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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Delaware General Assembly Affirms the Commission's Plan
Governor commits the "necessary and sufficient funds" for next year
Commission suspends timeline

Wilmington, DE — As the 148th Delaware General Assembly legislative session ended, the House and Senate passed Senate Joint Resolution 17, an interim affirmation of the Delaware State Board of Education's approval of the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission's redistricting plan and Senate Bill 300, which clarifies the funding implications and supports further analysis by the Commission.

In a related action, Governor Markell committed to put no less than \$7.5 million in his FY 2018 plan to support the Commission's plan, specifically to begin to change the 70-year old student funding formula. In a letter to the Wilmington delegation, Markell said, "I am proud to have worked alongside you in these efforts and pleased to commit that I will recommend an appropriation of the funds necessary and sufficient to fund the first year of implementation of the proposals of the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission, specifically an amendment to the unit count that would carry additional support for low-income students, English Language Learners and students with special needs statewide."

In response to the passage of the joint resolution and the Governor's action, Commission Chairman Tony Allen noted that because the "necessary and sufficient" funding has not yet been provided, he will immediately call on the Commission to suspend the timetable for implementing its plan. He offered the following statement on the impact of the resolution.

"While I am disappointed with several aspects of this legislative season, SJR17 allows the Commission to fight another day. After 62 years of waiting, fight on we will.

The Commission is wholly committed to reducing the fragmentation and dysfunction caused by 23 different school systems currently serving Wilmington children, less than 10% of Delaware's student population. In addition, the Commission will continue to focus attention on the needs of low-income students, English language learners, and other students with special needs in Wilmington and throughout Delaware. That includes meeting the non-instructional needs of these students, engaging empowered parents in school reform, and changing the antiquated funding system for students and schools that has for many years created sustained inequities dating back to well before *Brown v Board of Education* (1954).

I am grateful to the 22 other commissioners, the previous members of the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee, and the more than 10,000 community members who have been participating in this process. I urge your continued resolve."

For more information about the work of the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission and its predecessor group the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee, please visit www.solutionsfordelawareschools.com

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