

Wilmington Education Improvement Commission – Parent, Educator, and Community Engagement
William Penn High School
Minutes – September 15, 2015

Co-chairs Chandra Pitts and Yvonne Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m.

Meeting Introduction

The Co-chairs, Chandra Pitts and Yvonne Johnson, communicated that the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission (WEIC) and the Parent, Educator, and Community Engagement Committee will focus on work based on the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee (WEAC) final report. The goal of the Commission and this committee is to make sure that the suggestions of the WEAC final report are implemented successfully. For more information, the Co-chairs advised the committee and members of the public to read the WEAC report. More information can be found at:

www.solutionsfordelawareschools.com.

Future Meetings

The Co-Chairs explained that the committee might add meetings in order to plan engagement around certain WEIC deadlines. They have already begun hosting Town Hall meetings to engage the community, with a less formal setting to allow ample time for question and answer. The Co-chairs recommended that members of different districts in the committee host informational meetings in their districts.

The Co-chairs asked other members of the committee to try to make as many Town Hall meetings as possible, spread the word, involve the public, and use the web and social media to involve as many people as possible in the work of the Commission. Committee members will also be asked to bring information on best ways to reach the community.

Draft Outline

The Co-chairs shared the Redistricting Plan draft with members of the Committee. They mentioned that although the draft focuses on redistricting, that is only one area that WEIC will touch on. The Commission believes that redistricting alone will not solve the problem. This draft also gives the committee a clear picture of its future goals.

Areas of Focus

The Co-Chairs divided the committee into several groups to come up with current problems facing our school districts and potential solutions to these problems. They were asked to address the question about what successful engagement looks like through three lenses: parent, educator, and community.

Parent Engagement

- Parents and families need to be equipped with the resources necessary to engage youth
- Make sure the needs are met, and these needs might change
 - Addressing the immediate needs that are often of more concern to parents: food, housing, etc.
- The main challenge is that parents do not feel welcome in the schools, which discourages them from coming to the schools to participate
- Community liaisons can be very helpful with parent and community engagement, when they are the right person who is uniquely connected to the community. Some schools are looking for ways to fund a long term position like this internally
- More community engagement: schools out in the community
- Transportation is one barrier to parent and family engagement

Educator Engagement

- Teachers should know where the students are coming from
- They need to be connected to their community, discuss among the administration and staff
- Make home visits to build relationships, and get out early and often

Community Engagement

- Nonprofit organizations and youth centered organizations are out there and the schools and those organizations must build trust and be promoted
- Viewing schools as community centers that stay past the bell; involving food pantry, behavioral and mental health services, arts and entertainment

The General problems identified included resources, the use of Title I funds, guidance counselors, and the Community in School concept.

Items to look at

- Head Start
- 21 Readiness Teams from ELCG

Conclusion

The Co-Chairs were excited by the positive energy in the room. At the end of the exercise, there were many solutions to each problem. The Co-Chairs encouraged the committee to keep the good energy in order to achieve their goals.

The next meeting for the committee is set for September 29 in the library of the Eden Support Center immediately before the town hall meeting. The Co-chairs asked each committee member to bring someone else with them to the next meeting and to speak to their neighbors about the work that WEIC and this committee are doing. They also advised the group to review the WEAC report, especially pages fifteen, and forty-five to fifty-four.

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

**Wilmington Education Improvement Commission
Parent, Educator, and Community Engagement Committee
Attendance at the 9/15 Meeting**

Committee Members Attending

Chandra Pitts, Co-chair
Yvonne Johnson, Co-chair
Donavon Alderman
Wendy Lapham
Frederika Jenner

Marsha Carter
Evelyn Keating
Pati Nash
Alexis Adrianopoulos
The Honorable Nnamdi Chuckwuocha

Members of the Public

Orrin White
Mike Mathews
Annette Fletcher

Laura Nash
Mike Wilson
Susan Haberstroh

Institute for Public Administration Staff

Kelly Sherretz
Elizabeth Burland
Kervin Zamora