

**Addendum to the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission’s Plan:  
*Redistricting in the City of Wilmington and New Castle County: A Transition,  
Resource and Implementation Plan***

**February 11, 2016**

*“In a state whose courts set the precedent for Brown vs. Board of Education more than 60 years ago, but yet never acted to make any real change until told to do so by the federal courts, the time has come to take bold action on behalf of the children of Wilmington.”*

*“Forty years is long enough to have school district boundaries that divide neighbors and dilute the ability of the City community to engage in education. District leaders, teachers, parents, students, and advocates all support change.”*

Governor Jack A. Markell  
State of the State  
January 21, 2016

### *Addendum Contents*

This addendum to the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission's Plan provides direct and concise responses to each of the concerns listed in the State Board of Education's January 31, 2016 letter to the Commission. The Commission's responses in the narrative portion of the addendum are provided in the order listed in the letter from the State Board of Education (herein referred to as State Board and SBE). The addendum also includes the following additional documentation:

- a compendium that includes additional details related to those responses;
- an integrated timeline that summarizes action steps, milestones, and funding at each stage of implementation;
- letters solicited by the Commission from each of the Wilmington school districts specifically responding to issues raised by the State Board;
- links to additional documentation provided by the Red Clay and Christina School Districts in response to the Commission's request (now posted at the Commission's website, [www.solutionsfordelawareschools.com](http://www.solutionsfordelawareschools.com) and available for State Board review); and,
- copies of the answers provided by the Commission on December 18, 2015 and January 15, 2016 to earlier questions raised by the State Board.

***SBE Reason One: “A clear connection was not sufficiently established that identified how shifting district boundary lines would lead to improved student outcomes.”***

**When all are *separately* accountable, no one is *truly* accountable. Redistricting will establish a clear leadership responsibility for the improvement of Wilmington student outcomes. Building a *community of accountability* is the path to securing a *better future* for public education in Wilmington.**

The Wilmington Education Improvement Commission’s vision for Wilmington students and their families is a coherent public education system that increases accountability for student performance and reduces fragmentation for families. This vision is supported by innovative district-driven solutions grounded in proven best practices from around the country that will enhance community partnerships, increase instructional coherence, and ensure instructional quality.

The change in boundaries alone would be significant in that, for the first time in 40 years, more than half of Wilmington’s children will be experiencing a common set of instructional services and supports already approved for radical transformation of student performance by the Department of Education and the State Board. Redistricting would be supported by an increase in funding both from the priority schools’ allocation and the anticipated increase in funding for the affected students as recommended by the Commission and partially supported in the Governor’s proposed Fiscal Year 2017 budget.

For the remaining 50 percent, we now have commitments, in writing, for enhancements to the districts’ own plans to increase student outcomes for City of Wilmington and all low-income students. Equally important is the yearly evaluation we pledge to undertake that would, for the first time, aggregate the performance of all City of Wilmington students.

**We have included the supporting documentation for this response in the accompanying compendium and make it clear how the proposed changes are linked to research-based findings on enhancing student outcomes.** (“SBE Reason One” on pages 11–12).

***SBE Reason Two: “There are not commitments to evidence based programs and best practices to address instruction, student learning outcomes, and support services for all Wilmington students now and throughout the proposed implementation timeline.”***

**Each of the four districts serving Wilmington students has provided commitments and specific plans for enhancing their services to City of Wilmington students.**

The five districts serving City of Wilmington students are on record confirming their continuing commitment to apply the best evidence-based programs and practices to address instruction, student learning outcomes, and support services for their City of Wilmington students. We have attached their written communications in the compendium (starting on page 22). This is unprecedented progress. Never in the previous four-decade saga of Wilmington education have so many people been committed to finding a common path forward.

The Red Clay Consolidated School District is already carrying out its approved priority schools plan. With respect to the affected students in Christina School District, during the transition the Commission expects that the Department of Education would approve Christina’s priority schools plan and that the Christina and Red Clay Consolidated School Districts will initiate the collaboration on improvement programs so that they can be readily adapted to Red Clay once the students transfer.

**The Commission will continue to facilitate collaboration among the districts and the Department of Education.**

The planning year (2016-17) is of central importance for the Red Clay Consolidated School District. Red Clay, in collaboration with the Commission and the University of Delaware, will gain a deeper understanding of the needs of Christina's Wilmington students, and identify the programs and services required to meet their needs.

As indicated earlier, the Commission will submit an annual evaluation of all students residing in Wilmington to the State Board of Education, the Governor, and the General Assembly. This annual evaluation will be conducted by the University of Delaware through a collaboration between the Institute for Public Administration and the School of Education. This work will be strengthened by a groundbreaking University of Delaware Partnership for Public Education which will draw upon the interdisciplinary resources of the University. The annual evaluation will focus on milestones and measures of success for improved student outcomes, interim and long-term, that are both quantitative and qualitative. The evaluation will address all facets of the Commission's action agenda for improving Wilmington student outcomes. Particular attention will focus on indicators for evaluating progress in overcoming the conditions that both reflect and sustain poor student outcomes in the area of academic achievement. The key overall objective is to reduce the achievement gap between Wilmington low-income students and other students in all districts and charters.

**Quantitative Outcome Indicators**

- Increased attendance rates
- Increased persistence and engagement rates
- Reduced disciplinary incident rates
- Increased participation in high-quality early childhood education programs
- Increased participation in in-school and out-of-school programs that support enhanced developmental progress and learning
- Increased graduation rates
- Reduced achievement gaps in standardized tests
- Reduced youth incarceration and recidivism rates

**Qualitative Outcome Indicators**

- Reduced student trauma
- Increased in-school and out-of-school programs to support developmental progress and learning.
- Improved college and workforce readiness
- Improved family stability
- Increased employment

We have included the supporting documentation for this response in the accompanying compendium (see "SBE Reason Two" on pages 13–14).

***SBE Reason Three: “The proposed weighted funding recommendations are not broad enough for meaningful city-wide change. The proposed timeline and distribution for funding does not provide an equitable impact for all students in the City of Wilmington.”***

**The Commission is committed to additional funding for all low-income students, English language learners, and basic special education for grades K-3, in the City of Wilmington.**

The total cost of this funding will be based on the weighted-unit formula approved by the General Assembly. Based on the model illustrated in the Commission’s plan, the total cost for City of Wilmington districts and charter schools is between \$22 and \$26 million in recurrent funding, depending on the weights approved.

Given state fiscal constraints, our approach is to phase in such funding over three years, beginning with the affected districts, and moving to the remaining districts and charters serving City of Wilmington students. For the first year, Fiscal Year 2017, we estimate a need for \$7.5 to \$11 million recurrent funding, depending upon the weights approved by the General Assembly, to apply this unit to the Red Clay Consolidated School District and the Christina School District schools in the City of Wilmington.

**To be clear, we see the increased funding for City of Wilmington low-income students, English language learners, and basic special education for grades K-3 as a baseline leading to statewide application of this essential support.**

We have included the supporting documentation for this response in the accompanying compendium (see “SBE Reason Three” on page 15).

***SBE Reason Four: “There is not an executive summary or concise overview that outlines all associated costs with appropriate categorization mapped to implementation milestones.”***

A summary timeline is provided on pages 16–18 of this document that includes a concise overview of the costs associated with implementation milestones (see “SBE Reason Four” on pages 16–18).

***SBE Reason Five: “Without milestones connecting the work of other WEIC committees, it is unclear how essential services and supports will integrate with redistricting efforts to allow meaningful impact on student outcomes.”***

**The Commission’s committees are focused on how essential services and supports will be integrated with redistricting to support meaningful positive impacts on student outcomes.**

The Commission’s committees on Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty; Charter and District Collaboration; and Parent, Educator, and Community Engagement are focused on how best to mobilize and focus needed supports for schools, students, and their families. A key step is to identify the needs of schools with high concentrations of low-income students and English language learners. The committees have outlined work plans and goals that focus on improvements based on national best practices for these schools. Key areas of focus include alignment and integration of early childhood, in-school, and out-of-school supports and services; tools for increasing parent and

community engagement; recommendations on strengthening educator professional development; and more effective coordination of collaboration between districts and charter schools.

The committees are focused on recommending ways to strengthen support and services for all City of Wilmington students. Some groups have committed themselves to play a much larger role supporting the work of the committees and the schools impacted by redistricting. This includes the University of Delaware Partnership for Public Education, as referenced earlier, and the United Way of Delaware, which works collectively with business, government, social service agencies, academic groups, community organizations, and concerned individuals. The United Way of Delaware will mobilize community resources to support the Commission's efforts. Additional organizations are being invited to join this effort, including the Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League, FAME, Inc., One Village Alliance, Education Voices, Inc., the Latin American Community Center, the Vision Coalition of Delaware, the Delaware Hispanic Commission, the YMCA, the Boys and Girls Clubs of Delaware, the Business Roundtable, the Delaware Public Policy Institute, the State and New Castle County Chambers of Commerce, and the Interdenominational Ministers Action Council.

#### **Milestones for Fiscal Year 2017 (July 2016 – June 2017)**

- United Way will study and evaluate national best practices and models for the effective mobilization of community capacity.
- The University of Delaware in partnership with United Way of Delaware and the Commission's Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty committee will develop a comprehensive map of Wilmington community assets to support schools and students.
- The Commission's Parent, Educator, and Community Engagement Committee will produce recommendations based on national and local best practices for how to strengthen engagement in order to improve student outcomes. The initial focus will be on the schools involved in redistricting.
- The University of Delaware Partnership for Public Education will work with the Commission's Charter and District Collaboration Committee to conduct an evaluation of national best practices for charter and district collaboration, and for the effective support of charter school operations. This will provide the basis for recommending improvements.
- The Commission's Charter and District Collaboration Committee will develop recommendations for collaborative professional development opportunities among districts and charter schools.

#### **Milestones for Fiscal Year 2018 (July 2017 – June 2018)**

- The University of Delaware will assist the Commission in undertaking a comprehensive review of current state policies and programs intended to serve low-income children and families, accompanied by a fiscal mapping of the flow of funds associated with those policies and programs. This review will provide the necessary baseline for recommending improvements in state policies and programs.
- The Commission's Parent, Educator, and Community Engagement Committee will engage partner and community organizations (see above) to help strengthen parent engagement in all schools serving City of Wilmington students.
- The Commission's Charter and District Collaboration Committee will develop a plan grounded in effective practice research for strengthening collaboration between and among charter schools and districts.

We have included the supporting documentation for this response in the accompanying compendium (see "SBE Reason Five" on pages 19–20).

***SBE Reason Six: “There is not a clear and concise summary of required components for the redistricting transition, resource, and implementation as it relates to the overall timeline. It is difficult to differentiate what’s required immediately versus the broader recommendations within the full report.”***

**The compendium includes a clear and concise summary of the required components for the redistricting transition, resource, and implementation timeline.**

The Redistricting Plan includes a detailed timeline for redistricting transition, resources and implementation, as well as a funding timeline and the specific timelines outlined by the Red Clay Consolidated District and the Christina School District. The summary timeline on pages 16–18 of the compendium is based on the more detailed timelines provided in the Redistricting Plan. This summary includes the yearly action steps required for the redistricting, planning, and transition for the provision of necessary fiscal and community resources, and for effective implementation.

We have included the supporting documentation for this response in the accompanying compendium (see “SBE Reason Four” on pages 16–18).

***SBE Reason Seven: “A lack of milestones related to relevant work to be done by the Department of Elections.”***

**The Commission commits to the following milestones in working with the New Castle County (NCC) Board of Elections:**

- **July 5, 2016:** The Commission would request that the NCC Board of Elections addresses Christina Nominating District A and the Commission would craft the necessary legislation to redraw boundaries or expanding/contracting boards. The Commission’s attorneys would work with Board of Elections officials to devise necessary legislation.
- **August to November 2016:** The Commission would consider the proposed solution and would conduct discussions with the Red Clay Consolidated and Christina School boards.
- **January to February 2017:** The Commission and NCC Board of Elections would seek sponsors in the General Assembly for proposed legislation. Legislation would be introduced into the General Assembly and considered by the Senate and House Education committees.
- **June 2017:** Legislation would be adopted prior to the July 2018 redistricting implementation. This provides adequate time to prepare for necessary actions prior to the onset of redistricting July 1, 2018.

The ultimate application of these proposed milestones will be at the clear discretion of the New Castle County Department of Elections.

***SBE Reason Eight: “The Board does not support all components within the “Board Resolution” and does not support the inclusion of a “Board Resolution” within the WEIC proposal.”***

**The “Redistricting Resolution” is not intended to limit, contravene, or replace the State Board’s procedures for acting on the Commission’s plan.**

We do understand that the State Board of Education’s procedure is to initiate a motion from a member of the Board to act upon the plan, and that the Board does not intend to approve or not approve the Commission’s plan by resolution.

The “Redistricting Resolution” is an integral part of the Commission’s plan. The school districts’ representatives have informed the Commission that inclusion of the Resolution is necessary for their school boards’ support of the Plan. At the Commission meeting on February 2, 2016, all four school board representatives reaffirmed their commitment to the resolution and identified it as critical to their support of the plan.

***SBE Reason Nine: “The Board expressed concerns with the proposed approach around suspension of the implementation timetable and expiration of the plan.”***

**Redistricting should not go forward without the necessary and sufficient resources to support improvements in student outcomes.**

The Commission has always agreed with the position articulated by the State Board of Education: Real education change requires much more than redistricting. For redistricting to have an impact, resources must be provided to better support student learning. The possibility of suspending the timetable for implementation applies only for the next two budget cycles, prior to the actual change in district boundaries. Once the boundaries change, there are no contingencies. If the necessary and sufficient funding is not provided by July 2018, before the boundaries change, then the plan expires. This provision ensures that redistricting does not occur without the resources required to change instruction in these schools. This avoids creating an unfunded mandate.

***SBE Reason Ten: “It is not clear how broad and sufficient community/stakeholder support for this proposal will be sustained throughout the duration of the implementation timeline and beyond.”***

**Community and stakeholder engagement is a priority for the Commission. The Commission’s process has been the most transparent and inclusive citizen-engagement effort for any major public policy reform in state history, and we intend to sustain this process of active community/stakeholder engagement through the duration of implementation and beyond.**

Wilmington education has been shaped by top-down strategies for 40 years. The results speak for themselves. WEAC and WEIC have consciously developed a plan from the ground up, the only process capable of producing sustained change for public education.

The commission has reached an estimated 25,000 Delawareans directly, including ongoing engagements with community leaders and decision-makers, a social media strategy actively engaging 2,500 citizens in two-way communication, and broad opportunity for community participation that

has resulted in 500 pages of direct input from hundreds of interested citizens. We believe this process fully meets the standard articulated in the State Board's second guiding principle that calls for inclusion of the most diverse perspectives that fully represent the breadth and depth of citizen views. The Commission, working with the impacted school districts and with the support of Wilmington community organizations, remains committed to sustaining this high level of stakeholder engagement throughout the process.

The Commission has dedicated an entire committee, the Parent, Educator, and Community Engagement Committee, to ensuring that plans are in place for continuous engagement throughout all stages of this process. The committee is exploring ways to build on school-to-community connections using both school-based and community-based approaches, and mobilizing community-based assets for family support. The United Way of Delaware will expand its leadership role in mobilizing and coordinating community support for schools with high concentrations of low-income students and English language learners, and other students at risk. These efforts will include partners from all sectors.

Finally, the Red Clay Consolidated and Christina School Districts have developed plans for how they will communicate with families, students, and educators throughout the process of redistricting. Some examples of this communication include meetings with stakeholders, social media, letters and postcards, emails, and both traditional and nontraditional media outlets. Both school districts are committed to maintaining and strengthening this communication. The Commission plans to work with all Wilmington districts and charters to sustain community and stakeholder engagement.

***SBE Reason Eleven: "Potential for duplicative actions and additional levels of bureaucracy among WEIC and other entities (IRMC, Office of Early Learning, P-20, Delaware Charter Schools Network, etc.) are referenced in the proposal."***

**The Commission will not be an ongoing part of Delaware Public Education and will not duplicate the work of any other institutions.**

The Commission is a community-based advisory group, not a part of the state government. The Commission has a specific mission and set of responsibilities defined by state law (HB148) that will end on June 30, 2021. Its purpose is to facilitate the activities and effectiveness of others, and to recommend how existing institutions may be strengthened and augmented to improve Wilmington student outcomes. For example, the Commission proposes that the Office of Education and Public Policy can fill a gap by strengthening City of Wilmington parent and community engagement in support of the schools serving Wilmington students. As the Wilmington Education Strategy Think Tank describes, "It is critical that officials in Wilmington play a more direct role in shaping and monitoring the educational opportunities and resources afforded to youth growing up in the city – a role that has been completely eroded over the past several decades." **The Commission seeks to reduce duplication by strengthening the alignment and integration of existing agencies and services to address the specific needs of City of Wilmington students and their families.**

We have included the supporting documentation for this response in the accompanying compendium (see "SBE Reason Eleven" on page 21).

**Compendium to Responses to State Board of Education**

***SBE Reason One: “A clear connection was not sufficiently established that identified how shifting district boundary lines would lead to improved student outcomes.”***

The recommended shift in boundary lines will transfer responsibility for approximately 5,000 City of Wilmington students from the Christina School District to the Red Clay Consolidated School District. This change, and the accompanying resource commitments proposed by the Commission, will lead to improved outcomes for these students.

The Commission’s goal is to provide the opportunity for an excellent and equitable education for all students, the first principle in the State Board’s mission statement. We have documented that many, if not most, Wilmington students enjoy neither equity nor excellence. Achieving that goal requires a transformation. Currently, a bare majority of City of Wilmington students meets the state’s standards in only one school district. In all four districts, a majority of low-income Wilmington students do not meet the state’s standards and perform below other low-income students residing in the suburbs.

An important contributing factor to low student achievement is the Christina School District’s disconnected configuration, which is inconsistent with national best practices for aligning district boundaries with the communities they serve; one of only four such districts among 14,000 nationally. This configuration imposes burdens on City of Wilmington students that are greater than the burdens placed on non-Wilmington students, with no compensating educational benefits. Separating students from the communities in which they reside makes it far more difficult to develop school, family, and community partnerships which research has shown to be powerful influences on student achievement.

Many Wilmington students experience instructional incoherence rather than the instructional coherence that research has shown is important to student achievement. A majority of City of Wilmington students in the Christina School District choose out to other districts and charters but often return to the default district, moving back and forth between other districts and charters. Between 20 percent and 30 percent of Christina’s City of Wilmington students change schools each year, approximately double the student turnover rate in their suburban schools. Changing schools in the City of Wilmington often means that students change districts, reducing education progress because of differences in curriculum, instructional materials, and instructional strategies. The alignment gained by consolidating the City of Wilmington students in the Christina and Red Clay districts will remove one of the important sources of disruption experienced by many students.

Redistricting will mean that all of the lowest performing City of Wilmington schools in both districts will be in a single district that is implementing an approved and funded improvement plan. The Christina School District’s plan for improving its lowest performing schools in the City of Wilmington has not been approved by the Department of Education, and the district currently lacks funding to carry out its plan. By contrast, the Red Clay Consolidated School District has a plan approved by the Department of Education for improving its lowest performing schools in the City of Wilmington and is actively implementing that plan. The Red Clay Consolidated School District has made a commitment to work with the Commission and other partners, such as the University of Delaware and United Way of Delaware, to further strengthen instruction and both in-school and out-of-school supports beginning immediately upon approval of the Commission’s plan. City of Wilmington students moving to the Red Clay Consolidated School District will enjoy considerably more program and school options at the middle and high school levels than they currently have in the Christina School District. Overall, instructional quality will be enhanced.

Governor Markell has included funding for the Red Clay Consolidated School District in his proposed Fiscal Year 2017 budget, pending the approval of redistricting, to initiate a unit for low-income students, English language learners, and basic special education for grades K-3. That funding will enable educational supports for City of Wilmington, such as smaller class sizes and socio-emotional supports, that would otherwise be unaffordable.

Implementation of the recommended shift in district boundaries will result in a majority of Wilmington students being the responsibility of one school district for the first time in forty years. It will confer a leadership role in Wilmington public education on the Red Clay Consolidated School District, enabling a concerted focus on improvements based on best practices that may be scaled up across low-performing schools and reduce the gap in achievement between Wilmington low-income students and low-income students district wide.

***SBE Reason Two: “There are not commitments to evidence based programs and best practices to address instruction, student learning outcomes, and support services for all Wilmington students now and throughout the proposed implementation timeline.”***

- See memos from Red Clay Consolidated School District, Christina School District, Colonial School District, Brandywine School District, and New Castle County Vocational Technical School District, starting on page 22.
- See Christina Priority Schools Plan [here](#).
- See Red Clay’s Highlands Priority School Plan [here](#).
- See Red Clay’s Shortlidge Priority School Plan [here](#).
- See Red Clay’s Warner Priority School Plan [here](#).

The research on how schooling affects educational outcomes reflects that student outcomes are related to differences among students, teachers, classrooms, schools and districts. The greatest percentage in variability in outcomes, achievement in particular, is attributable to differences among students, which includes their background, family, and community context, which explains about two thirds to three-quarters of the differences in outcomes. Differences between teachers or classrooms account for another 10–15 percent of the variance, while school-based differences account for about another 20 percent.<sup>1</sup>

In the education system, teachers have direct effects on student outcomes, influenced most immediately by learning opportunities in the classroom as well as the immediate community and home context in which students become ready to learn. School leaders (and schools themselves) impact student outcomes by shaping school culture, supporting instructional quality, and managing community relationships. These are well documented indirect impacts. District level reform is one step further removed from instruction and student outcomes, directly impacting schools, school leaders, and teachers, but not directly impacting students. The effects of districts are felt through changes in schools and teachers. Therefore, student outcomes are impacted by teaching and learning, which are shaped by the school context, which are in turn shaped by leadership and policy at the district level.

Some educational reforms that are made possible through a more streamlined governance system include:

**Professional learning communities among schools:** Research on professional learning, particularly for teachers, indicates that time for, and structures that support, collaboration can result in the diffusion of ideas, resources, and practices, and may ultimately impact student learning. While schools currently engage in these practices, there are limited opportunities for schools serving Wilmington students to regularly engage in this type of shared learning and growth. A streamlined governance system – including both redistricting and greater charter-district collaboration – may enable the organization of professional learning communities within Wilmington, as it will create fewer barriers to coordination and implementation and facilitate the establishment of structures and supports.

**School, family, and community partnerships:** The work of Joyce Epstein and colleagues focuses on the power of partnerships and their relationship to student outcomes such as achievement, grades, attitudes, and long-term educational success.<sup>2</sup> Establishing policies and practices for communicating

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<sup>1</sup> Nye, B., Konstantopoulos, S., & Hedges, L. V. (2004). How large are teacher effects?. *Educational evaluation and policy analysis*, 26(3), 237-257

<sup>2</sup> Epstein, Joyce L. (2013). Perspectives and previews on research and policy for school, family, and community partnerships. In Booth, Alan, and Judith F. Dunn, Eds. *Family-school links: How do they affect educational outcomes?*, pp 209-246. New York: Routledge.

with families, engaging with community stakeholders, and establishing partnerships with local organizations to collaboratively meet student needs may be more consistent, coherent, and effective with a streamlined governance system. In the current structure, stakeholders, families, and organizations must navigate unusual district boundaries and establish relationships with multiple districts with different visions, policies, and practices.

**Instructional coherence:** Research suggests that one lever that districts and schools have in improving student outcomes is instructional coherence – that is, providing a consistent vision for student learning accompanied with the supports and structures made available system-wide. While there are many research-based models of instruction, educational programs, and whole school reforms that may be helpful in addressing the needs of Wilmington students, ensuring system-wide supports and structures for implementation is made more challenging when that system is governed by multiple organizations with different resources and political contexts.

**Ensuring instructional quality:** One of the indirect ways in which schools and districts influence student outcomes is by influencing instructional quality. Instructional quality results from professional development, hiring, mentoring, and evaluating educators. As many of those functions lie with initiatives or support from district central offices, a more streamlined governance system can enable a more coherent approach to staffing schools with high quality teachers through human resources practices and supporting high quality teaching through system-wide policies and supports related to professional development.

Redistricting creates many possibilities for quality and coherence in the educational opportunities in Wilmington schools. District reform plans will take advantage of these possibilities and leverage the opportunity to implement strategies to improve instructional quality, such as but not limited to those described above.

***SBE Reason Three: “The proposed weighted funding recommendations are not broad enough for meaningful city-wide change. The proposed timeline and distribution for funding does not provide an equitable impact for all students in the City of Wilmington.”***

As a result of its funding system, educational opportunity in Delaware is inequitable. Delaware is one of fifteen states without funding designated for low-income students and one of only four states without designated funding for English language learners. Additionally, Delaware does not provide funding for basic special education for grades K-3. While the lack of funding affects schools and students statewide, the impact is particularly acute for students in the City of Wilmington, which has the highest concentration of poverty in the state.

The Commission supports, without qualification, extending additional funding to all low-income students, English language learners, and basic special education for grades K-3 in the City of Wilmington at the earliest practicable time. Indeed, the Commission believes such funding should be extended to all qualified students statewide. Recognizing the fiscal constraints of the state and the districts, the Commission has recommended an alternative to immediate city-wide allocation, a three-year roll-out to full implementation in all schools in which City of Wilmington students are enrolled, with the first two years of funding provided to the schools in the two districts impacted by redistricting. The Commission believes that we must start now to address these needs and that the roll-out of needed funding for all City of Wilmington students, and all comparably needy students statewide, should move forward as rapidly as possible.

In order for the weighted unit funding to have an equitable impact for all students living in the City of Wilmington, it cannot be allocated only to schools citywide but must be provided to all schools in which City of Wilmington students are enrolled. Many Wilmington students and most Wilmington middle and high school students are enrolled in schools outside of the City of Wilmington. This is largely not a matter of choice. There is no traditional high school in the City of Wilmington. For this reason, allocation of the recommended funding unit needs to include schools in suburban New Castle County, in which Wilmington students are enrolled.

Using the funding model illustrated in the December 17, 2015 WEIC Transition, Resource and Implementation Plan, it is estimated by the Office of the Controller General that it may cost the State of Delaware between \$22 and \$26 million to provide the funding unit to all schools in which City of Wilmington students are enrolled, depending on the weights approved by the General Assembly; this does not include the required local share of funding.

Governor Markell has supported the Commission’s proposed roll-out by recommending that \$4 million dollars in recurrent funding be provided in Fiscal Year 2017 to begin the implementation of the weighted unit funding. The Commission appreciates the Governor’s commitment to this funding but recognizes that it is not sufficient to fully fund the Commission’s recommendation. We will work with the Governor and the General Assembly during the current legislative session to achieve full funding for the Commission’s recommendation for the first year, which includes the Christina schools in the City of Wilmington and basic special education for grades K-3. For the first year, Fiscal Year 2017, we estimate a need for \$7.5 to \$11 million recurrent, depending upon the weights approved by the General Assembly, to apply this unit to the Red Clay Consolidated School District and the Christina School District schools in the City of Wilmington.

***SBE Reason Four and Six: “There is not an executive summary or concise overview that outlines all associated costs with appropriate categorization mapped to implementation milestones.” And “There is not a clear and concise summary of required components for the redistricting transition, resource, and implementation as it relates to the overall timeline. It is difficult to differentiate what’s required immediately versus the broader recommendations within the full report.”***

### Implementation Timeline

#### **Action Steps, Fiscal Year 2017 (July 2016 – June 2017): Planning Stage**

- The Christina and Red Clay districts would continue to collaborate on transition planning.
- Initiation of a weighted unit for low-income students/English language learners/basic special education for grades K-3 for **all Red Clay schools plus Christina Wilmington schools**. Estimated cost: \$7.5 to \$11 million recurrent, depending upon the weights approved by the General Assembly.
- Wilmington Transition Fund: \$3 million in one-time funds.
- Review of property reassessment building on the work of the 2008 task force and the recommendations on property reassessment from the Education Funding Improvement Commission.
- The University of Delaware will assist the Commission in undertaking a review of current state policies and programs intended to serve low-income children and families, accompanied by a fiscal mapping of the flow of funds associated with those policies and programs.
- United Way will study and evaluate national best practices and models for the effective mobilization of community capacity.
- The University of Delaware in partnership with United Way of Delaware and the Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty committee will develop a comprehensive map of Wilmington community assets that may be mobilized to support schools and students.
- The Commission’s Parent, Educator, and Community Engagement Committee will produce recommendations based on national and local best practices for how to strengthen engagement in order to improve student outcomes. The initial focus will be on the schools involved in redistricting.
- The University of Delaware Partnership for Public Education will work with the Commission’s Charter and District Collaboration Committee to conduct an evaluation of national best practices for charter and district collaboration, and for the effective support of charter school operations. This will provide the basis for recommending improvements.
- The Commission’s Charter and District Collaboration Committee will develop recommendations for collaborative professional development opportunities among districts and charter schools.
- Christina will consider existing special programs in the city and analyze the capacity to effectively support holistic and enriching programs at the high school level after redistricting.
- Red Clay will initiate a facilities assessment of the schools being acquired from the Christina School District, develop new grade and school configurations, design new feeder patterns and transportation feeder patterns, and develop action plans to assure that redistricting takes place in a manner that is minimally disruptive to students, parents, and educators.
- The Commission will support the Red Clay Consolidated and Christina School Districts’ collaboration with DSEA, CEA, RCEA, and AFSCME to establish a multi-year process and joint plan for the staffing needs for the Christina schools in the City of Wilmington. These needs will depend on the configuration of schools and new programs determined by Red Clay.
- Memorandums of understanding between the districts and the representatives of employees about the overall planning, choice, and decision process will be completed by the end of 2016.

- Options for employment for educators and other personnel will be identified after the development of the districts planned configuration of schools and programs, and no later than the spring of 2017.
- Red Clay Consolidated School District and Christina School District will plan for the transfer of student data and other technological needs.
- Christina School District will plan for the relocation of their central offices.
- The Commission, in partnership with the districts, will develop a legal plan for the transfer of property.
- Red Clay Consolidated School District and Christina School District will continue communicating with parents, students, educators, and staff throughout the process through several channels identified in their individual plans.
- The Commission will work with the NCC Board of Elections to determine the school board configurations.
  - July 5, 2016: The Commission will request that the NCC Board of Elections addresses Christina Nominating District A and the Commission will craft the necessary legislation to redraw boundaries or expanding/contracting boards. The Commission's attorneys will work with Board of Elections officials to devise necessary legislation.
  - August to November 2016: The Commission will consider the proposed solution and will conduct discussions with the Red Clay Consolidated and Christina School boards.
  - January to February 2017: The Commission and NCC Board of Elections will seek sponsors in the General Assembly for proposed legislation. Legislation will be introduced into the General Assembly and considered by the Senate and House Education committees.
  - June 2017: Legislation should be adopted prior to the July 2018 redistricting implementation. This provides adequate time to prepare for necessary actions prior to the onset of redistricting July 1, 2018.

**Action Steps, Fiscal Year 2018 (July 2017 – June 2018): Transition Stage**

- Expansion of a weighted unit to low-income students/English language learners/basic special education for grades K-3 **all Christina schools**, in addition to unit already applied to all Red Clay Schools and Christina schools in the City of Wilmington. Estimated Additional Cost: \$3.5 to \$6.5 million recurrent, for a total cost of \$11 to \$17.5 million, depending upon the weights approved by the General Assembly.
- An additional increment to the Wilmington Transition Fund: \$1 million.
- The Commission recommends initiation of a long-overdue process of statewide property tax reassessment and to establish that process on a regular schedule that is in accordance with national best practices.
- The University of Delaware will assist the Commission in undertaking a comprehensive review of current state policies and programs intended to serve low-income children and families, accompanied by a fiscal mapping of the flow of funds associated with those policies and programs. This review will provide the necessary baseline for recommending improvements in state policies and programs.
- The Commission's Parent, Educator, and Community Engagement Committee will engage partner and community organizations (see above) to help strengthen parent engagement in all schools serving City of Wilmington students.
- The Commission's Charter and District Collaboration Committee will develop a plan grounded in effective practice research for strengthening collaboration between and among charter schools and districts.

- Red Clay Consolidated School District and Christina School District will continue collaborating on the minimal disruption to students.
- Students will be assigned to their schools and given the opportunity for choice.
- The Red Clay Consolidated and Christina School Districts will provide professional development opportunities and related support services to employees to enhance their capabilities to assume new responsibilities associated with changes in positions and expectations.
- Red Clay Consolidated School District will plan for the changing transportation needs.
- Professional development for transitioning staff begins and continues through implementation.
- Transfer of assets, contracts, and accounts completed.
- Purchase of curriculum materials and other assets necessary for transition occurs in time for implementation.
- Red Clay Consolidated School District, Christina School District, and the Commission will continue to communicate with students, families, and educators.

**Action Steps, Fiscal Year 2019 (July 2018 – June 2019): Initial Implementation**

- Effective July 1, 2018, the schools and students in the City of Wilmington that are now served by the Christina School District will be assigned to the Red Clay Consolidated School District.
  - All students can choose to remain in their schools, as of the end of the 2017–18 school year, until their grade configuration is complete, or until they complete their unique program. If approved, the change in district boundaries and the reassignment of Christina School District students and City of Wilmington schools to the Red Clay Consolidated School District will begin at the start of the 2018–2019 school year.
- Expansion of a weighted unit to low-income students/English language learners/basic special education for grades K-3 **all City of Wilmington districts and charter schools**, in addition to unit already applied to all Red Clay Schools and all Christina schools. Estimated Additional Cost: \$8.5 to \$11 million recurrent, for a total cost of \$22 to \$26 million, depending upon the weights approved by the General Assembly.
- Initiation of the process for implementation of property reassessment.
- The districts impacted by redistricting will be authorized to enact tax rate adjustments to meet current operating expenses as voted by their school boards until property reassessment occurs. Annual adjustments should not exceed an established inflation threshold, such as CPI.
- Contingency funding for the adjustments needed in the NCC tax pool, \$3 million.
- Increased collaboration will be sustained among Wilmington districts and between districts and Wilmington charters. New partnerships are proposed and initiated.
- Continue implementation of WEIC committees' action plans to support the needs of Wilmington students.
- Full implementation will be complete for the United Way of Delaware-led alliance of nonprofit and community institutions in support of Wilmington public schools.
- Begin implementation of the proposal for the development and implementation of a complete plan for integration of state and local services including partnering with private and nonprofit institutions.
- Begin implementation of the early childhood community plan for the city of Wilmington, which includes a partnership to increase access to high quality early childhood services.
- Begin implementation of new roles for the Delaware P-20 Council to improve the alignment of resources and programs to support student learning from birth through college and career with specific attention to transitions. Begin the development of relevant legislation.

***SBE Reason Five: “Without milestones connecting the work of other WEIC committees, it is unclear how essential services and supports will integrate with redistricting efforts to allow meaningful impact on student outcomes.”***

The Commission’s committee, Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty, has divided its work into three distinct working groups: Early Childhood (birth to age five); In-School Support and Services; and Out-of-School Community Supports and Services. The committee continues to work both collectively and in its working groups to address. The three working groups are as follows:

- The Early Childhood working group is committed to identifying and developing support services and programs for babies and young children so that they grow healthily and start school at the appropriate developmental level and are ready to learn.
- The In-School Support and Support Services working group is endeavoring to identify, align, and integrate necessary resources within the school infrastructure to support academic success.
- The Out-Of-School Community Supports and Services working group is seeking to identify, align and ensure that adequate community-based resources are in place and working collaboratively to support children and families during non-traditional school based hours.

It is the committee’s position that positive community outcomes will be best achieved through improved alignment and integration of community services and public/private funding. To ensure the execution of this committee’s recommendations, United Way of Delaware and the University of Delaware will work to develop a framework which effectively coordinates and aligns services and funding from both public and private sectors in support of public schools in the City of Wilmington. The framework will include a comprehensive student needs assessment; detailed evaluation of the public and private resources currently supporting efforts and a sustainability analysis. In 2016, the committee anticipates working through all the data collection requirements, and in 2017, the committee anticipates commencing the execution of the framework. With proper alignment of services and resources, both public and private, the committee can best meet the needs of low-income students and their families and work to provide a pathway to success from birth to college and/or career.

The Commission's Charter and District Collaboration Committee is using demographic data to identify schools with similar populations, and therefore have the potential to learn from each other. They are reviewing state and national models of best practices, identifying challenges faced by students (i.e., prevalence of PTSD), and are exploring ways to build upon existing collaborations to create a coherent public education system that serves all students well.

The Commission’s Parent, Educator, and Community Engagement Committee (PEaCE) is coordinating the engagement of parents, educators, and the community during the development and implementation of the plan and beyond. PEaCE is honing strategies to improve and sustain engagement of parents in support of the schools in which their students are enrolled. While family engagement is recognized broadly as of critical importance to student success, actual mobilization of efforts is fragmented. This committee will evaluate national best practices for engagement of parents, families, and community members and recommend models and strategies that apply to the City of Wilmington and prospectively to all of Delaware. The committee seeks to support the resources necessary to engage youth and their families in understanding why participation is important. This could include the more consistent provision of community liaisons or site coordinators at schools, encouraging schools to make sure meetings are adding value and strengthening communication with

families. The committee is exploring ways to build on school-to-community connections on both the school-based and community-based approaches, bridging between enhanced professional development for staff and teachers (e.g., cultural competency, Train the Trainer) and community-based assets for family support and training. The Commission and the committee are committed to parent, educator, and community engagement and will create a strong plan aligned with this objective.

By the end of the first transition year, each of the affected districts will have an asset map of existing resources and gaps and a coordinated plan for integration of surrounding services, some of which we expected to be employed in all of the affected schools and some of which will be at the discretion of the principal and his or her leaders in those schools. In the second year, said services will be fully operational and evaluated to develop a baseline by school. In the transition year, all services will be fully operational.

The Commission has obtained the commitment of a number of community partners to actively support the provision of essential services and supports for Wilmington Schools. At the Commission's urging, the University of Delaware is launching the Partnership for Public Education to mobilize the university's research, educational, and public service capacities to address the challenges facing Delaware schools with high concentrations of low-income students and other students at risk. The initial focus of the UD Partnership for Public Education will be on assistance to schools impacted by redistricting to complement the work of the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission. UD's research and evaluation capacity will help partners select, craft, and evaluate programs and policies to improve outcomes for students at risk. These include the design of research-based programs and interventions, continuous improvement and implementation research, and impact analysis. Professional development will include UD-based, as well as site-based, professional development opportunities for educators and staff in partnership schools to learn evidence-based practices that strengthen the quality of instruction for all students.

The United Way of Delaware will expand its leadership role in mobilizing and coordinating community support for schools with high concentrations of low-income students and English language learners, and other students at risk of failure. As described on the United Way of Delaware's website, "Founded in 1946, United Way of Delaware (UWD) works to advance the common good by focusing on the three building blocks to a good life: Education, Income and Health. UWD is engaged in a long-term strategy to eliminate the root causes of Delaware's most pressing social problems in New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties. United Way of Delaware works collectively with business, government, social service agencies, academic groups, community organizations and concerned individuals to establish positive, long-lasting solutions for today and into the future." United Way of Delaware's initial effort will be to assist schools impacted by redistricting to complement the work of the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission. The United Way's program will provide direct support for both in-school and out-of-school services – including early childhood education programs, developmental screening programs, in-school assistance programs for socio-emotional development, after school programs, extended year-round educational programs, family assistance programs – that address the developmental needs of children and their families, provide needed assistance to teachers and other school staff, and support continuous improvement in student learning outcomes. The United Way of Delaware is now evaluating national models of best practice for the effective mobilization of community capacity. In addition, the university is helping to develop a comprehensive map of Wilmington community assets.

***SBE Reason Eleven: “Potential for duplicative actions and additional levels of bureaucracy among WEIC and other entities (IRMC, Office of Early Learning, P-20, Delaware Charter Schools Network, etc.) are referenced in the proposal.”***

As stipulated in House Bill 148, the Commission is responsible for “advising the Governor and General Assembly on the planning, recommending, and implementing improvements to the quality and availability of education for children pre-K through grade 12 in the City of Wilmington and for which changes may be instructive for addressing needs of all schools within the State with high concentrations of children in poverty, English language learners, or both.”

The Commission seeks to reduce duplication by strengthening the alignment and integration of existing agencies and services to address the specific needs of City of Wilmington students and their families. Towards this objective, the Commission, in collaboration with the University of Delaware’s Center for Community Research and Service and Kid’s Count in Delaware, will undertake a review of current state policies and programs intended to serve low-income children and families, accompanied by a fiscal mapping of the flow of funds associated with those policies and programs. This type of analysis reflects national best practices for evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the existing policy and program infrastructure serving public purposes. This is precisely the kind of analysis that was used as the foundation for the improvements in early childhood education undertaken in 2010, leading to the sustained improvements in Early Childhood programs and policies over the subsequent five years.



February 8, 2016

To: Delaware State Board of Education

Re: WEIC Response

**RED CLAY CONSOLIDATED  
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Mervin B. Daugherty, Ed.D.**  
*Superintendent*

**Administrative Offices**  
1502 Spruce Avenue  
Wilmington, Delaware 19805

**Office of the Superintendent**

Office (302) 552-3702  
Fax (302) 992-7830

The following information from the priority school packets are being submitted due to the concerns raised by the State Board of Education regarding the WEIC plans. I believe the information within the individual plans from each school addresses your questions related to the commitments based programs and best practices to address instruction, student learning outcomes, and support services for all Wilmington students now and throughout the proposed implementation timeline. Red Clay would follow similar plans to address each Christina school involved within the WEIC plans.

These plans and their implementation have already proven a change in school climate, classroom instruction and professional development for staff members. Each school's plans for improvement addresses clear targets to impact student learning and provide opportunities for staff members to use additional supports and services to focus on instructional models that most appropriately meet the needs of their students. Red Clay is committed to implement evidence based programs and best practices to address instruction, student learning outcomes, and support services for all students.

The path forward, if approved, would allow Red Clay to work collaboratively with the committees, parents and stakeholders to develop a concentrated plan of school configurations which will benefit the students and increase academic performance. Red Clay already provides students with a wide range of options, particularly at the middle and high school level. We also provide a variety of after school and summer activities which engage community and parent support.

In closing, we believe the implementation of programs already existing in Red Clay and the appropriate funding to offer additional support to students and families will benefit the students in Wilmington, strengthen their academic performance and create a positive educational environment throughout the area.

Respectfully,

  
Mervin B. Daugherty, Ed.D.



Robert J. Andrzejewski, Ed.D., Acting Superintendent

Drew Educational Support Center  
600 N. Lombard Street  
Wilmington, DE 19801  
[www.christinak12.org](http://www.christinak12.org)

TEL: (302) 552-2630  
FAX: (302) 429-3944  
TDD Relay Service: (800) 232-5470

February 4, 2016

Dr. Daniel Rich  
University of Delaware,  
Institute of Public Administration  
Newark, Delaware

Dear Dr. Rich,

In response to the State Board of Education's inquiries about current educational practices in the Christina School District's "Priority Schools", we submit the attached Statement of Agreement which was negotiated in the spring of 2015 with the Department of Education, members of the Governor's Education staff, and key members of the leadership of the Christina School District. It must be noted that this memorandum was agreed to as a conclusion to the discussions about the direction Christina would take with these particular schools. What is key to this situation is to know that although on March 20, 2015 the Christina Board of Education agreed to this document, the Superintendent, Dr. Freeman Williams, signed it, and the then President of the Board, Fred Polaski, signed it; however, the Secretary of Education, Dr. Mark Murphy, would not agree to sign it. This initiative went unsigned and unfunded for these schools in question. To date that remains the status.

However, despite the lack of additional funding and additional resources guaranteed in the Agreement, the Christina School Board and the Christina School District remain deeply committed to providing the best possible educational experience for the youngsters in the city of Wilmington schools. We adhere to the commonly accepted "best practices" for urban schools, those being:

- Clear, shared focus on educational outcomes
- High standards and high expectations for all students (strong RTI especially at the Tier 1 level)
- Effective, experienced school leadership
- High levels of collaboration and communication both within the school and between the school and the District
- Curriculum, instruction and assessments are aligned with state standards (reliance on pacing guides, embedded coaching, etc.)
- Frequent monitoring of teaching and learning (internal and external)
- Focused professional development (Whole Child focus to intensify cultural awareness)
- Established supportive learning environment to change climate settings
- High level of family and community involvement in student achievement

**Mrs. Harrie Ellen Minnehan, President; Mr. Frederick Polaski, Vice President; Mr. George E. Evans, Esq.; Mrs. Elizabeth Paige; Mr. David Resler; Mrs. Shirley Saffer; Mr. John M. Young; and Dr. Robert J. Andrzejewski, Acting Executive Secretary**

*The Christina School District is an equal opportunity employer. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identification, marital status, disability, age, genetic information or veteran's status in employment or its programs and activities. Inquiries regarding compliance with the above may be directed to the Title IX/Section 504 Coordinator, Christina School District, 600 North Lombard Street, Wilmington, DE 19801; Telephone: (302) 552-2600*

Please do not hesitate to contact us if there is a need for further clarification or explanation. We are all very hopeful that the WEIC Plan can move forward to further benefit the youngsters in our neediest schools.

Sincerely,



Harrie Ellen Minnehan  
President, Christina School District Board of Education

HEM/km

Attachment

**Mrs. Harrie Ellen Minnehan, President; Mr. Frederick Polaski, Vice President; Mr. George E. Evans, Esq.; Mrs. Elizabeth Paige; Mr. David Resler; Mrs. Shirley Saffer; Mr. John M. Young; and Dr. Robert J. Andrzejewski, Acting Executive Secretary**

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**ACTION ITEM** "PRIORITY SCHOOLS"

1. Superintendent's Recommendation:  
It is recommended that the Christina School Board authorize the development and submission of Grant applications to the Department of Education for the "Priority Schools"
2. Background/Analysis: The Bancroft Elementary School, The Stubbs Elementary School, and The Bayard Middle School were identified by the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) during fiscal 2015 as "Priority Schools". Each school developed, with community engagement, plans in accordance with DDOE guidelines. The School Board, during the February 3, 2015 special board meeting voted not to authorize the submission of the Priority School Plans as presented and modified during the meeting.

DDOE informed the District that the failure to submit Plans by February 4<sup>th</sup> resulted in the CSD requirement to notify DDOE of intent on Closure or Restructure of the three schools by February 27<sup>th</sup>. The Board, on February 10<sup>th</sup>, passed a resolution on the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee (WEAC) interim recommendations. DDOE offered to meet with CSD to discuss the WEAC recommendations and the effect on the Priority Schools. Leadership, including representation of the Board, met with DDOE and representatives from the Governor's Office on both the 25<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of February.

The outcome of these meetings, along with subsequent exchanges between the District Office and the DDOE resulted in negotiated agreements to support the 3 schools for fiscal 2016. This was conditioned upon the District supporting the WEAC recommendations to consolidate districts within the City of Wilmington (with Christina School District schools and buildings located within the City becoming part of the Red Clay Consolidated School District). The School Board approved, during the March 10<sup>th</sup> Board meeting a Statement of Agreement, and operating budgets for each school for the 2016 fiscal year. DDOE failed to execute the agreement, and failed to provide the funding agreed upon.

The original plans, developed by the schools called for significant financial support, utilizing a combination of funding sources. Each School had identified funding requirements labeled "Priority Funding" (meaning funds supplemental to other Federal/ State/ & Local resources). The "Priority Funding" identified for each of the schools was on average ~\$1.4 Million per School per year for 3 years. As noted earlier. These plans were not authorized by the Board for submission.

**BOARD OF EDUCATION**

The subsequent negotiated agreement, a 1 year plan (SY 2015-2016), was designed to provide supports for the current school year. This agreement called for supplemental funding of ~\$425,000 per school, plus the state share of an Assistant Principal should the school not earn one through the September 30 unit count, AND a transitional Assistant Principal funded 100% with Priority School Funding. As noted earlier, this negotiated agreement was not executed nor funded by the Department of Education.

#### RECENT ACTION

The DDOE has recently reached out to the District offering financial support for each of the schools identified. DDOE has indicated that each school would be eligible to receive ~\$100,000 this year and ~\$350,000 for each of the next three years. DDOE has indicated that there would be no requirement to remove school principals or replace teachers. And, that there is no intent for these schools to become Charter Schools or require that the District employ a management contractor.

The amount of funding offered is clearly less than either the amounts previously identified. As such, the schools would once again need to develop plans for submission. The plans submitted must be consistent with the established requirements of ESEA.

3. Fiscal Impact: ~\$1,350,000 over 3+fiscal years [Funding at School Level]
4. Prepared By: Robert Silber, Assistant Superintendent and Chief Financial Officer
5. Board Meeting Date: February 9, 2016

**BOARD OF EDUCATION**

February 4, 2016

To: Dr. Tony Allen, Dr. Dan Rich, and the members of the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission:

This message is to confirm Colonial School District's commitment to applying evidence-based programs and best practices to address instruction, student learning outcomes, and support services for all of our students, including of course those children who reside in Wilmington. We are committed to working with other districts, Charters, and with the WEIC Commission to identify and support improvements for teaching and learning.

In Colonial, we recognize a well-trained educator will positively impact student outcomes. Thus, we have invested considerable resources in teacher training and best practices. All teachers have been trained in Learning Focused Strategies (LFS), Paul Bambrick's work in Observation Feedback and Data Driven Instruction, Elmore's Instructional Rounds and our Teaching and Learning Framework, which is used to evaluate teachers. In addition, we have begun intense training in blended learning and personalization to increase student engagement and the meet the individual needs of students. Each of these trainings improves classroom instruction on a daily basis and are recognized as superior practices for teachers.

Below are multiple ways, the district addresses student-learning outcomes:

- Benchmark testing is conducted 3 times a year to show where students begin and their growth through the year. These assessments are used to make instructional decisions. These assessments include DIBELS, STAR, SRI and the Math Screener.
- Core instruction is aligned with the Common Core and resources have been identified to meet the rigor and expectations of the standards. This includes Harcourt and Holt reading series along with supplemental text readings and math programs such as Investigations, Math in Context and Core Plus.
- RTI programs are provided to support struggling learners. RTI programs in reading have been identified that focus on the 5 dimensions of reading – Phonemic awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary and Comprehension. Programs include Discovery Intensive Phonics, System 44, Read 180, Words their Way, 6 Minute Solutions, etc. Math programs are also researched based to support the domains of math such as counting, number sense, operations and algebraic thinking and fractions. Programs include Dreambox, Number Talks, Fasst Math, Imagine Learning, etc. School Success Teams meetings are ongoing and continuous adjustments are made based on student needs.

Numerous programs have been put in place in the district to meet specific needs of special education students including Integration A, Integration B, CASL (autistic students) and behavior programs.

Furthermore, Colonial School District is committed to providing all students with access to quality educational programming in a nurturing environment that leads to long-term opportunities and real-world experiences that support college and career readiness. Our focus is to provide all students and families with access to early education options (Pre-K programming), unique innovative programs with a personalized or blended approach to learning, social-emotional and wellness care, and building partnerships with local businesses and industry to expand student and family access to resources that support the educational and holistic needs of children and families.

To achieve these goals, Colonial School District supports students' nutritional needs by providing all students with access to a free breakfast and utilizes the Universal Lunch Program to provide a free lunch to all students in 12 of our 14 schools. Additionally, Colonial has a unique summer feeding program that provides meals at three schools in designated areas of high-need. The district has also become the first in Delaware to employ two mobile vans that go out into additional limited income areas in the community to provide lunch to our families in the summer. We have also recently begun serving dinner at several of our schools to feed students a nutritious meal after school while they participate in one of our many after school programs.

Colonial School District is committed to an expanded Pre-K program. Its goal is to serve all Pre-K students in the district by expanding the number of students served. Not only will it continue its focus on serving Pre-K students with identified disabilities, but it has also expanded its overall access to Pre-K services by enrolling in the Delaware STARS Program and Purchase of Care to support families with limited incomes. Our Pre-K coordinator has focused on establishing deeper partnerships with local daycare providers and has intentionally targeted underserved communities to educate and inform parents about the importance and affordability of early education programs in the district.

Colonial School District has partnered with Reading Assist to develop a unique approach to intervention with struggling early elementary school readers. Students identified with severe reading deficits receive daily one-on-one reading assistance with trained Reading Assist AmeriCorps members. This program is the only such program in Delaware and is designed to support struggling readers with the highest need. Additionally, the district has trained many

teachers in the Reading Assist reading strategies program and has allocated Reading and math support specialists in every building.

Colonial School District has also developed partnerships with Nemours and The Life Health Center to provide pilot programs with tele-medicine services and an elementary wellness center at two schools with diverse populations serving students with limited incomes and unique needs and disabilities. These pilots are designed to service students with severe medical needs and/or students and families with unmet medical and social-emotional needs. Each pilot partnership is designed to provide in-school medical access to a healthcare provider. The significant difference between the two programs is that the elementary wellness center provides onsite medical and social-emotional health services to students and families by licensed medical professionals that include a nurse practitioner and Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSWs), as well as case managers to help uninsured families obtain insurance for their children and families. Conversely, the tele-medicine pilot provides only medical consultations between the school nurse and the medical professional through the use of technology. Both pilot programs are the only such programs being piloted in Delaware.

In addition to the two pilots mentioned, the district supports the social-emotional needs throughout the district by its partnership with the State of Delaware through the use of behavioral health consultants in the middle schools. The district also employs licensed therapeutic personnel that float throughout our schools to support our counselors, students, and families. Family Crisis Therapists (FCTs) are also present in every elementary school. FCTs that are also licensed therapists are placed in our elementary schools that have the most significant needs.

Addressing the whole child and whole family are important elements in the academic success of our students. Access to early education, health and wellness care, mentoring and early intervention programs are just a few highlights of the plan for success for all students in Colonial. We believe that the district vision, in partnership with families and the community, will support the academic success and overall personal growth of all of our students.



## BRANDYWINE SCHOOL DISTRICT

1311 Brandywine Boulevard  
Wilmington, DE 19809-2306

(302) 793-5000  
[www.brandywineschools.org](http://www.brandywineschools.org)

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**MARK A. HOLODICK, Ed.D.**  
*Superintendent*

**JOHN A. SKROBOT, JR.**  
*President, Board of Education*

**RALPH ACKERMAN**  
*Vice President, Board of Education*

February 3, 2016

Dr. Tony Allen, Dr. Dan Rich, and the members of the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission:

This message is to confirm Brandywine's commitment to applying the best evidence-based programs and best practices to address instruction, student learning outcomes, and support services for all of our students, including of course those children who reside in Wilmington. We are committed to working with other districts and with WEIC to identify and support improvements for teaching and learning. Collaboration is a priority of ours as evidenced in the efforts we have made with the BRINC Consortium.

Guided by input provided by numerous stakeholder groups that included students, parents, community members, non-instructional staff, teachers, administrators, and Board of Education members, the 2015-2019 BSD Success Plan was created. Key components of the plan communicate our commitment to what was mentioned in the opening paragraph above and include:

- Revision of all curricula to ensure a rigorous and relevant 21<sup>st</sup> century learning experience for all students
- Implementation of Programs of Study that complement existing pathways and capitalize on students' interests as discovered through Student Success Plan completion
- Expansion and strengthening of an already dynamic STEM program to increase relevance through multi-disciplinary connections
- Increased dual enrollment opportunities for students prior to graduation
- Implementation of a World Language Immersion Program
- Deepened focus on Response to Intervention (RtI) to ensure all students are receiving targeted assistance through evidence-based programs in the critical areas of Reading/Writing and Mathematics
- Implementation of Standards-Based IEPs to ensure key prerequisite skills are identified and focused on to support access to Common Core State Standards
- Ensuring an articulated continuum of services is provided based on the needs of students with special needs
- Expansion of AVID, Freshman Seminar, SAT Prep, and other courses to support students in rigorous academic programs, preparing them to graduate college- and career-ready.
- Deepened focus on supports and services for English Language Learners (ELL) through implementation of Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)
- Implementation of the Parallel Curriculum to provide rich learning for students in the Gifted Program and other advanced learners across the District
- Personalized learning through strategically designed blended learning opportunities that balance face-to-face direct instruction, online learning, and collaborative interaction through project-based learning activities
- Adoption of the NETS standards for students, teachers, and administrators to ensure that students have the technological understanding and skills identified as essential for today's 21<sup>st</sup> century learner

- Implementation of proactive, restorative discipline programs such as No Bully System, Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS), and Responsive Classroom to ensure the social and emotional needs of students are being met
- Implementation of a Compassionate School model in all sixteen buildings to provide additional support and wrap-around services for identified students, and
- Developing a rigorous employee hiring process with a focused effort on hiring a diverse workforce.

The complete and detailed 2015-2019 District Success Plan can be found on the District website or by visiting [brandywineschools.weebly.com](http://brandywineschools.weebly.com).

While the 2015-2019 District Success Plan provides a holistic view of key programmatic initiatives, it does not contain a comprehensive list of all programs and initiatives strategically designed and implemented to address specific student needs across the District. Listed below are a few such programming initiatives, specifically tailored to address identified student needs unique to a select group of students or building.

- Pre-Kindergarten programming at P.S. duPont's Early Childhood Assistance Program for income-eligible students (STARS accredited)
- Pre-Kindergarten programming at the Bush Early Learning Center for students with disabilities (in the process of becoming STARS accredited)
- Formalized Response to Intervention Program for students working below established benchmarks to provide targeted intervention support, inclusive of students with disabilities.
- Specific professional development on research-based intervention strategies used for Rtl, including Differentiated Reading Strategies – Walpole, Reading Assist, PALS, Do the Math, It Makes Sense, and Ten Marks.
- Universal breakfast programs at several school sites (Maple Lane, Harlan, Carrcroft, Claymont)
- Pilot "Teacher Leader" positions for the 2015.16 school year based on multiple indicators of need (Brandywine High and Harlan Elementary School)
- Specialized Summer Programming at Harlan Elementary designed to strengthen identified skill deficiencies, reduce summer learning loss, and promote a positive student-staff-school relationship to foster greater academic achievement
- Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) to support 1<sup>st</sup> generation college students, providing strategies for immediate and long-range academic success (e.g., study habits, note taking, mentor support from AVID teacher)
- SAT Prep in all three high schools for 11<sup>th</sup> grade students. Prior to implementing this program during the school day, BSD offered SAT prep to students living within the City after hours at P.S. duPont Middle School.
- Lower than the District average class sizes at Harlan Elementary School
- Reading Specialists provided to all elementary and middle schools
- Instructional leadership in the form of an Assistant Principal in all buildings, including those not earning the position based on student enrollment and the State allocations protocols (Claymont's 2<sup>nd</sup> AP, Forwood, Harlan, Maple Lane, Springer's 2<sup>nd</sup> AP, Brandywine's 2<sup>nd</sup> AP, Mt. Pleasant High's 3<sup>rd</sup> AP)

Respectfully submitted,  
Mark A. Holodick



# NEW CASTLE COUNTY VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

1417 NEWPORT ROAD, WILMINGTON, DELAWARE 19804  
(302) 995-8000

YVETTE SANTIAGO  
President  
Board of Education

VICTORIA C. GEHRT, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

JOHN F. LYNCH JR.  
Vice President  
Board of Education

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Dr. Tony Allen, Dr. Dan Rich  
Members of the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission

**FROM:** Victoria C. Gehrt, Ed.D., Superintendent

**DATE:** February 8, 2016

**SUBJECT:** **NCCVTSD COMMITMENT**

This message is to confirm New Castle County Vocational-Technical School District's (NCCVTSD) commitment to continuing to apply evidence-based programs and best practices to address career and technical programs, academic instruction, student learning outcomes, and support services for all of our students, inclusive of all students who reside in New Castle County and Wilmington. Collaboration with other NCC districts is a priority of ours as evidenced in the work we have accomplished with the BRINC Consortium.

Through a process involving numerous stakeholders, the District's three-year strategic plan was developed and is being implemented. Note the summary of the plan that follows.

### Vision

NCCVT School District delivers world-class Career and Technical programs combined with rigorous academic curricula to equip students with the 21st century skills that will best serve the State of Delaware, and the global community.

## CORE BELIEFS

### NCC Vo-Tech School District Believes:

- All students have the ability to learn and the opportunity to succeed.
- Our district community has the highest standards and expectations for instruction.
- Our schools are unique in providing extensive Career and Technical Education opportunities and experiences that prepare students for post-secondary success.
- A safe, caring, and respectful school community empowers deeper learning.
- Diversity is critical to excellence in all endeavors.
- Business partnerships, community involvement, and family support are essential to high quality schools.

## STRATEGIES

### A system of learning that is:

- Applied and Relevant
- Rigorous and Innovative
- Personalized

### A system of support that includes:

- Professional Development that enhances teaching and learning
- Communication and Celebration of the NCCVTSD story of success

## STUDENT ATTRIBUTES

### NCCVTSD strives to prepare graduates to be:

- Highly employable and workforce ready
- Innovators
- Problem solvers
- Effective Communicators
- Ambassadors for NCCVT
- Life-long learners

In NCCVTSD, we focus on the development of our educators and have a strong commitment to the implementation of the current state common core standards that have been incorporated into our curriculum course guides.

We strategically invest in resources to train our educators in Learning Focused Strategies (LFS), Growth Mindset practices, PLCs, Data Driven Instruction, an adaptation of Elmore's Instructional Rounds, and training in blended and personalized learning that increases student engagement and focuses on the individual needs of our students.

Below are some of the initiatives that NCCVTSD employs to provide the quality of instruction that is expected of us by our community of parents and business partners.

- The highly successful one-to-one iPad program at Howard - a high school whose students continue to excel since they were a designated a Partnership Zone school.
- Partnerships with business and industry that drive the quality of career and technical programs and provide cooperative education opportunities for all students who qualify.
- District wide assessments for core academic courses enabling educators to collaboratively design and evaluate assessment outcomes.
- Implementing RTI for high school students.
- Providing senior students opportunities to participate in Dual Enrollment at Delaware Technical and Community College.

- The goal for students to receive Credentialing and Certifications in all 40 career and technical education programs (CTE).
- Tech Prep partnerships that enable students to graduate with credits in their specific CTE programs.
- Alignment of core instruction with common core to ensure that students can meet the high expectations of the standards.
- After school tutoring available for all students once a week with transportation provided.
- Emphasis on blended and personalized learning as a result of the BRINC consortium.

A responsibility of NCCVTSD is to communicate Vo-Tech opportunities to all New Castle County and Wilmington students. This is accomplished in the following ways:

- Presentations and/or tours for many middle schools in Appoquinimink, Red Clay, Brandywine, Eastside Charter, Thomas Edison, Family Foundations, Kuumba and Prestige.
- Invitations to all middle school students and their families in NCC and Wilmington to attend the annual NCC Vo-Tech open house in November.
- Participation in the Charter School Choice Expo.
- Engagement with community centers such as the Boys and Girls Clubs.
- Information on CTE programs sent to all public middle schools in New Castle County several times each year.
- Information on CTE programs available at a mall kiosk in Christiana Mall each fall; print, radio, and television advertising highlighting CTE programs, social media, etc.
- Hosting a Career and Tech Summer Camp (focus on Construction Trades and IT) for middle school students with transportation included where a greatly reduced fee is charged for students who qualify for the Federal Meal Benefits Program.
- A new website to better communicate CTE opportunities.
- Collaboration with businesses and higher education when addressing the viability of CTE programs or the addition of new programs.

VCG/jd

**Wilmington Education Improvement Commission**  
**Responses to Questions from the State Board of Education**  
**December 18, 2015**

**1. What are the funding requirements for redistricting, and when are those funds needed?**

The Commission's highest funding priority is the initiation of weighted unit funding to address the needs of low-income students, English language learners, and basic special education K-3 students. Delaware is 1 of only 5 states without a specific allocation for English language learners and 1 of 15 states without a specific allocation for low-income students. This recurrent funding should begin with the districts impacted by redistricting with the long-term goal of expanding statewide.

In addition, one-time funding for a Wilmington Transition Fund is needed to complete a full-scale facilities assessment of the schools, develop new grade configurations, design transportation feeder patterns, and develop action plans to assure that redistricting takes place in a manner that is minimally disruptive to students, parents, and educators. The transition fund will support the identification and implementation of national best practices and new models for Red Clay and Christina schools with high concentrations of low-income students, English language learners, and basic special education K-3 students, in a process that includes community input.

**Fiscal Year 2017: \$10.5 million in new funds -\$7.5 million recurrent and \$3 million one-time**

- Low-income, English language learner, and special education unit for students in all Red Clay schools plus those in Christina's Wilmington schools: \$7.5 million recurrent based on the model illustrated in the Commission's plan (**Appendix D**).
- Wilmington Redistricting Transition Fund: \$3 million in one-time money to support the planning and development of new models and proposals on facilities.
- While not required for redistricting, the Commission strongly supports additional funding for early childhood education for low-income students.

**Fiscal Year 2018: \$4.5 million in new funds-\$3.5 million recurrent and \$1 million one-time**

- Low-income, English language learner, and special education unit applies to all Red Clay schools plus all Christina schools: additional \$3.5 million in recurrent funding (added to the 7.5 million for FY2017 for a total of \$11 million in FY2018). This is based on the model used for illustration in the Commission's plan (**Appendix D**).
- An additional increment to the Wilmington Redistricting Transition Fund: \$1 million.

**Fiscal Year 2019: Additional funding needed is contingent on the extent of statewide roll-out.**

- Low-income, English language learner, and special education unit expands for all northern New Castle County districts and then statewide as rapidly as possible. The statewide expansion extends beyond the scope of redistricting and the cost depends on the pace and extent of expansion. The Commission will prepare estimates of the cost of expansion for discussion with the Governor and General Assembly.

- Some short-term contingency funding to balance the impacts on the New Castle County tax district and capacity for local districts to make limited adjustments to meet operating expenses.

**Other fiscal changes, such as the move to a new education funding allocation system and the initiation of property reassessment are under review by the Educational Funding Improvement Commission which is scheduled to release its report by the end of March 2016.**

## **2. What happens if the needed funding is not provided?**

The Redistricting Resolution (**page 10**) is explicit and specific about what will happen if the necessary and sufficient resources are not provided.

***“If the necessary and sufficient funding and transition supports are not provided by the conclusion of each stage and in the manner proposed, the State Board, at the request of the Commission after consulting with the affected districts, shall suspend the timetable for implementation until the resources and supports are provided. If the necessary and sufficient funding and transition supports are not confirmed by the Commission in consultation with the affected districts by July 2018, the plan will expire.”***

The Commission has been consistent that the residents of the Red Clay school district should not be expected to assume responsibility for an unfunded or underfunded mandate, and should not bear any undue tax burden as a result of redistricting.

## **3. Isn't the proposed funding for low-income students, English language learners and other students at risk independent of redistricting?**

- The Commission has always stated that redistricting alone will not accomplish the needed improvements in student outcomes. All of the changes proposed in the Commission's framework (**see pages, 21-26**) must be carried out. In Wilmington, the two changes must go hand-in-hand: consolidating 50% of Wilmington's students into a single district and providing additional resources.
- Funding to districts engaged in redistricting is targeted to address the learning needs of low-income students, English language learners and other students at risk is essential to the educational success of redistricting.
- The Commission strongly supports the eventual expansion of this targeted funding statewide, but that expansion is not a requirement of redistricting. The Commission's broader recommendation is consistent with its mandate under HB148 to advise the Governor and General Assembly on “addressing the needs of all schools within the State with high concentrations of children living in poverty, English language learners, or both” (**page 32-33, and Appendix A**).

## **4. What responsibility does the State Board of Education have for ensuring that the needed funds are provided?**

- The State Board of Education is **not responsible** for insuring that the needed funds are provided. The Governor and General Assembly are responsible for allocating the needed funds and the Commission will seek that funding beginning with the coming legislative session.
- The Commission is explicit (**pages 26-27**) that the “State Board's authority to approve the plan is separate and distinct from the authority to carry out the plan” and that the

“Governor, General Assembly and school districts must allocate the resources needed to support the redistricting transition and provide for the equitable and effective education of all students and for the support of schools with high concentrations of low-income student and English language learners.”

**5. When will the Commission and the affected districts begin to address the teaching and learning needs of Wilmington students?**

- This work on best practices for addressing the developmental learning needs of students is already underway. A research team from the University of Delaware is identifying best practices in support of improved teaching and learning in schools with high concentrations of low-income students, English language learners and other students at risk.
- The application of this work can begin as soon as the districts can adopt changes and this work will intensify during the next school year and beyond with ongoing support of the Commission and its committees through a community-engaged process.
- This is essential to carrying out the Commission’s full action agenda (**see pages 21-26**) and it will engage the work of all the Commission’s committees, primarily the committees on Charter-District Collaboration, Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty, and Parent, Educator and Community Engagement. Key facets of this work and the initial cross-sector partnerships already supporting this work are described in **Part VI** of the Commission’s plan (**pages 102-119**).

**6. Are the Christina and Red Clay plans in the Commission’s report specifically focused on redistricting or are these plans the same as the priority schools plans proposed earlier?**

- No, they are not the priority schools plans. The Christina and Red Clay plans that are included in the Commission’s report (**Appendix B and C**) are new plans that were developed specifically as frameworks for planning the implementation of redistricting.
- The administrative staff of the two districts worked together and with the Commission to be sure that the plans are aligned and mutually reinforcing.
- The district plans are labeled interim because, immediately upon approval of the Commission’s submitted redistricting plan, the two districts will proceed with stage two of the process and produce further detailed planning for implementation, including the new configurations of schools, feeder patterns and new programs to better support teaching and learning.
- The Commission’s plan (**Part VII, pages 120-137**) builds upon the detailed plans of the two districts and also adds dimensions of particular importance to the overall success of the implementation process, such as clear guidelines for the assignment of educators impacted by redistricting (**pages 126-129**) and the continuation and extension of choice options for students (**pages 133-137**).

**7. What makes redistricting so critical to changing student outcomes?**

- Redistricting will streamline the governance of Wilmington public education and focus primary responsibility for student outcomes in the Red Clay School District, which then will enroll more than half of the public school students living in the City of Wilmington.
- Many of the other improvements in Wilmington public education will be more effectively supported with redistricting. Our belief is without approval of redistricting,

the momentum for needed changes will dissipate and the broad-based community support for the needed changes will be difficult to sustain. The inaction over 40 years is evidence of what can be expected.

**8. Why was the Commission's recommendation on the Colonial district changed from what was earlier proposed?**

- The Colonial School District voted to continue to serve its Wilmington students, with the expectation that it can be effective in the education of those students and it has submitted the initial outline for a plan to do so.
- After much discussion with leaders of the Colonial School District, the Commission's leadership team concluded that we were not willing to risk support for the full plan based on the Colonial decision to continue to serve the fewer than 200 Wilmington students now in its schools. We so recommended to the Commission which supported this judgement, as reflected in the final plan submitted to the State Board of Education.
- While some members of the Commission have concerns about the district's role in the education of Wilmington students, we are prepared to work with the district to consider how to strengthen education for those Wilmington students it continues to serve. We also will explore the possibility of a greater role for the Colonial School District in collaboration with other districts and charters to help to overcome the adverse impacts of the fragmentation of responsibilities.
- The Commission will report annually on these efforts as well as those of all other districts, and also on the learning outcomes for all Wilmington students.

**9. What is the evaluative methodology and on what dimensions will you determine success?**

- The Commission's evaluation plan includes a stipulation of the milestones and measures of success for evaluating progress and outcomes (**see Part IX, pages 167-182**).
- One distinctive feature of this evaluation plan is that it includes an analysis of Wilmington students that previously has been absent. This analysis will be continued annually and reported to the State Board of Education and others.
- The Commission's evaluation plan includes milestones and measures of success that align with all the facets of the Commission's action agenda and also align with research on key student developmental needs and outcomes, especially for low-income students and students at risk.
- The Commission will add to the initial set of indicators as the process moves forward and will respond to requests from the State Board of Education and the participating districts for additional analysis of outcomes and impacts.
- The Commission will submit to the State Board of Education an annual evaluation of progress in achieving milestones and improving the success of City of Wilmington students.

January 15, 2016

***Response to Information Request Received by the Commission Leadership from the  
State Board of Education on Thursday, January 14, 2016, at 9:07 a.m.***

## **Public Comment**

**Please add Dr. Allen's December 18, 2015 email to the SBE addressing questions raised by the SBE at the December meeting to the record of public comment.**

- This response has been added to the Commission's website in the section for the public record. That section has been updated to include all public comment received before public comment closed on January 14, 2016. This correspondence will also be added to the public record.

## **Redistricting**

**1. The action taken by each school board with regard to approval or conditional approval of the WEIC plan occurred well before the plan was finalized. Did WEIC discuss the final plan with each board or was there discussion from the board representatives serving on WEIC of the board's approval of the plan? Was there any additional feedback from district boards received on the final proposal?**

- Christina and Red Clay Consolidated School Board members and administrative staff worked collaboratively to develop the frameworks for planning, found in Appendix B and C respectively. The Commission's own plan for implementation of the Christina/Red Clay redistricting (Part VII) is based on the collaborative work of the two school districts.
- The Christina and Red Clay Consolidated School Boards voted to approve the drafts of their respective frameworks for planning (see page 54), and no changes to those plans have been made to those plans since those votes were taken.
- The Colonial School Board and the Brandywine School Board voted after the Commission's final redistricting recommendations were resolved. Boards supported the move of Christina out of the City of Wilmington and affirmed their commitment to continue to serve Wilmington students within their current boundaries, which also is the recommendation of the Commission.
- Members of the Commission, including members of the Red Clay Consolidated School Board and District gave updates at every scheduled Red Clay School Board meeting from September through December. The Board was advised of all updates in the Commission's plan including an update by the President of the Red Clay School Board (who is Vice Chair of the Commission) on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015, the day before the Commission's plan was submitted to the State Board of Education.

**Wilmington Education  
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- At each Christina School Board meeting from September through December an update on the Commission's plan was presented in the agenda and discussed at the board meeting. The President of the Christina School Board affirms that the board members were advised and encouraged to provide feedback throughout the period of public comment and that the board supports the proposals in the Commission's final plan.
- The Red Clay, Christina, and Colonial School Board Presidents, and the Brandywine School Board Vice-President, serve on the Commission. These same Board representatives as well as representatives from the district administrations serve on the Redistricting Committee and the Funding Student Success Committee, and were therefore involved in all facets of the process, including the review of all the redistricting recommendations in the final plan.
- All four school board representatives voted on behalf of their boards on December 15, 2015, to approve the Commission's Transition, Resource, and Implementation Plan and submit it to the State Board of Education on December 17, 2015.

**2. In both the Red Clay transitional plan as well as the Redistricting section of the plan there is reference to changes that would need to be made for the school board election districts but there is not a timeline for that work to indicate 1) when that work would be completed and 2) if there are additional costs associated with that work. If there are additional costs, what is an estimate of them and where do they fit into the estimated funding?**

- Transferring population from the Christina School District to the Red Clay Consolidated School District will require adjustments in both the Red Clay and Christina school boards. Christina's total population will drop from 170,139 to 147,043 (estimate from New Castle County Board of Elections based on 2010 census data). Red Clay's total population will increase from 138,228 to 163,957. Consistent with the timeline laid out in the Commission's proposal, these changes would be effective July 1, 2018.
- The New Castle Board of Elections believes that given the magnitude of the population change involved it would be appropriate to seek legislation authorizing redrawing of boundaries earlier than 2020. Such a redrawing would be based on 2010 census data. Presumably, new boundaries would then be needed again following the 2020 census.
- At this time, the Department of Elections has identified no additional costs associated with these changes.

**3. Please clarify what is meant by "program complete" in the 4th bullet of the Executive Summary "Redistricting Recommendation" section, which pertains to students transitioning or remaining at their existing school during Redistricting.**

- Senate Bill 122 states, "The plan shall permit students to continue their attendance at the school they attended prior to the boundary change, with tuition payments by the sending district as provided in Chapter 6 of this title, until such time as the pupils complete the grade levels offered in that school."

- The intent of this language was to allow students to remain in their schools, as of the end of the 2017–18 school year, until their grade configuration is complete, or until they complete their unique program. Some examples of specialized programs include Sarah Pyle Academy, Douglass Academy, and students receiving special education services.

**4. Please clarify recommendations referencing the addition of additional seats for Wilmington students at vocational schools and the plan initially recommended for development of a vocational education partnership between the NCC districts and vocational district.**

- This question refers to a recommendation from the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee (WEAC) Final Report, *Strengthening Wilmington Education: An Action Agenda*, submitted in April 2015. The reference is repeated on page 51 of the Commission’s plan (pages 25–27 from the WEAC Final Report are set aside in a box for reference. The quote referenced is below.

**“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.”**

- No action has been taken by the Commission on this WEAC recommendation. This and other recommendations related to collaboration will be considered in the coming year by the Commission’s Committee on Charter and District Collaboration. Representatives from the New Castle County Vo-Tech District sit on both the Redistricting Committee and the Funding Student Success Committee and will be invited to participate in the work of the Commission on Charter and District Collaboration.

**5. How does this final plan address the “case for redistricting” which sites 23 different governing units but this proposal reduces that number by only 1 and introduces at least one additional body with the creation of the Wilmington Office of Education and Public Policy?**

- Reducing fragmentation in the City of Wilmington requires a two-track strategy: consolidation then coordination.
- **Redistricting is the first step of consolidation. This single step will consolidate more than 50 percent of City of Wilmington students under one governing authority, the Red Clay Consolidated School District. This would be the first time in 40 years, one governing unit will have responsibility for the majority of City of Wilmington students.**
- The second step is to coordinate policies and programs of district, charter, and vo-tech schools in order to better streamline governance for City of Wilmington students. This will

be a primary focus for the Commission and Committee on Charter and District Collaboration during the next year.

- The Wilmington Education Improvement Commission is not a governing unit. The Commission has designated and limited responsibilities under legislation, and has no governing authority over schools or students. The Commission’s mandate ends in 2021 when the Commission sunsets.
- **If created, the Office of Education and Public Policy would be a part of the Wilmington City Government. It would have no governing authority over schools or students. The Commission supports its formation as a vehicle for supporting parent and community engagement, but the Commission is not responsible for the development of that office or for its funding, nor is the creation of the office a contingency for redistricting.**

## Funding

**6. Please define the term "other students at risk" which is used in the description of the new weighted unit recommendation.**

- “Other students at risk” refers to basic special education grades K-3.

**7. Please further explain any costs associated with the creation of, as well as the responsibilities of, the Wilmington Office of Education and Public Policy within this plan.**

- The Office of Education and Public Policy is a recommendation of the Wilmington City Council that the Commission has endorsed.
- If implemented, funding for the Office would come from the City of Wilmington.
- Please see the answer to question 5.

**8. Please identify the way funds requested as transition funds will be used and to whom they would be allocated for those uses. Additionally, if there is a request for “ongoing” funds (not planning or transition funds) beyond those outlined in the recommendation for a weighted “At Risk Unit” please outline what those ongoing costs would be used for. Lastly, with respect to the At Risk Unit outline the costs per year in the years beyond the roll out to Red Clay and Christina, what is the estimated funding cost?**

- During the planning year, the transition funds would be used to conduct a facilities assessment for all of the impacted schools, which would be of value under any circumstances as a guide for facilities improvement. In addition, funds would be used for research and analysis of best practices for schools with high concentrations of low-income students and English language learners and best practices for the configuration of schools and programs to serve those students. This would be valuable regardless of which district is responsible for those schools and it would be valuable to other schools in Wilmington and across Delaware with high concentrations of low-income students and English language learners.

- **Beyond the weighted unit, there are no “ongoing” funding requests. The cost is dependent on the model used and the weights given.**

**9. The timelines for implementation of this new unit allocation formula do not include all students of the city of Wilmington before expanding to include students in the suburbs of the Red Clay and Christina districts. Please discuss the proposed timeline and further explain the decision of WEIC to implement the funding model in this fashion so that we can fully understand why the recommendation is phased in this manner.**

- The Commission has endorsed a change in the allocation system to a more flexible model; however, the Commission did not believe that funding for low-income students, English language learners, and basic special education K-3 should be contingent on changing the funding allocation system in the future.
- Given fiscal constraints, the Commission specifically proposed an initial commitment of funding that applies to the districts impacted by redistricting, Red Clay Consolidated and Christina School Districts.
- We are proposing that funding would expand to all districts and charter schools in the city in the third year and that statewide roll-out be implemented as rapidly as possible given the fiscal constraints.

**10. The funding recommendations for expansion of the unit funding system within the proposal have been discussed before the Board as attempting to work within our existing funding structure. Please address these recommendations, which have been presented not as short term recommendations but as recommendations for 2021 and beyond, with respect to complementary or potentially conflicting actions with the currently meeting task force established through SJR4, Education Funding Improvement Commission, including the statement on page 87 of the tracked changes document that the Commission believes a new allocation system would provide the best opportunity to incorporate the needs of those most at risk.**

- The work of the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission (WEIC) and the Education Funding Improvement Commission (EFIC) are complementary. To be clear, many members of WEIC and its working committees are on EFIC, most notably Jill Floore, Red Clay CFO and Mike Jackson, Deputy Controller General, who chair the WEIC Funding Student Success Committee. WEIC and its Funding Student Success Committee began prior to the initiation of EFIC. It is our understanding that this commission is undertaking a review of the allocation formula as well as matters related to revenue and property reassessment.
- The focus of the WEIC Funding Student Success Committee was on factors relevant to redistricting, specifically the funding for low-income students, English language learners, and basic special education K-3 and the transition fund.
- WEIC endorsed the movement to a more flexible funding system. **The Education Funding Improvement Commission is considering the possibility of a move to a new funding**

system. Should a new funding allocation system be implemented, the WEIC funding requests would be moved into the new system.

**11. Property Reassessment: please clarify the financial burden of this recommendation- is it state or county? Is this a required component of this proposal in order for it to have adequate and sufficient funds?**

- No. We believe property reassessment is essential for the long-term fiscal health of the public education system, and ultimately the state. However, redistricting is not contingent on property reassessment.
- The Commission has not recommended a specific process for property tax reassessment. The Funding Student Success Committee has recognized the 2008 report of the committee formed by House Joint Resolution 22, which did recommend that the process be undertaken at the state level. This report can be found in Appendix E.

**12. If funding is not "restored to FY2008 levels" does that mean that this plan is not adequately funded?**

- Redistricting is not contingent on returning state funding of public education to fiscal year 2008 levels.
- Restoration is supported by the Commission and is highly desirable for the long-term benefit and improvement of Delaware public education.

**13. Please discuss whether the requests for funding of Early Childhood Education initiatives are in addition to existing requests from the Office of Early Learning and pertinent agencies funding Early Childhood education and care or if this request is simply complementary and vocalized support for those existing requests.**

- The Commission's recommendation refers directly to the existing request from the Office of Early Learning.

**14. Please clarify the IRMC's roles and responsibilities with respect to this plan and clarify if this is reducing potential duplicative efforts by multiple groups. Please also identify how WEIC factors into those efforts.**

- The Commission's recommendation is specifically related to alignment of resources and working with existing state groups to strengthen their contributions, not to duplicate efforts, as described on page 112 of the Commission's plan.

**"The Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty Committee will be addressing these recommendations and rolling out their plan in parallel to the implementation of redistricting. This work will engage collaborations with key state agencies and councils, including the Interagency Resource Management Committee (IRMC) responsible for the integration of services for children and families across state agencies, the Delaware P-20 Council responsible for the alignment of educational**

programs and student support services from early childhood through college and career readiness, and the council on higher education to mobilize coordinated support from all higher education institutions. These collaborations will be instrumental for the development and implementation of the Advisory Committee’s recommendation for 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.”

**15. Please identify the source of data used for establishing baseline goals as well as the responsibility for providing data and information to determine success of these milestones. Please identify the actual baseline metrics and goals for those stated measures and milestones.**

- The baseline analysis is the 2015–16 school year, which will be included in the first annual report of the Commission. The reports will use each school year’s verified data from the Department of Education. Currently, the Department of Education does not disaggregate data for the City of Wilmington; therefore, this additional analysis is necessary and will not duplicate current efforts.
- The Commission would be pleased to defer to the Department of Education should the Department desire to prepare a report that contains this analysis.

**16. Within the letter to WEIC from the Christina School District in their transitional plan there is statement that the tax base will go down by 20% and a statement that the impact should not negatively impact Christina residents. Please clarify the impact this plan would have on the residents of both Christina and Red Clay districts.**

- The movement of students and schools would change the allocation of funds, and the Commission believes that the funding should follow the students. A district with fewer students will have lower expenses. There may be a need for contingency funds to moderate the impacts of those shifts in the short term, as referenced on page 98 of the Plan. The contingency funds would not be necessary until redistricting takes place in fiscal year 2019.
- This reference refers to the expected impact on the allocation of the New Castle County tax district. Local tax funding for the four northern New Castle County school districts is governed by the guidelines established for the New Castle County tax district, in place since the 1981 court order.

## **Transition Plans from Christina and Red Clay**

**17. Please clarify the educational impacts ongoing for the students in these schools between now and FY2019. Clarification is needed for the educational and instructional programs that may be enacted in some of the impacted schools in the Christina district between now and 2019 that are in process of implementing school turnaround programs.**

- Questions related to the Christina School District's implementation of school turnaround programs should be directed to the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) and the Christina School District.
- Secretary Godowsky has confirmed that questions about the educational and instructional programs in turnaround/priority schools should be directed to DDOE and the districts.

**18. Please clearly specify how this plan directly addresses instructional programs/initiatives critical to improving student outcomes and how these are aligned in measures of success and stated milestones.**

- The action agenda, laid out in the graphic on page 8, and its explanation on pages 1–2 and 11–19 specify how this plan directly addresses improved student outcomes. This action agenda is connected back to the milestones and measures of success on pages 164–178. The action agenda was developed purposefully to keep improved student outcomes at the forefront of all recommendations made by the Commission, and action requested of the State Board, General Assembly, and the Governor.
- During the planning year, the transition funds will be used to conduct a facilities assessment for all of the impacted schools. In addition, funds will be used for research and analysis of best practices for schools with high concentrations of low-income students and English language learners and best practices for the configuration of schools and programs. The Commission will not be involved directly in the instruction, but will continue to support the collaboration already going on between the Christina and Red Clay Consolidated School Districts to develop programs and initiatives that best serve these high needs students and lead to the improved student outcomes outlined in the milestones and measures of success.

**19. Are there projected timelines for revisions to in-district boundary lines (feeder patterns) for both districts that have been discussed and are able to further inform these plans?**

- The 2016–17 school year is the planning year. During this time, analysis and research will be conducted on best practices for schools serving high concentrations of low-income students and English language learners and the optimal configuration of schools to support students.
- The Red Clay Consolidated School District and Christina School District will determine any needed changes to feeder patterns during the transition year, the 2017–18 school year, based on the outcomes of the planning year.
- New feeder patterns will be implemented when district boundaries change for school year 2018–19.

**20. There is reference to potential capital repairs of buildings currently in the Christina district that are proposed to become Red Clay facilities. Are those repairs proposed to be state funded, locally funded, or a separate option of public/private partnerships?**

- The districts will collaborate on the facilitation of changes. During the planning year, the 2016–17 school year, funds will be used to conduct a facilities assessment for the impacted

schools. The repairs will occur during the 2017–18 school year based on the facilities assessment and should be paid for by the state.

- Any capital fund requests not related to redistricting will continue to be made in the traditional way.

**21. Please clarify the details of WEIC's role and responsibility in future requests for capital funding or major capital design for updating or constructing new schools in the city of Wilmington?**

- The Commission has no role in current or future capital funding or major capital design requests. That is the responsibility of the affected districts, Christina and Red Clay.

## **Choice and Collaboration Efforts**

**22. There are existing collaborations underway and organizations already in place which are developing charter and district collaboration. What controls or precautions to avoid duplication of those existing collaborative efforts have been discussed by WEIC to include in the proposed plan?**

- The Commission recognizes that there are many existing collaborations underway but also believes that city wide collaboration is not as effective or widespread as necessary to create a coherent system of governance.
- The Charter and District Collaboration Committee is working to identify and review existing collaboration with the intent to expand upon them, not to duplicate or substitute. Any recommendations on this will come from that committee to the Commission for review.
- There are no recommendations related to this phase of streamlining governance, as this is not part of redistricting. See the answer to question 5.

**23. Please explain any specific asks or proposed policy changes with regard to choice that are being recommended in this section.**

- See the answers to questions 5 and 22. The section on Choice Options and Policies refers to the second phase of streamlining governance: coordination.

## **Milestones and Measures of Success**

(The State Board of Education has flagged questions that were already referenced and discussed in previous questions with a star.)

**24. Are baselines for performance being set from most current student achievement and growth data? Who will be responsible for collecting this data and running reports moving forward? How does this differ from the reporting already done by DDOE? Are these baselines goals aligned to state goals and accountability metrics?\***

- The milestones and measures of success are entirely consistent with the state's measures.

- The Commission has included consideration of these milestones and measures for City of Wilmington students disaggregated, which is not included in the state’s assessment.
- The Commission would be pleased if the Delaware Department of Education would like to take on this responsibility.

**25. Please clarify the milestones and timelines for the Department of Elections\***

- Please see the answer to question 2.

**26. The weighted unit funding model was initially understood as a transitional piece that would be implemented immediately. How will this work transition if EFIC recommendations result in a different statewide education funding structure? Is there flexibility for changes as a result of the recommendations from this commission, how does this plan recognize the ongoing work and incorporate that into the final components of the plan? \***

- Please see the answer to question 10.

**27. How does the Red Clay district plan commit to and align with the measurable outcomes of the WEIC plan?**

- The Red Clay district’s plan fully aligns with the Commission’s plan.
- The measureable outcomes of the Commission plan were developed through extensive collaboration with the Red Clay Consolidated and Christina School Districts as well as the Redistricting Committee, which had representation from the Brandywine, Colonial, Christina, and Red Clay Consolidated School District administrations and School Boards.
- The Commission will continue to work with all four districts to align with the milestones and measures of success that they helped develop in the Commission’s plan.

**28. Will measures and milestones be applicable to all students residing within the City of Wilmington or just those students from the city attending Red Clay schools?**

- The milestones and measures of success will be applicable to all students residing within the City of Wilmington. All City of Wilmington students will be included in the annual report submitted by the Commission.

## **Resolution and Plan as a Whole**

**29. Please clarify the funding components that are incorporated and required to meet the "necessary and sufficient" funding measure.**

- The “necessary and sufficient” funding, as specified on pages 167–168 of the Commission’s plan, include the Wilmington Transition Funds requested for the 2016–17 and 2017–18 school years and recurrent funding approved and allocated for fiscal year 2017 to support weighted unit funding for low-income students, English language learners, and basic special

education for grades K-3 in the entire Red Clay Consolidated School District and the current Christina School District schools in the City of Wilmington. These are the funds related directly to redistricting.

- Please see Q&A sent on December 18, 2015, question 1, for the timeline of the funding rollout.

**30. Does this proposal, and the SBE approval of such, expire if necessary and sufficient funding is not allocated? Please clarify provision in Resolution #2 relating to Board's suspension of implementation timetable.**

- This provision is consistent with the State Board of Education's authority under SB 122. Under SB 122, only the State Board of Education is authorized to alter the boundaries, therefore the State Board must be involved in any suspension of the timetable or the expiration of the Commission's plan.
- It is the responsibility of the Commission in collaboration with the districts to report to the State Board whether they are able to continue with the redistricting commitment based on the available state funds. This is a multi-district change; therefore, the Commission must facilitate a collaborative decision about the adequacy of funding to meet the contingencies up until July 2018.
- The opportunity to suspend the redistricting timeline only exists for the next two budget cycles. If the funding is not provided by July 2018, the plan expires. After July 2018, the opportunity of suspension of the timeline ends as this is when redistricting would occur. The suspension is only contingent on the conditions stipulated on page 98 of the plan.
- Suspension is only necessary if the state is unable to meet the financial targets that have been set out in the phased approach by July 2018, otherwise the Commission's plan expires. There are no further contingencies beyond 2018.
- The Commission shares the feeling with the State Board that merely changing district boundaries is not adequate. This authority ensures that district boundaries will not change without the adequate funding.

**31. Within the Resolution's Whereas statements it states that this plan is consistent with the objective of improving student outcomes and is in the best interest of all students in NCC. Please provide details supporting this assertion. In prior questions above, we have referenced questions regarding these topics as well specifically in questions 9, 17, 18, 24, 27, 28**

- This statement confirms the expectation shared by both the State Board and the Commission that action should be consistent with the best interests of students. The statement does not refer to the impact of what is being proposed, but rather the objectives and intentions of the Transition, Resource, and Implementation Plan submitted by the Commission and under review by the State Board.
- The Commission commits itself to center all actions around the best interests of students, as does the State Board.

- The Commission’s intention is for the plan to serve in the best interests of all students is clear in the action agenda, laid out in the graphic on page 8, and its explanation on pages 1–2 and 11–19, and connected back to the milestones and measures of success on pages 164–178.

## **Additional Questions Identified by WEIC Staff**

### **32. Will the State commit the necessary and sufficient funds?**

- Governor Markell was present at the Commission Meeting on December 9. He acknowledged the necessity of additional state funding to ensure the plan’s success and avoid placing undue burden on the taxpayers, particularly those from the Red Clay Consolidated School District.

### **33. What is the role of the Commission after implementation?**

- The Commission will take an active role in collaboration with the districts to implement redistricting. Beyond redistricting, the Commission’s mandate is to facilitate the development and implementation of the recommendations of the other Committees. Specifically, the legislation states:  
**“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.”**
- The Commission will submit to the State Board an annual evaluation of progress in achieving milestones and in improving success for City of Wilmington students.
- Page 99 of the Commission’s plan references the continued mandate of the Commission:  
**“The Commission has accepted these recommendations as a baseline for its work not only in redistricting, but in all other aspects of its mission. The Commission will build upon that baseline through all of its operations, beginning with redistricting and extending until it sunsets in 2021. It should be reaffirmed that in this domain the Commission’s legislated mandate is statewide; the Commission is to advise the Governor and General Assembly on addressing the needs of all Delaware schools with high concentrations of low-income students and English language learners. The Commission’s plan for redistricting represents the beginning of the Commission’s efforts to fulfill that larger responsibility. The Commission is committed to the alignment of supports and services through a strong partnership between the community and its schools. Governor Markell was present at the Commission Meeting on December 9. He acknowledged the necessity of additional state funding to ensure the plan’s success and avoid placing undue burden on the taxpayers, particularly those from the Red Clay Consolidated School District.”**