and (c) of this section, the State Board of Education may~~  
21 ~~change or alter the boundaries of the Sussex County portions of the Milford and Woodbridge school districts if written~~

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SD : FJM : CBK  
4761480072 Jun 09, 2015

22 requests for such changes or alterations are submitted by the respective school district boards of education. The proposed  
 23 changes must result in the clarification of district boundaries using tax parcels registered in Sussex County as of January 1,  
 24 2008.

25 (2) The school boards of education in the effected districts shall conduct a public hearing on the proposed request prior  
 26 to taking any formal action. The hearings shall be advertised at least once a week for 2 consecutive weeks in a newspaper  
 27 published or circulated in Sussex County and the districts. Such advertising shall occur at least 20 days prior to the public  
 28 hearing on the proposed boundary change or alteration.

29 (3) Furthermore, prior to ordering a change or alteration of a school district boundary under this subsection, the State  
 30 Board shall conduct a public hearing on the request. The hearing shall be advertised at least once a week for 2 consecutive  
 31 weeks in a newspaper published or circulated in each county of the State. Such advertising shall occur at least 20 days prior  
 32 to the public hearing on the proposed boundary change or alteration.

33 (4) In its decision and order to change or alter a school district boundary under this subsection, the State Board of  
 34 Education shall specify a transition plan, which will provide for the orderly reassignment of pupils affected by the boundary  
 35 change. Such transition plan may permit pupils to continue their attendance at the school they attended prior to the  
 36 boundary change, with tuition payments by the sending district as provided in Chapter 6 of this title, until such time as the  
 37 pupils complete the grade levels offered in that school.

38 (5) The authority of the State Board of Education to act under the provisions of this subsection shall terminate on  
 39 January 1, 2010.

40 (d)(1) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections (b) and (c) of this section, the State Board of Education may  
 41 change or alter the boundaries of school districts in New Castle County in a manner consistent with some or all of the  
 42 redistricting recommendations made by the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee in the report issued March 31,  
 43 2015, provided that the General Assembly passes, and the Governor signs, a Joint Resolution supporting the proposed  
 44 changes.

45 (2) Prior to ordering a change or alteration of a school district boundary under this subsection, the State Board or the  
 46 Wilmington Education Improvement Commission, shall conduct at least one public hearing in each of the school districts to  
 47 be affected, including at least two in the City of Wilmington.

48 (3) In its decision and order to change or alter a school district boundary under this subsection, the State Board of  
 49 Education shall adopt a transition resource and implementation plan. The plan shall be developed by the Wilmington  
 50 Education Improvement Commission, for presentation to and approval by the State Board, and shall, at a minimum, provide  
 51 for (1) the orderly and minimally disruptive reassignment of students affected by the boundary change and the reassignment

52 of governance responsibilities, (2) implications for educators, administrators, and other personnel that may lead to equitable  
 53 adjustments to local collective bargaining agreements, (3) resources that will be required from state, district, and local  
 54 sources, to support the redistricting transition and provide for the effective ongoing education of all affected students, and  
 55 for the support of schools with high concentrations of low income students and English Language Learners, (4) student  
 56 transportation, (5) distribution of capital assets, and (6) engagement of educators, staff, parents, district personnel, and  
 57 community members through-out the transition. The plan shall permit students to continue their attendance at the school  
 58 they attended prior to the boundary change, with tuition payments by the sending district as provided in Chapter 6 of this  
 59 title, until such time as the pupils complete the grade levels offered in that school. If the State Board does not approve the  
 60 plan as submitted by the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission, it shall notify the chairperson of the  
 61 Commission in writing, give reasons why the plan was not approved, and allow the Commission to resubmit the plan within  
 62 60 days of the chairperson receiving the notice of denial.

63 (4) The State Board shall base its decision to change or alter school district boundaries on a record developed in  
 64 compliance with state open meetings laws.

65 (5) The authority of the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission and the State Board of Education to act  
 66 under the provisions of this subsection shall terminate on March 31, 2016.

67 (e) Notwithstanding subsection (b) of this section, the State Board of Education may change or alter the boundaries of  
 68 any reorganized vocational-technical school district if the school boards of the districts affected by such change or  
 69 alteration have adopted resolutions favoring such change or alteration.

SYNOPSIS

This bill would give the State Board of Education the authority to change school district boundaries in New Castle County in a manner consistent with the final report of the Wilmington Education Advisory Group. The State Board would be required to hold public hearings in the school districts affected, and in the City of Wilmington, prior to making such a change. The Wilmington Education Improvement Commission would be required to develop a transition, resource, and implementation plan for the redistricting proposal, for submission and approval by the State Board. The redistricting proposal and transition plan could not be implemented prior to the General Assembly passing, and the Governor signing, a Joint Resolution supporting the changes.

Author: Senator Henry



SPONSOR: Rep. Potter & Sen. Henry  
Reps. Baumbach, Bennett, Bolden, Jaques, Keeley, J. Johnson,  
Kowalko, B. Short, K. Williams; Sen. Poore

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
148th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

HOUSE BILL NO. 56  
AS AMENDED BY  
HOUSE AMENDMENT NO. 1

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO CHARTER SCHOOLS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE:

Section 1. Amend § 511(c), Title 14 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strike through and insertions shown by underline as follows:

(c) Charter school applications shall be submitted to a local school board or the Department for approval as an approving authority. Whenever a charter school seeks a charter from the Department as approving authority, such approval shall require the assent of both the Secretary and the State Board, as shall any action pursuant to §§ 515 and 516 of this title. The approving authority shall be responsible for approval of the charter school pursuant to this section and for continuing oversight of each charter school it approves. In addition, for a charter school applicant seeking to locate in the City of Wilmington, prior to the approving authority authorizing the school to open, the Mayor and the City Council of the City of Wilmington may review and provide comment regarding the likely impact of the proposed charter school on students in the City of Wilmington as outlined in this chapter and further defined in regulations.

Section 2. No new charter schools shall be authorized to open in the City of Wilmington prior to June 30, 2018, or until the development of a needs assessment and strategic plan for specialized public educational opportunities throughout the State, including those at traditional, magnet, charter, and vocational-technical schools. The strategic plan shall be based on an evaluation of educational needs using national models and best practices.



SPONSOR: Rep. K. Williams & Sen. McDowell & Sen. Poore  
Reps. Barbieri, Baumbach, Bennett, Bolden, Brady,  
Carson, Heffernan, Jaques, Q. Johnson, J. Johnson,  
Keeley, Kowalko, Loughurst, Lynn, Matthews, Mitchell,  
Mulrooney, Osinski, Paradee, Potter, Schwartzkopf, B.  
Short, M. Smith, Spiegelman, Viola; Sens. Bushweller,  
Ennis, Henry, Sokola, Townsend

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
148th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

HOUSE BILL NO. 30

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE:

1 Section 1. Amend § 1703, Title 14 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strike through and  
2 insertions shown by underline as follows:

3 § 1703 Unit of pupils.

4 As used in this chapter:

5 (a) "Unit" or "unit of pupils" is defined according to this schedule of numbers of pupils enrolled in schools beginning in  
6 kindergarten and through grade 12; and for children prior to entry into kindergarten who are eligible for special education  
7 services as defined in Chapter 31 of this title:

8 Beginning July 1, 2011

9 Preschool — 12.8

10 K-3 — 16.2

11 4-12 Regular Education — 20

12 ~~4-12~~ K-12 Basic Special Education (Basic) — 8.4

13 Pre K-12 Intensive Special Education (Intensive) — 6

14 Pre K-12 Complex Special Education (Complex) — 2.6.

15 (b) All such units must be authorized by the Department of Education under rules and regulations promulgated by the  
16 Department. Partial unit funding is provided for all units based on the cash-in value of the unit. Only the last unit in any  
17 category may be a major fraction.

18 (c) In the case of kindergarten, "unit" or "unit of pupils" is defined as 32.4 pupils for half-day kindergarten and 16.2  
19 pupils for full-day kindergarten.

20 (d) For funding purposes, the following conditions shall prevail for the calculations of the number of units for children  
 21 with disabilities and all other children. The preschool unit shall be 1 unit for 12.8 students. The kindergarten through third  
 22 grade unit (K-3) shall be 1 unit for 16.2 students, except as noted in subsection (c) of this section above. The regular  
 23 education unit for grades 4 through 12 (4-12 regular education) shall be 1 unit for 20 students. The basic special education  
 24 (basic) unit for ~~grades 4 through~~ kindergarten through grade 12 shall be 1 unit for 8.4 students. The intensive special  
 25 education (intensive) unit for preschool through grade 12 shall be 1 unit for 6 students. The complex special education  
 26 (complex) unit for preschool through grade 12 shall be 1 unit for 2.6 students. Grade 12 is defined as enrollment until  
 27 receipt of a regular high school diploma or the end of the school year in which the student attains the age of 21, whichever  
 28 occurs first, as defined in Chapter 31 of this title.

29 (1) *Preschool unit* —

30 a. Student shall be counted in the preschool unit if the student is identified as eligible for special  
 31 education and related services and not counted in the intensive unit or complex unit described below and  
 32 is:

- 33 1. Eligible for special education and related services from birth; or
- 34 2. At least 3 years of age; or
- 35 3. Eligible as described in the interagency agreement with the Department of Health and Social  
 36 Services; or
- 37 4. Not yet entered kindergarten.

38 b. The following provisions shall apply to the preschool unit:

- 39 1. Partial unit funding is provided for between 1 and 12.8 students based on the cash-in value of the  
 40 unit.
- 41 2. The cash-in value of the unit is tied to the teacher state salary schedule at the master's level plus  
 42 10 years of experience as defined in § 1305(a) of this title.
- 43 3. The units include Divisions II and III.
- 44 4. Districts must use all funds generated by preschool unit to support services for the students  
 45 counted in the preschool unit. Districts are not limited to using the funds to employ teachers only.  
 46 The funds may be used to hire preschool special education teachers, paraprofessionals, and speech  
 47 and language pathologists, or other related services personnel as determined at the local level. The  
 48 units may also be used to secure contractual services per requirements for the contractual option  
 49 described in Chapter 13 of this title.

50 5. Districts may use tuition to pay for the local share and excess costs of special education and  
 51 related services.  
 52 6. The units are considered teacher/instructional units for purposes of other unit counts.  
 53 7. A student is not required to receive a minimum number of hours in special education instruction  
 54 to count in the preschool unit.

55 (2) *K-3 unit* —

56 a. A student shall be counted in the K-3 unit if the student is enrolled in kindergarten through grade 3  
 57 and not counted in the intensive unit or complex unit described later in this section.

58 b. The following provisions shall apply to the K-3 unit:

- 59 1. Partial unit funding is provided for between 1 and 16.2 students based on the cash-in value of the  
 60 unit.
- 61 2. The cash-in value of the unit is tied to the teacher state salary schedule at the master's level plus  
 62 10 years of experience as defined in § 1305(a) of this title.
- 63 3. The units include Divisions II and III.
- 64 4. The units are covered under the 98% rule as defined in § 1704(4) of this title and returned to the  
 65 buildings that generate them.
- 66 5. At least 20% of teachers at the K-3 building level must be certified in the area of special  
 67 education. The units are considered teacher/instructional units for purposes of other unit counts.

68 (3) *4-12 regular education unit* —

69 a. A student shall be counted in the grades 4-12 unit if the student is enrolled in grades 4 through 12 and  
 70 not identified as eligible for special education and related services.

- 71 1. Partial unit funding is provided for between 1 and 20 students based on the cash-in value of the  
 72 unit.
- 73 2. The cash-in value of the unit is tied to the teacher state salary schedule at the master's level plus  
 74 10 years of experience as defined in § 1305(a) of this title.
- 75 3. The units include Divisions II and III.
- 76 4. The units are covered under the 98% rule as defined in § 1704(4) of this title and returned to the  
 77 buildings that generate them.
- 78 5. The units are considered teacher/instructional units for purposes of other unit counts.

79 (4) ~~4-12~~ *K-12 basic special education (basic)* —

- 80 a. A student shall be counted in the basic unit if the student is enrolled in ~~grades 4 through kindergarten~~  
 81 through grade 12; and identified as eligible for special education and related services; and not counted in  
 82 the intensive unit or the complex unit described below.
- 83 b. The following provisions shall apply to the ~~4-12~~ K-12 basic special education ("basic") unit:
- 84 1. Partial unit funding is provided for between 1 and 8.4 students based on the cash-in value of the  
 85 unit.
  - 86 2. The cash-in value of the unit is tied to the teacher state salary schedule at the master's level plus  
 87 10 years of experience as defined in § 1305(a) of this title.
  - 88 3. The units include Divisions II and III.
  - 89 4. The units are covered under the 98% rule as defined in § 1704(4) of this title and returned to the  
 90 buildings that generate them.
  - 91 5. A student is not required to receive a minimum number of hours of instruction to count as a  
 92 student in the basic unit.
  - 93 6. The units are considered teacher/instructional units for purposes of other unit counts.
  - 94 7. All units generated by special education students are to be used for professional staff to support  
 95 students with disabilities, to include special education teachers, school psychologists,  
 96 speech/language pathologists, reading specialists, educational diagnosticians, counselors, class aides  
 97 and social workers.
  - 98 8. Districts are authorized to use up to 5% of the units for para-professionals or to cash them in for  
 99 related services.

100 Section 2. This Act shall become effective beginning with the fiscal year after its enactment.

SYNOPSIS

This bill provides State funding to kindergarten through third grade for basic special education. State funding already occurs for intensive and complex special education during these grades. Currently the basic special education funding runs from fourth through twelfth grade. This bill is an effort to promote earlier identification and assistance for basic special education needs which should then mitigate costs over the long term.



SPONSOR: Rep. Hefferman & Rep. Bolden & Rep. Jaques &  
 Rep. K. Williams & Sen. McDowell & Sen. Henry ;  
 Reps. Keesley Lynn Matthews Osienki ; Sen. Townsend  
 Reps. Barbieri, Potter

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
 148th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

HOUSE BILL NO. 117

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO THE CREATION OF A UNIT FOR  
 LOW-INCOME STUDENTS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE:

- 1 Section 1. Amend Chapter 17, Title 14 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strike through and  
 2 insertions as shown by underline as follows:
- 3 § 1716B. Unit for low-income students.
- 4 (a) "Unit for low-income students" is defined for funding purposes as 1 unit for each 250 full-time equivalent low-  
 5 income students in a school district or charter school, grades K through 12. School districts or charter schools shall qualify  
 6 for partial funding for a fractional part of 250 full-time equivalent low-income students enrolled in grades K through 12.  
 7 The Department of Education shall define the measure to determine low-income status used to determine students eligible  
 8 to be included in the low-income unit count.
- 9 (b) Each student counted in establishing a unit for low income students may be counted only once in a school  
 10 district and charter school. For students who attend schools in more than 1 school district during each school day, the  
 11 student is to be counted in each school district for the portion of the day that the student is in attendance there.
- 12 (c) Funding authorized by this section shall be used to provide supplemental school and educational services and  
 13 programs for low-income students, including the employment of additional classroom support, such as teachers and  
 14 paraprofessionals; student support services, such as counselors, school psychologists, social workers, and intervention  
 15 specialists; Response to Intervention Services; and before and after school programs offering homework assistance, and for  
 16 support for English language learners.
- 17 (d) Funds appropriated in support of a unit for low-income students may be used for expenditures for any Division  
 18 III purpose pursuant to §§ 1304, 1707(h), and 1710 of this title. The programs supported by funds authorized under this  
 19 section shall operate for the number of hours of employment as specified by § 1305 of this title and the personnel employed  
 20 with funds authorized under this section shall be paid in accordance with § 1305 of this title.

21 (c) The units for low-income students are covered under the 98% rule as defined in § 1704(4) of this title and  
 22 returned to the buildings that generate them.

23 (f) The dollar value of a unit for low-income students, when applied to the employment of a full-time person, shall  
 24 be as provided in this title, but, when applied as herein authorized for other services, shall be the number of dollars set in  
 25 the state-supported salary schedule for a teacher holding a master's degree with 10 years of experience and employed for 10  
 26 months. The calculation of this funding shall be for the current school year. Expenditures on behalf of this unit when used  
 27 for the purchase of services shall be up to, but not in excess of, the amount herein authorized.

SYNOPSIS

This Act will create a funding source for students enrolled in Delaware public schools who are determined as low-income according to the Department of Education. This funding source will be in addition to the normal enrollment based funding provided to school districts and charter schools. The low-income unit will provide one unit of funding for every 250 low-income students in grades K-12 where the funding can be used for such purposes as providing additional teachers and paraprofessionals for classroom instruction; additional counselors, school psychologists, social workers, and intervention specialists; Response to Intervention Services; and before and after school programs providing homework assistance, and for support for English language learners. To ensure the low-income resources reach the schools where they are most needed, this Act requires that at least 98% of the units be directed towards the schools that generate the funding unless otherwise waived by a local board of education during a public meeting.



SPONSOR: Rep. Heffernan

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
148th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

HOUSE AMENDMENT NO. 1  
TO  
HOUSE BILL NO. 117

1 AMEND House Bill No. 117 on line 7 by inserting “, based on federal guidance,” after “status” and before “used”  
 2 therein.

3 FURTHER AMEND House Bill No. 117 after line 27 by inserting the following:

4 “(g) State appropriations made under this section must require a local district contribution. Any school district that  
 5 receives State funds under this section may use § 1902(b) of this title to provide for the local district contribution required  
 6 by this subsection.”

SYNOPSIS

This Amendment clarifies that the Department of Education’s definition of a low-income student must be based on federal guidance.

In addition, this Amendment provides that appropriations made for units for low-income students must require a local district contribution and allows a school district to use a match tax in accordance with § 1902(b) of Title 14 to assist in meeting the local district contribution.







*“For me, Education is a door to obtain this powerful weapon called knowledge, which can break all boundaries and change the world.”*

**KYRONE DAVIS**

STUDENT, EASTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

*“At this moment we can look back and perhaps agree that in the past we didn't do everything we could to create different outcomes for our children. The recommendations in this report lend themselves to the possibility that when we look back on this time we will say that it is because of what we did that peace and prosperity have become synonymous with Wilmington's children.”*

**AARON SELEKMAN**

PRINCIPAL, H.B. DUPONT MIDDLE SCHOOL