

**Wilmington Education
Improvement Commission**
Solutions for Delaware Schools

March 15, 2016

Dr. Teri Gray
President
Delaware State Board of Education

Dear Dr. Gray and members of the Delaware State Board of Education:

On March 14, 2016, the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission (“the Commission”) approved the alternative language recommended by Governor Markell for inclusion under item #2 of the Redistricting Resolution in the Commission’s Plan, “Redistricting in the City of Wilmington and New Castle County: A Transition, Resource and Implementation Plan.” I have attached a copy of the Governor’s letter recommending the alternative language and have included the language below:

“If the necessary and sufficient funding and transition supports, as laid out in the Compendium dated February 11, 2016, are not provided by the conclusion of each stage and in the manner proposed, the Commission, after consulting with the affected districts, shall suspend the timetable for implementation until the resources and supports are provided.”

The Commission voted 20 Yes, 1 No, and 2 Absent to resubmit the Redistricting Plan with the alternative language to the State Board of Education. As such, we have updated the Redistricting Plan with the alternative language and it is now posted at this link:

<http://sites.udel.edu/cas-weic/weic-draft-31416-sm/>

As per my March 1 letter, we are also reaffirming our desire to work with the State Board to ensure that we mutually commit to advance student improvement at the most rapid pace possible, apply measures of success to track student progress, and hold ourselves accountable to strengthen the quality of Wilmington schools. Our expression of that commitment is also outlined in our March 1 letter, but we have taken the liberty of noting it again below.

- The Commission’s leadership is committed to meet with the State Board of Education **at every stage of the implementation process** to evaluate educational improvements and to discuss whether the necessary and sufficient resources have been provided to support implementation. The Commission will take no action without such discussion.
- The Commission maintains an open invitation for the State Board to attend and participate in the meetings of the Commission and its committees. The Commission will accept all invitations from the State Board to discuss any matters related to the implementation of the redistricting plan and the improvement of education for Wilmington students.
- The Commission will update the State Board semi-annually on the progress of the Commission’s efforts to meet student needs, build and sustain community supports, and expand charter/district collaboration.

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- The Commission will provide an annual analysis of the ***state of Wilmington education*** based on data collected by the Delaware Department of Education and other sources sanctioned by DDOE, and discuss this analysis with the State Board of Education and the Secretary of Education.

While the discussion of redistricting has taken up much of the public discourse over the past six months, the Commission has maintained that the change in district boundaries is only one step in a comprehensive path for school reform. We must also provide funding for low-income students, English Language Learners, basic special education, K-3; strengthen early childhood education and both in-school and after-school programs to meet the needs of Wilmington students; and mobilize active parent and community engagement in support of schools. Our committed purpose continues to be improved outcomes for Wilmington students specifically, and for low-income students throughout the state generally. That is the goal of the Commission through 2021.

We look forward to your action on the resubmitted Redistricting Plan at your meeting on Thursday, March 17. Because of family obligations, I will not be able to attend, but others from the Commission will be present. We look forward to your support. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Tony Allen, Ph.D., Chairman

cc: Wilmington Education Improvement Commission
Dan Rich, Ph.D., Policy Director
The Honorable Steven Godowsky, Ed.D. Delaware Secretary of Education