

**Wilmington Education Improvement Commission
Parent, Educator, and Community Engagement Committee**

Cab Calloway School of the Arts

100 N Dupont Rd

Wilmington, DE, 19805

Meeting Minutes

April 14, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 p.m.

Kelly Sherretz, University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration, began the meeting with an update of the committee activities since the passage of the redistricting plan by the Commission.

Tizzy Lockman, Wilmington Education Improvement Commission Vice-Chair, gave a presentation regarding community schools, prepared based on materials shared by committee member, Frederika Jenner. She began by noting that over 50% of the state's public school children are from low-income families and communities. She then suggested that the state should consider changing the way that it funds the education of children and that doing so is essential to improving outcomes. She then presented the purpose and model of *Community Schools*, which she considers to be a more holistic approach to public education, concluding that the community schools approach could allow for workable, practical goals for improving access to resources in a way that works for the state of Delaware

Wendy Lapham added that collaboration is also important in finding solutions that work for Delaware's children. She cited the Henrietta Johnson Medical Center, which was established to serve Wilmington school children, as an example of such collaboration.

Kelly Sherretz added that collaboration had been a recurring theme of conversation in other WEIC committees.

Tizzy Lockman, when talking about looking for examples of working models of collaboration and effective service delivery, noted that East Side Community schools may be worth visiting to examine elements of their program. She would ask if it was possible to do the same at Henrietta Johnson Medical Center. Wendy Lapham suggested that she set-up tours for the committee members to see the center and other examples in Christina.

The committee then reviewed minutes from previous meetings, but did not reach quorum for approval.

Wendy Lapham asked what the "holes" are during a review of the minutes.

Kelly Sherretz answered by saying that 'holes' were, in the context in which they were discussed, what the committee could do to improve parent engagement. She then asks that committee members review the draft of the committee's work plan, which she said she would send out for feedback from committee members.

Wendy Lapham, when talking about the committee plan, said that communication needed to be extended from “teachers” to “schools.” She also thought that the plan should list students first when discussing “safe havens” in the plan.

Tizzy Lockman explained that “safe havens” for parents were essentially establishing comfort for parents to be active in schools. To this end she posited that this idea often raised concerns in the debate regarding parent access to classes versus teacher/class disruption.

Dr. Henry Harper noted that there was a body of literature that talks about “Welcoming Schools” that touched on the roles of parents, that of teachers, and examples of success.

Tizzy Lockman added that oftentimes the expectations that teachers have for children are reflective of the relationship between teacher and parent; and that creating a relationship that allows for communication, mutual respect, and trust between teachers and parents is important in bridging the divide that exists.

Wendy Lapham added that cultural competency is important in creating such relationships.

Marsha Carter mentioned that respect is key, but “safe” could also mean that parents are “free to be [themselves]” in the relationship between parent and teacher.

Tizzy Lockman said that cultural competency training could be a goal for creating “safe havens,” for parents and teachers.

Cultural competency training is important. Maybe have all committees in WEIC make the recommendations?

Dr. Henry Harper cited work by Ronald Edmonds, in which he writes that every student can learn and learn well if given the time and resources to do so. He also cited the Behavioral Research Institute (BRI) as an example of such an idea. He then opined that we have proven that it is possible to be successful with special needs populations.

Tizzy Lockman added that BRI is a great argument for weighted funding for children from low-income schools. She then moved the committee’s attention to review of the “Success Pillars” in the committee’s outlined plan.

Wendy Lapham asked what “empowerment” means in the context of the work plan.

Marsha Carter recommended that the committee revisit the third pillar to get clarity.

Tizzy Lockman said that the committee needed to be cognizant of its mandate as per the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee (WEAC) plan, and asked that the WEAC plan be reviewed to find that specific mandate. She also asked if the “steps to achieving goal” portion of the plan meant that the committee should make policy recommendations.

Kelly Sherretz notes that doing so is part of that goal, but these steps are not limited to only policy recommendations.

Tizzy Lockman then charged the meeting attendees with the task of starting to send ideas to populate the ‘pillars’ in the plan.

Kelly Sherretz added that committee members could send their ideas to Elizabeth Burland or herself and they would compile them.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 12th at Cab Calloway School of the Arts, unless committee goes on a “field trip” to see schools and examples of parent engagement.

Wendy Lapham asked what the committee should consider best practices in building trust between parents and schools.

Marsha Carter asked what the committee’s goal happens to be. She recommended that the committee revisit and re-word “Pillars of Success” so that goals are consistent with broader desired results.

Meeting adjourned at 7:25pm.

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Meeting Attendance
April 14, 2016**

Committee Members

Dr. Henry Harper
Wendy Lapham
Marsha Carter

Commission Vice-Chair

Tizzy Lockman

Institute for Public Administration Staff

Kelly Sherretz
Chester Holland