

**Wilmington Education Improvement Commission Meeting**  
**Red Clay District Office**  
**February 2, 2016**

Dr. Tony Allen, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:33pm.

Dr. Allen asked the Commissioners and members of the public introduce themselves.

The minutes from December 9, 2015 were approved by the Commission.

The transcript from December 15, 2015 was approved by the Commission.

**Delaware State Board Education update**

Dr. Allen explained that the State Board voted to send the plan back to the Commission for further clarifications. He received a letter on January 31, 2016 informing the Commission of the State Board's concerns, and he responded on February 1, 2016.

It was noted that so far the Commission has submitted a lengthy and detailed plan, with over 500 pages of appendices, and has already answered approximately fifty questions from the Board. The Commission will respond with an Addendum to the plan that clarifies each of the points, but will not make changes to the plan itself.

One Commissioner called Commission to note the inaction of the State Board of Education, stating that the Commission was very careful to follow the process outlined and the State Board has not followed that process.

Dr. Tony Allen stated that he shares the frustration of many Commissioners, and has asked the State Board to take action during their next meeting.

Dr. Allen discussed the agenda for the meeting. He explained that Dr. Dan Rich, the Commission's policy director, would take the Commission through the State Board's letter.

Dr. Rich said that WEIC will answer all the concerns that the State Board has. He adds that the intention is to reaffirm and explain the details about the plan, not to change the plan.

Several commissioners engaged in a discussion about what will be necessary to satisfy the concerns of the Board. Many commissioners agreed that clarifying points that might have been unclear in the plan is a good idea. A question was raised about making direct edits to the plan, but several commissioners cautioned this action and preferred to create the summary addendum as described by Dr. Allen.

Dr. Rich explained that the Commission will also include memos from the districts to answer the questions relating to the direct education of students.

Dr. Rich said that at the State Board meeting, there was a motion to approve or disapprove the WEIC plan. However, this motion was amended. WEIC will make it clear that an action is needed for this plan.

Dr. Pika answered a question from a Commissioner about the Board of Elections involvement, as he was the one in communication with them about this process. He explained that the timeline that

appears in the plan is how the Commission intends to proceed, and that they have spoken with the Board of Elections who agrees on the necessary steps.

### **Weighted Unit Funding**

The State Board of Education expressed concerns about the roll-out of the weighted unit funding system; they would like to see it rolled out city-wide immediately.

One Commissioner expressed that the Commission would love for the roll-out to occur as soon as possible; however, the funding made available for this unit depends on the General Assembly.

### **Redistricting Resolution**

Commissioners share that they support the WEIC resolution that the plan needs to happen as a package. Another Commissioner added that taking out that resolution gives too much power to the State Board of Education—community leaders would also disagree with this action.

Each school board president or representative stated support for the resolution in its entirety, expressing that this resolution is essential to their support of the plan.

### **Other concerns addressed**

Dr. Rich explained that the response will describe the broad level community engagement that occurred throughout the process, and the document provided will serve as a clarification document to answer each of the questions that the Board raised.

A Commissioner noted the importance to specifically address the concern that there are duplicative efforts being recommended in this plan. Tony Allen clarified the process, explaining that SB122 requires the State Board to vote on the submitted plan. It cannot go forward to the General Assembly before an affirmative vote from the State Board, as only they have the authority under the law to redraw district boundaries.

Tony Allen shares that he understands the Commissioners' frustration, but that WEIC needs to stay focused to keep moving forward.

Vicki Seifred, parent and educator in the Red Clay Consolidated School District, expressed her frustration that the plan is facing so much opposition when the Commission, a very representative group all came forward knowing that what is going on in the public schools now, particularly for minority students and those in poverty, is not successful, has come up with a solution and is working to push it forward. She expressed concerns about the way students and teachers are assessed, when it is impossible to measure the hardships they face. After the effort that was put into this plan by a diverse group of concerned citizens who have decided to do something about the problem, she was frustrated that it was so difficult to get it through the process.

Aretha Miller explained that while there is clear frustration by the Commission, this is an important opportunity for the Commission to clarify and explain parts of the Redistricting Plan that were not clear.

Margie Lopez Waite said that perhaps the State Board was expecting details about how success would be measured, what new programs would be implemented, and how would facilities would be used, transferred, or shared.

Dr. Rich reminded the Commissioners that this is not something that has ever been done, so it is a new process for the State Board and all decision makers throughout the state.

Dr. Jackie Jenkins, Co-chair of the Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty Committee, asked about including the social services that students need to be successful.

Dr. Rich explained that what happens in the schools after redistricting is up to the school districts, it is the Commission's job to ensure they have the resources they need. The leadership has reached out to each district to submit a statement about what they plan to do to serve low-income students. These plans will be included in the response to the Board.

A Commissioner suggested that the Commission highlight that this plan is the first time in many years that the four districts have worked so closely together, collaborated, and agreed on a plan.

### **Other Business**

The University of Delaware and the United Way of Delaware will be working together to achieve the following goals:

- A complete fiscal and policy inventory for services to low-income children.
- An assessment of national best practices for the coordination of out-of-school services.
- An asset map for the City of Wilmington.

### **Public Comment**

Bill Doolittle expressed his belief that some of the reasons behind the State Board of Education's decision had to do with politics, timeline, and some real concern for the children. He asked the Commission to be very clear about how this Commission seeks to help children in the City of Wilmington when answering the State Board's questions.

Representative Kim Williams expressed concern with the amount of money that the Governor put in his budget proposal, including the removal of Christina from this funding and that basic special education K-3 was not included. She said that she did not believe the Board fully read the report and that it is a disgrace that the Commission was unable to speak at their meeting. She applauded the collaboration between Commission members, but she is upset that the State Board does not show any sign of collaboration with the Commission.

Mike Matthews reiterated the concerns expressed by Representative Williams, and explained he supported SB122 with reservations about the State Board being a part of the process, and his disapproval of the Board refusing to engage with the Commission at both the workshop and the meeting.

Dr. Allen thanked the Commission and members of the public for their work and support. He reminded everyone of the meeting scheduled on February 8 to review the draft response, which will be available at that time.

The meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

**Wilmington Education Improvement Commission**

February 2, 2016  
Meeting Attendance

**Commissioners**

Ralph Ackerman  
Tony Allen  
Eve Buckley  
Nnamdi Chukwuocha  
Rosa Colon-Kolacko  
Karen Eller  
Yvonne Johnson  
Joseph T. Laws  
Elizabeth Lockman

Margie Lopez-Waite  
Johnny Means  
Aretha Miller  
Harrie Ellen Minnehan  
Joe Pika  
Chandra Pitts  
Kenny Rivera  
Vicki Seifred  
Michelle Taylor

**Institute for Public Administration Staff**

Dan Rich  
Elizabeth Burland  
Kelly Sherretz

Chester Holland  
Kervin Zamora

**Members of the Public**

Merv Daugherty  
Vicki Gehrt  
Mark Holodick  
Jackie Jenkins  
Tom Driscoll  
Bill Doolittle  
Neil Kirschling  
Bob Silber  
Laura Nash  
Jill Floore  
Bob Salterfield

Teresa Salterfield  
Matt Albright  
Ty Jones  
Mike Matthews  
Justin Rondo  
Cherelle Davidson  
Ariadna Castanada  
Ron Russo  
Henry Clampitt  
Ted Amman  
Rep. Kim Williams