



Wilmington Education Improvement Commission

ANNUAL REPORT, JULY 1, 2016 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2017

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Part I: Creation and Mandate	3
Part II: Action Agenda and Framework for Educational Improvement	4
Part III: Status Report on Action Agenda	8
Part IV: Commission and Committee Operations	12
Part V: Reports and Publications.....	16
Part VI: Commission Funding and Resources.....	17
Part VII: Commission and Committee Membership.....	19

Preface and Acknowledgements

The Wilmington Education Improvement Commission (the Commission) was mandated by legislation to advise the Governor and General Assembly on how to improve the quality of public education for children within the city of Wilmington and address the needs of all Delaware schools that have high concentrations of students in poverty, English language learners (ELLs), and other students at risk. The Commission is charged to carry out the action agenda developed by the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee. The Commission's framework for change focuses on three areas of critical importance for an improved education system and student outcomes: (1) creating responsive governance, (2) funding student success, and (3) meeting the needs of students in poverty.

In 2015, the Delaware General Assembly passed and Governor Markell signed two relevant pieces of legislation. Senate Bill 122 and House Bill 148 created the Commission and gave Delawareans the opportunity to build a coalition to improve Delaware public schools. The Commission continues to work under Governor Carney's administration to strengthen Wilmington education and enhance the lives of Delaware students.

As required by law, the Commission must submit an annual report each year until the Commission sunsets in 2021. This report serves as the second annual report that tracks the progress of the Commission's work through June 2017, and informs Delaware citizens and leaders on the actions necessary to address the challenges that face public education in the city of Wilmington and throughout the state. The report outlines the progress of the Commission, details the current status of education in Delaware, and presents the milestones for future success in improving the education system that serves Wilmington students and all students in Delaware. It also summarizes progress on each of the three action streams in the framework for change: creating responsive governance, funding student success, and meeting the needs of Wilmington students.

As the Commission has made evident, improving educational outcomes is dependent on a host of collaborative and strategic efforts working in unison—one strategy alone will not create continuous learning or sustained and improved student outcomes. A quality education available to all students must begin with a new vision, backed by a common stakeholder commitment to strengthen public education in Delaware. This like-minded commitment is as important to the education of children in Indian River and Capital School Districts—to name a few—as it is for the education of children in New Castle County.

Delawareans—from all corners of the state—have been an integral part of the work of the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission. Their engagement in our efforts has helped shape every recommendation that this Commission has put forth since the Commission's inception. Thank you all for playing an important role in the conversation, creation, and advocacy of the Commission's work.

While there are numerous valued contributors, there are some individuals that played a leading role in the work of the Commission:

- **Governor John Carney** for his willingness to continue the fight for all students in Delaware.
- **The Honorable Jack Markell** for his leadership and unwavering support of the work of the Commission.
- **Secretary of Education Susan Bunting** for her lifetime commitment to student success.
- **The staff and students of the Institute for Public Administration** at the University of Delaware for providing outstanding support to the operations and research of the Commission.
- **Attorneys Thomas Driscoll**, of Tarabicos Grosso, LLP, and **Ian Connor Bifferato**, of The Bifferato Firm, P.A., who have and continue to provide excellent legal guidance at no cost to the Commission.
- **Brandywine, Colonial, Christina, New Castle County Vocational-Technical, and Red Clay Consolidated School Districts** and their board presidents, superintendents, and staff in northern New Castle County, for working with, and in some cases serving on, the Commission and the committees. Your partnership has been monumental in shaping solutions and moving the work forward.

Lastly, I would like to thank all members of the Commission and its committees for their commitment, hard work, and dedication to improving the Delaware education system so that it benefits all students.

Without you this work would not be possible.

Tony Allen, Ph.D.

Chair, Wilmington Education Improvement Commission

Executive Summary

This report serves as the second annual report that tracks the progress of the Commission's work from July 2016 through June 2017, and informs Delaware citizens and leaders on the actions necessary to address the challenges that face public education in the city of Wilmington and throughout the state.

Part I of this report reviews the Commission's mandate. The Wilmington Education Improvement Commission was established by House Bill 148, which was signed into law on August 4, 2015. This 23-member Commission was charged to:

- Carry out the action agenda developed by the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) as described in *Strengthening Wilmington Education: An Action Agenda*.
- Advise the Governor and General Assembly on how to improve the quality and availability of education for children in preschool through grade twelve within the city of Wilmington.
- Recommend actions to address the needs of all schools statewide that have high concentrations of students in poverty, English language learners, and other students at risk.

Part II of this report includes the Commission's framework, which incorporates the action agenda of the Advisory Committee and focuses on three streams of action needed to improve Wilmington student outcomes: (1) creating more responsive governance, (2) funding student success, and (3) meeting the needs of students in poverty.

Part III of this report details the Commission's progress as of June 30, 2017. Overall, some of the action agenda items have been completed. Most items are in progress with some initial milestones met.

Part IV of this report describes the work that each individual committee has carried out on behalf of the Commission. Each committee's work is focused on specific facets of the action agenda, which in combination contribute to quality access, improved student success, and systemic educational improvement.

Wilmington Demographics and Data Analysis

The Commission continues to monitor the educational progress of Wilmington students and the needs and performance of all students in poverty across Delaware. Based on the 2016 Smarter Balanced Assessment:

- Approximately 82% of students living in the city of Wilmington failed to meet state standards in Mathematics.
- Nearly 73% of students living in the city of Wilmington failed to meet state standards in English Language Arts.
- Less than 40% of students of low-income families across the state performed at state standards in English Language Arts.

- Only 1 out of every 4 students of low-income families in Delaware met state standards in Mathematics.

In the fall of 2015, the Commission developed an interim transition, resource, and implementation plan to address the action agenda developed by the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee). The final plan, *Redistricting in the City of Wilmington and New Castle County: A Transition, Resource, and Implementation Plan*, was conditionally approved by the Delaware State Board of Education in March 2016 and the Delaware General Assembly in June 2016. The plan called for consolidating portions of Wilmington now served by the Christina School District into the boundaries of the Red Clay Consolidated School District. That change would mean that more than 50% of Wilmington's student population would reside in a single school district with a common curriculum and shared instructional strategies—changes designed to produce higher-quality schools and improved student outcomes.

At the conclusion of the 2016 legislative session, Senate Bill 300 with House Amendment 1 was passed. This legislation required that the Commission undertake an analysis detailing the fiscal impact of transitioning students who live in the city of Wilmington from the Christina School District to the Red Clay Consolidated School District as recommended by the Commission's plan. To fulfill the mandate set forth by the Delaware General Assembly, the Commission created an Ad-Hoc Fiscal Impact Committee that completed this fiscal impact analysis. The final report can be found on the Solutions for Delaware Schools website at <https://sites.udel.edu/cas-weic/files/2016/07/Fiscal-Impact-Report-2017-final-1ky9ycn.pdf>.

Part I: Creation and Mandate

In September 2014, Governor Jack Markell formed the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) to make recommendations on how to strengthen the public education system for all city of Wilmington students. Governor Markell charged the Advisory Committee with addressing the underlying challenges facing public education in the city of Wilmington and proposing actions that will propel continuous improvements in schools in the city of Wilmington.

The Advisory Committee's final report, *Strengthening Wilmington Education: An Action Agenda*, was produced in April 2015. The recommendations fell into four categories: (1) Creating Responsive Governance, (2) Meeting Wilmington Student Needs, (3) Funding Student Success, and (4) Implementing Change. It was the fourth category, Implementing Change, that made the Advisory Committee's recommendations stand apart from the several committees that came before it. Earlier committees had developed comprehensive recommendations; however, none of the previous committees had proposed how their recommendations should be carried forward. The Advisory Committee recognized this as a problem and recommended a strategy for "implementing change" in the creation of the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission (the Commission), to oversee the implementation of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

Out of this set of recommendations came House Bill 148 (HB 148) and Senate Bill 122 (SB 122), passed by the General Assembly during the 2015 legislative session and signed into law in August 2015. HB 148 addressed the Advisory Committee's recommendations on implementing change by creating the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission and SB 122 authorized the redistricting work. As established through HB 148, the 23-member Wilmington Education Improvement Commission was charged to:

- Carry out the action agenda developed by the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee as described in *Strengthening Wilmington Education: An Action Agenda*.
- Advise the Governor and General Assembly on how to improve the quality and availability of education for children P–12 within the city of Wilmington.
- Recommend actions to address the needs of all schools statewide that have high concentrations of students in poverty, English language learners, and other students at risk.

The Commission continued work in the 2016–17 school year with three standing subcommittees and one ad-hoc committee. The Commission adopted the Advisory Committee's action agenda: creating responsive governance, funding student success, and meeting Wilmington student needs. These three focus areas led to the development of several committees under the Commission that worked to develop implementation plans in relation to a specific focus area with the overarching goal of improving student outcomes. Action alone in one of these three areas is not sufficient; the Commission believes that creating a unified approach to tackle all three action items will result in improved student outcomes.

Part II: Action Agenda and Framework for Educational Improvement

The Commission includes a diverse representation of the Wilmington community, including educators, parents, advocates, and community activists. While diverse, the Commission has approached the work with shared expectations and agreement on guiding principles. While the focus is Wilmington, the Commission believes these principles should apply across Delaware. These principles have been adopted from the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee and helped shape the action agenda.

- **Providing Access to High-Quality Education** — Delivering high-quality public education to all children, including those who are low income, black or Latino, is not only a Wilmington problem, it is a challenge facing all of Delaware.
- **Meeting High-Standards for Student Learning** — All Wilmington schools should meet high and rising standards for student learning in Delaware and across the globe. There should be agreed-upon measures for student success in meeting those standards that apply to all schools.
- **Engaging Families and Parents** — Parent and family engagement is critical to the effectiveness of public education, and we must establish a strong Wilmington education partnership between schools and the families they serve.
- **Creating Community Partnerships** — Wilmington schools should be seen as community assets and must have allies to address the complex challenges of educating the city's children. These allies include engaged families, community and business partners, early childhood educators, mental and physical health providers, institutions of higher education, and social service providers.
- **Ensuring Access to High-Quality Educators** — All Wilmington students should have access to high-quality educators who are prepared to meet their diverse needs and to the human and financial resources needed to support student success.
- **Collaboration and Strengthened Commitment** — Wilmington students should continue to be served by a combination of district, charter, and vocational-technical (vo-tech) schools. Policies and practices for Wilmington schools should promote collaboration, shared learning, and a mutual commitment to improvements that serve all students.

The action agenda depicted in Figure 1 builds upon recent improvements in education such as gains in early childhood education and college and career readiness. This action agenda works to accelerate and sustain those gains and complements the core areas recommended by the Advisory Committee's final report. Strengthening Wilmington education requires that actions be taken in each of these areas in a systematic, coordinated, and sustained fashion. The effectiveness of the action agenda in each of these areas is highly dependent upon the implementation of the action agenda in the other areas. Each area represents a stream of required decisions and initiatives. Progress on any one stream alone will not

be sufficient to support and sustain improved Wilmington student outcomes. Progress on all three of these streams together will result in improved student outcomes.

Creating Coherent and Responsive Governance of Wilmington Public Education

The governance of Wilmington public education is fragmented and dysfunctional. More coherent and responsive governance requires action on three fronts: (1) streamlining traditional school districts operating in Wilmington, (2) creating a coherent statewide plan guiding charter creation and creating a voluntary citywide education consortium, and (3) engaging Wilmington city government as a partner in public education. The Commission is committed to promoting a new vision of public education through which all units—traditional districts, vo-tech district, and charter schools—accept a shared responsibility for and act in concert to support the effective education of all Wilmington students.

Streamlining traditional districts responsible for Wilmington public education is a key part of the process needed to focus responsibility and leadership for the education of Wilmington students. It is certainly not the only part, but the Advisory Committee and the Commission concluded it is essential. The Commission's recommendations would consolidate more than half of Wilmington's public school students into a single district.

Beyond redistricting, the Commission seeks to expand collaboration among charters, among districts, and among charters and districts. A complementary part of the Commission's mandate is to actively promote and support such collaboration, so that the sum of the public education assets represented by the diversity of Wilmington schools can benefit more students in more ways than at any time in the past or present. Further, the Commission believes that the Wilmington city government must engage as a partner in improving Wilmington education. Collaboration at all levels is essential in order to scale-up school success for the benefit of all students.

Funding Student Success

Strengthening the overall education finance structure is of fundamental importance to public education across Delaware. While Delaware already spends a great deal of money on public education, the expenditure of those funds must focus more effectively on meeting the needs of Wilmington students—and other students at risk throughout Delaware. Actions are needed to ensure a sufficient and reliable revenue base at both the state and local levels and also to ensure that funds are allocated in ways that most directly and effectively address the diverse and often complex needs of students at risk. Targeted funding should support low-income students, English language learners, and other students at risk.

While the challenge of addressing these needs is statewide, it is particularly acute in the city of Wilmington, which has the highest rate of poverty in the state. Over the past fifteen years, working groups addressing Wilmington education have repeatedly recommended changes in education funding to better support Wilmington schools and students. All have addressed the unique needs of students in poverty and the additional challenges faced by schools with high concentrations of students at risk.

Additional funding is needed in many areas across the educational lifespan of children—from early childhood education, through K–12, to college and career readiness. Funding also is required to attract and retain the most highly qualified teachers into Wilmington schools.

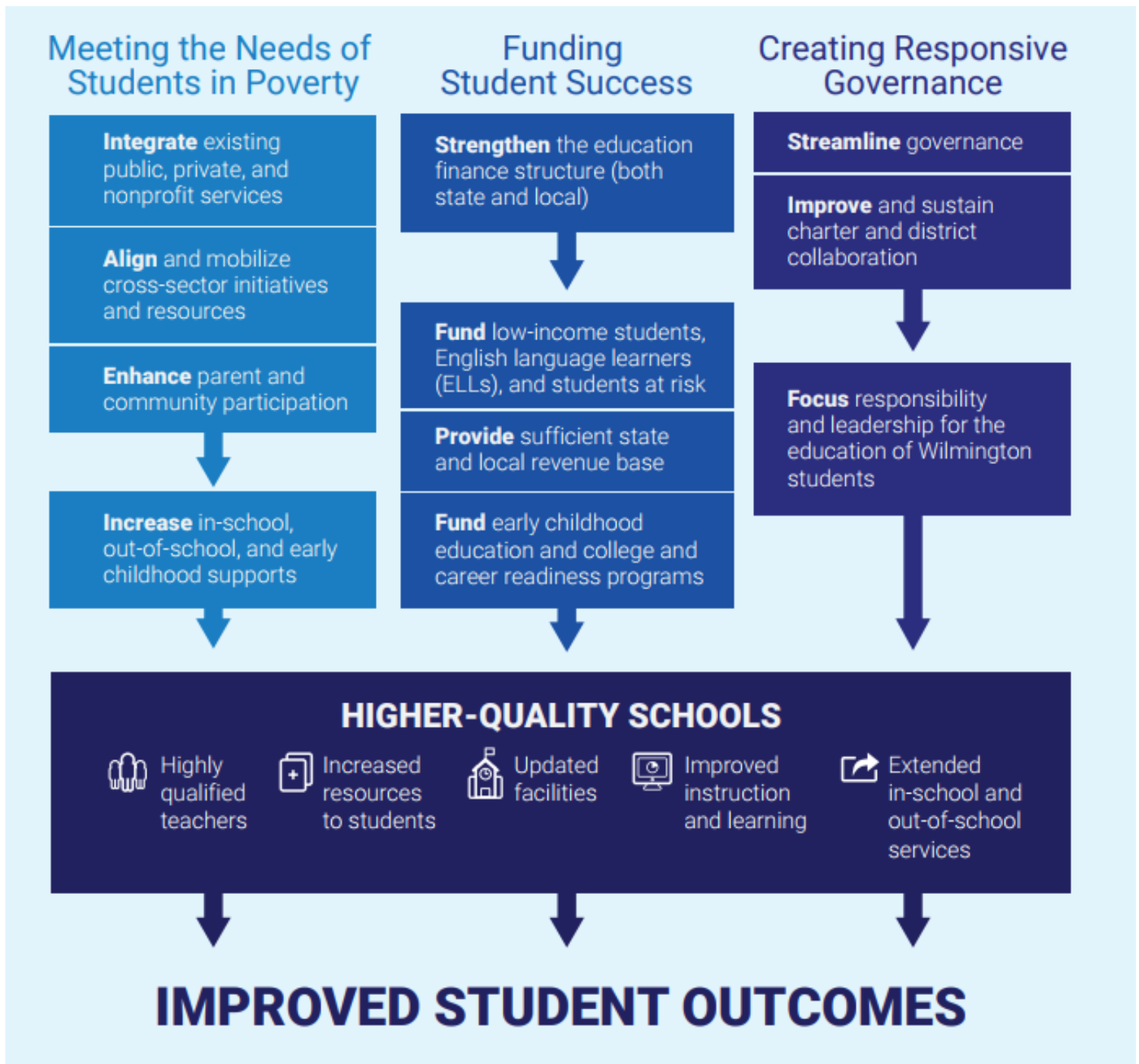
Meeting the Needs of Wilmington Students

Addressing the challenges of students in poverty requires a developmental approach that focuses on alignment of needed supports and services starting in early childhood and extending through entry into a career or higher education. Addressing the needs of these children and their families and providing the needed supports for schools with high concentrations of low-income students is a statewide challenge and needs to be met in a comprehensive manner. There is a need to develop and implement a comprehensive plan that can mobilize existing statewide institutions, policies, and resources toward the common objective of addressing the needs of children in poverty and supporting the schools in which those children are educated. As the Advisory Committee final report proposed:

Alignment of supports and services requires a strong partnership between the community and its schools. All sectors of the community should be mobilized.... Existing services provided by public, private, and nonprofit institutions should be more effectively and efficiently integrated at each stage of child development and in the transition from one state to another. The range of services needed include access to high-quality early childhood education; expanded school time and attention—including enhanced in-school services, such as school psychologists and social workers; availability of after-school programs; expanded school-to-work partnership programs; and more concerted efforts to reach and engage families in student learning and connect them to available services and supports. (Strengthening Wilmington Education: An Action Agenda, 2015, p. 50-51)

This stream of action requires coordinated efforts from all sectors, including more effective integration of state services and the alignment and mobilization of cross-sector initiatives and partnerships. It also requires greater parent and community engagement in Wilmington schools and in support of the continuous improvement of Wilmington public education. The combination and synergy of all of these changes are essential to increasing in-school and out-of-school supports, from early childhood until the transition to work and/or higher education.





Figure One: Action Agenda for Improved Wilmington Student Outcomes



Part III: Status Report on Action Agenda













July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017

The Commission has acted as community-based council outside of state agencies, working across all governmental units, educational entities, and private and nonprofit institutions to support the implementation of all recommended changes from the final report of the Advisory Committee. Last year, the Commission and the committees continued to build upon the majority of the Advisory Committee's recommendations. The status report below is for the period from July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017. It includes an assessment of progress for the Advisory Committee's action agenda and for acting on the subsequent priorities established by the Commission and its committees. See below for the key.

















Symbol	Status	Definition
	Completed	Action has been taken and wholly completed by the Commission.
	In Progress	Action has been taken to propose and partially complete the item, but it has not been fully finished.
	In Planning	Action discussed and in early planning stages.
	No Action	Action has not been taken.

Creating Responsive Governance				
Priorities	Status 2015–16	Status 2016–17	Action Taken	Responsibility
Develop plan for the Christina School District (CSD) to leave Wilmington and Red Clay Consolidated School District to include CSD's Wilmington students and schools.	▲	▲	Senate Bill (SB) 122 signed August 2015, mandates the Commission to develop a transition, resource, and implementation plan to carry out the Advisory Committee's recommendation on redistricting.	General Assembly
Colonial and Brandywine School Districts should continue to serve Wilmington students.	▲	▲	Colonial and Brandywine Boards of Education voted to continue to serve Wilmington students.	Commission and School Boards
The State Board of Education should approve the Commission's redistricting plan.	▲	▲	Plan submitted to State Board in December 2015. Approved by State Board in March 2016.	State Board of Education
The General Assembly should confirm the State Board's approval of Commission's redistricting plan.	▲	▲	SB 17 provided conditional approval, with requirement for return to legislature for final approval. No further action has been taken by the General Assembly.	General Assembly
Complete fiscal impact analysis of redistricting for 2017 legislative session.	▲	▲	The Commission's Fiscal Impact Ad-hoc Committee released its fiscal impact analysis of redistricting late Spring 2017.	Ad Hoc Committee and Commission
New charter approvals and expansions should be deferred pending a statewide needs assessment and a comprehensive plan for the desired number and mix of charter, district, and vo-tech schools.	▲	▲	The Delaware Department of Education completed the requirements, as they see it, of House Bill 56. The Commission feels that a statewide needs assessment has still not been done.	Department of Education and General Assembly
Charter and district schools should develop in accordance with a new vision that promotes shared capacity, collaboration, and best practices among charters and between charter and traditional schools.	▲	▲	The Charter and District Collaboration committee has considered barriers to collaboration and national best practices. Action on a proposed voluntary compact is underway.	Charter and District Collaboration Committee
A Charter Consortium or collaborative compact should be established to better support operational needs and best practices of all charter schools.	▲	▲	The Charter and District Collaboration committee has proposed a voluntary collaborative compact among schools that serve Wilmington students. Action on a proposed compact is underway.	Charter and District Collaboration Committee
An Office of Education and Public Policy should be created in City of Wilmington government to promote active community engagement in public education.	▲	▲	No action taken.	City of Wilmington government
The New Castle County (NCC) Vo-Tech District and traditional district schools and Wilmington charter schools should collaborate on expanded vocational education opportunities for Wilmington students.	▲	▲	No action taken.	Commission with districts and charters

Funding Student Success

Priorities	Status 2015–16	Status 2016–17	Action Taken	Responsibility
State funding should be allocated statewide for low-income students, English language learners, and basic special education students K–3.			The Commission has proposed legislation to change the State’s unit count allocation to include this funding. No action taken by the Delaware General Assembly on Commission proposal.	Commission working with the Governor, General Assembly, and community partners
Additional funding for early childhood education programs should be provided to meet the needs of students in poverty in Wilmington and statewide.			No action taken.	Commission, Delaware Office of Early Learning, Delaware Early Childhood Council
The State should increase funding for extended in-school and out-of-school services and supports, including after-school programs.			No action taken.	Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty Committee, Governor, and General Assembly, United Way of Delaware
Strengthening the revenue base supporting public education at both the state and local levels, including property reassessment.			No action taken.	Commission, County Governments, and General Assembly
Establish Wilmington Redistricting Transition Fund to support the costs of district reorganization and approve other funding adjustments needed for implementation of redistricting.			SB 300 establishes the fund with an initial allocation of \$200,000.	Governor and General Assembly
Existing state funding for low-income children and families should be redirected by a comprehensive state plan to more effectively address the needs of students in poverty.			This recommendation has been proposed to Governor Carney’s Family Services Cabinet Council, as similarly recommended in the Commission’ Policy Brief on Child Poverty.	Governor and State Agencies with Commission

Meeting the Needs of Wilmington Students

Priorities	Status 2015–16	Status 2016–17	Action Taken	Responsibility
A comprehensive early childhood education plan for high-quality programs and services for all children in Wilmington.			No action taken on a Wilmington plan. State investments have increased access to high-quality programs for children from low-income families.	Delaware Office of Early Learning, Delaware Early Childhood Council, Wilmington Early Childhood Council, Commission
A comprehensive plan for improving state and local services for low-income children and their families and for schools with high low-income student enrollment, including the integration of services and partnerships with private and nonprofit institutions.			Commission conducting Wilmington asset mapping, inventory of state policies, and mapping of finances. The Commission has also proposed this to Governor Carney's Family Services Cabinet Council.	Meeting the Needs of Wilmington Students (MNSP) Committee, Commission, Governor, and prospective the Interagency Resource Management Committee
The State should increase in-school supports for students experiencing trauma and other social and emotional challenges.			The Delaware Department of Education has begun a Compassionate Schools Initiative.	MNSP Committee, Governor, General Assembly, and State Departments
Delaware P–20 Council should be mandated to recommend improved alignment of resources and programs to support student learning and development from birth through college and workforce.			No action has been taken by the P–20 council, but future action is under consideration.	Governor, Secretary of Education, and P–20 Council
Mobilize and coordinate community (nonprofit and private) programs in support of schools with high concentrations of students in poverty.			United Way of Delaware leading plan to coordinate efforts in Wilmington and statewide. Wilmington Alliance proposed but not implemented by city government.	United Way of Delaware, MNSP Committee, community partners, Wilmington city government, and state agencies
Governor should convene higher education partnership to strengthen Delaware education including coordinated programs of professional development, school improvement, and adoption of national best practices.			No State action taken. University of Delaware (UD) established the Partnership for Public Education.	Governor and higher education institutions
Governor and business community should launch a business sponsorship program focused on Delaware schools with high percentages of low-income students.			No action taken.	Governor and business leaders in state and county chambers of commerce.
Strengthen parents, educators, and community engagement and support with schools as community assets.			UD has undertaken a survey of Wilmington parents/guardians about engagement and political efficacy. The PEaCE Committee is working with UD and Public Allies on a Pilot Program for Parental Choice and Information.	Parent, Educator, and Community Engagement (PEaCE) and MNSP Committees

Part IV: Commission and Committee Operations

One of the Commission's principal priorities has been public engagement with parents, students, educators, and community members. All Commission and committee meetings have been open to the public, and members of the public have been encouraged to participate. The Commission met seven times for official meetings from September 2016 to May 2017.

The agendas and minutes for each of these meetings can be found in the resources section of the Commission's website, www.solutionsfordelawareschools.com. At each of the Commission's meetings, the committee co-chairs provide an update of committees' work, receiving feedback on on-going projects and gathering ideas to bring back to their respective committees. The Commission also has the responsibility of reviewing any recommendations reported from the committees for action.

In addition to the official public meetings of the Commission, four active committees held approximately 35 meetings that were open to the public. The four active committees included: (1) meeting the needs of students in poverty, (2) charter-district collaboration, (3) parent, educator, and community engagement, and (4) fiscal impact ad-hoc. Agendas and minutes for each of these meetings can also be found on the committee pages of the Commission's website and on Delaware's public meeting calendar. Additionally, several of the committees broke into working groups that met between committee meetings in order to focus on key initiatives of the committees this year.

Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty

Since 2001, when the first report on strengthening Wilmington education was issued, the condition of poverty among Delaware children—particularly children living in the city of Wilmington—has become increasingly widespread. The increase in child poverty is occurring statewide. Some areas in southern Delaware are experiencing soaring numbers of children and families in poverty. For example, student poverty is growing not only in the city of Wilmington but also in Dover and in Sussex County, where one finds the highest percentage of poverty among the three counties. Despite the striking increase in poverty in southern Delaware, the highest concentration of children and families in poverty is in the city of Wilmington.

Understanding how the condition of poverty acutely affects school-age children in the city of Wilmington, the Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty Committee was tasked with developing a comprehensive plan to address unmet needs. The committee's work focuses on the integration of key services for low-income children and families and for schools with high concentrations of poverty. In order to properly address the challenges low-income children face, the committee and Commission believe the alignment of supports and services must track developmental needs from birth through college and entering the workforce. These services include but are not limited to access to high-quality early childhood education, enhanced in-school support, expanded school time, increased availability of after-school programs, and coordinated family engagement.

As the committee staunchly believes and works to exemplify, this work requires effective coordination among all sectors and greater parent and community engagement in Wilmington schools. Cross-sector and community mobilization ensures the integration and delivery of essential services at each stage of child development and through transitions from one stage to another. Aligning services and securing strong commitments and partnerships between the community and Wilmington schools are both crucial to the committee's work.

As a result of the committee's work in the 2016–17 school year, KIDS COUNT in Delaware, in partnership with the Commission, created [an inventory of poverty policies in Delaware](#) from 2009–2016 that captures enacted legislation in General Assembly 145 through General Assembly 148. These pieces of legislation were sorted into groups based on poverty related areas laid out in the Child Poverty Task Force report in 2009, these categories include: basic needs—housing; basic needs—food security; basic needs—transportation; health and healthcare; economic opportunity—building wealth and assets; early care and education; education; employability; child welfare; and adult and juvenile justice.

In the 2016–17 school year, the Institute for Public Administration (IPA) created a policy brief on child poverty in Delaware. This brief focuses on the relationships between poverty, education, and state policy and highlights the changing conditions of child poverty that lead to disparities in academic performance and outcomes for students and the challenges disproportionately faced by low-income families in Delaware. The committee also heard multiple presentation from groups involved in meeting the needs of children in poverty.

For the upcoming 2017–18 school year, the committee is working to determine the best way to build off this research and information and continue to align policy briefs, reports, and action steps with the commission's charge and path forward.

Parent, Educator, and Community Engagement

Effective public education in the city of Wilmington requires that the community and city government be engaged. Active engagement in both Wilmington schools and in the continuous improvement of Wilmington public education is crucial to the future success of the system and the students within it. Without the partnership among engaged community members, parents, educators, and city government, the work and sustainability of the Commission is not possible.

The Commission's Parent, Educator, and Community Engagement Committee formed to develop strategies and partnerships to enhance the ongoing engagement of parents and families to support the schools in which their students are enrolled. Understanding that active engagement is critical to the effectiveness of public education, the committee works to establish a strong Wilmington education partnership among schools and the families and communities they serve. While parent and family engagement is recognized broadly as of critical importance to student success, the actual mobilization of efforts is generally fragmented. This committee's mobilization efforts are geared toward determining the needs of Wilmington families and working with them on the school choice process.

The Parent, Educator, and Community Engagement Committee aligns with the Commission's belief that Wilmington schools must be seen as community assets. The committee strives to make this possible

through the promotion of ongoing, effective, two-way communication with parents, educators, and community residents. In addition, this work requires the ongoing participation of the community in both district- and charter-school decisions that impact the education of Wilmington students. Collaboration between community and school stakeholders is essential to address the needs of all students.

During the 2016–17 school year, the committee started work on two initiatives. The first is a survey of the political efficacy of Wilmington parents. The committee worked with a UD researcher to create a survey that fit the needs of the committee. The purpose of the survey and data collection was to examine how parent political efficacy in an urban region influences a parent’s perception of and interaction with their child’s school, and a parent’s trust in schools, political efficacy, and habits of participation. The survey was implemented in the summer of 2017, with the full report/draft report expected in 2018.

The other initiative, which will be implemented during the 2017–18 school year, is a Parent Choice Information Pilot. The purpose of the Parent Choice Information Pilot is to help families living in the city of Wilmington to learn how to successfully navigate the school choice process in Delaware. The project team will work to inform parents about all available school options through workshops, visits to community sites, and other public engagement methods (e.g., print resources). In order to identify optimal school options, the team will work with families to understand the educational environments at each school and how to determine the correct environment for their child both educationally and socially. The team will then support parents throughout the application process to ensure applications and supplemental documentation/assessments are completed effectively. After a child is invited to school(s), the project team will help families officially enroll their child in a school and review with families any school-specific policies and services that may impact their child’s maintenance of enrollment, such as attendance, appropriate school behavior, or dress code.

Charter and District Collaboration

The Advisory Committee recommended and the Commission endorsed that a combination of district, charter, and vo-tech schools continue to serve Wilmington students. Charter schools have become an important component of the Wilmington education system, and that role is projected to grow. Within the state, the city of Wilmington has demonstrated the densest and most rapidly growing concentration of charters with nearly two-thirds of statewide charter enrollment residing in the Christina, Red Clay Consolidated, and Colonial School Districts.

Governance over the Wilmington education system is fragmented due to the high number of school districts and charter schools that serve students. Operating outside of the traditional school districts, the majority of charter schools in Wilmington have grown into a separate public education delivery system despite operating in the same geographic location as traditional school districts. The Red Clay Consolidated School District is the only district that authorizes charter schools and the only district that works with charter schools on an ongoing basis. This exception aside, few successful collaborations and little promotion of shared capacity of best practices exists for improving education for all Wilmington students. The committee researched and recommends that there be a Wilmington Compact created

that brings together all education stakeholders to find shared goals and work collaboratively to improve education.

Achieving greater collaboration and communication among charter schools and among charter and traditional district schools is a key component of more responsive governance within the city of Wilmington. The work of the committee promotes the idea that the community's schools should share best practices of how to best meet the needs of Wilmington students. The Charter and District Collaboration Committee evaluates national best practices and their applicability in Delaware to provide a foundation of collaboration. Additionally, the committee was tasked with developing and promoting strategies that facilitate collaboration among charters and districts in order to ensure that no matter which school Wilmington students attend, all students have access to quality education and have their needs met.

During the 2016–17 school year, the committee developed a recommendation to create a Wilmington education compact, a policy brief was created about the compact as well as a draft plan. The policy brief focused on the fragmentation of public education responsibilities in the city of Wilmington and the challenges to collaboration among the schools that serve students living in the city of Wilmington. The benefits of collaboration are described and specific best practices from cities across the country are highlighted. The analysis concludes with options for the city of Wilmington, including the Commission's recommendation for the development of a collaborative compact that will strengthen capacity for the shared improvement of public education among district, charter, and vocational-technical (vo-tech) schools that serve students living in the city of Wilmington.

The draft proposal for the Wilmington education compact detailed how the Commission will ideally facilitate and support the development and operation of the compact working in alliance with district and charter leaders and with the Delaware Department of Education, the Delaware State Education Association, Wilmington city government, and Wilmington parents, students, educators and community leaders. The draft also highlights potential areas for collaboration within the city of Wilmington, these areas include: preparing teachers and educators, expanding educational opportunities, determining operational efficiencies, and educating students with high needs.

For the 2017–18 school year, the committee will work with stakeholders to determine the path forward for the compact and the most effective way to start collaborative conversations and, ultimately, the compact.

Part V: Reports and Publications

Reports and other documents on completed projects can be found on the Commission's website, www.solutionsfordelawareschools.com.

Reports

- [Wilmington Education Improvement Commission's Initial Annual Report, July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016](#)
- [Wilmington Education Improvement Commission Status Report, December 2016](#)
- [Status of Wilmington Public Education Data Report, School Year 2015–16](#)
- [Fiscal Impact Analysis of Redistricting](#)
- [Facilities Assessment \(conducted by Studio JAED\)](#)

Policy Briefs

- [Child Poverty Policy in Delaware: A Focus on Health and Education](#)
- [Charter District Collaboration: An Overview of National Best Practices and Options for Schools Serving Wilmington Students](#)

One-Pagers

- [Status of Wilmington Public Education](#)
- [Commission Overview and Action Agenda](#)

Miscellaneous

- [Commission Brochure, Spring 2017](#)
- [Delaware Poverty Policy Inventory: 2009–2016 \(conducted by KIDS COUNT in Delaware\)](#)

Part VI: Commission Funding and Resources

For the period of July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017, the work of the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission was supported by funding from public and private sources and from contributed services from many institutions and individuals. Support funding included contributed professional services provided by University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration (IPA) staff, in-kind and pro-bono services and contributions from other institutions and individuals, grants and donations, and a contract with IPA from the Delaware State Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The following section describes the types of services.

IPA Contract with OMB

A \$100,000 state contract between IPA and OMB provided funding for the provision of staff services to the Commission. The scope of work for the execution of the contract is as follows.

The University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration (IPA) will provide research, organizational, and operational support services to the Governor's Wilmington Education Improvement Commission (WEIC) under contract with the state's Office of Management and Budget.

Services

- Work with the chair and vice-chairs of WEIC. IPA will support the general operation of the Commission including planning, scheduling, agenda-setting, coordination with WEIC committees, and participation in and follow-up on meetings with government, education, and community leaders and engagement with students, parents, teachers, and the public.
- Coordinate Commission organization, including the management of meeting logistics, records, communications, and follow-up on decisions.
- Work with each WEIC committee to create and implement work plans that are aligned with the Commission's responsibilities and priorities and the responsibilities and priorities of the other committees.
- Carry out the research agendas of the Commission and its committees. Examples of proposed research that aligns with the Commission's work plans include, but are not limited to, examination of best practices for district/charter collaboration and public engagement, a development of an inventory of policies and fiscal commitments that impact low-income children and their families, including English language learners, and production of a map of a community resources and assets that may support schools with high concentrations of low-income students, English language learners, and other students at risk.
- Write and produce reports and work plans, including an annual report to be submitted by June 30, 2017 to the Governor, General Assembly, State Board of Education, and Secretary of Education. The annual report will include status updates for the commission and committees including any milestones and measures as determined by the committees.
- Support the communication and outreach activities of the Commission and its committees, including the Commission's website, presentations to community group, and the development of written communications for use in the public media.

- Develop and produce implementation plans for WEIC recommendations, including administrative support for WEIC committees and liaison with collaborating school districts, charter schools, state agencies, and other organizations.

Funding was used for staff salaries and benefits, student stipends, production of documents, reports, and presentation materials for the Commission and its committees, and costs for public meetings and transcriptions of public hearings. All funds were used for direct expenses and the university did not charge overhead or other indirect costs.

Contributed Professional Services by the University of Delaware

The contributions of the Project Director Dan Rich, IPA Director Jerome Lewis, Professor Elizabeth Farley-Ripple, and other UD faculty and senior professional staff were supported as part of the public service mission of the university and have been paid by the university. In addition to services supported by the state contract, IPA also contributed staff and student services to the Commission as part of their public service mission. The university also charged no overhead or other indirect costs.

Contributed Services from Other Institutions and Individuals

Contributions of in-kind and pro-bono support from private and nonprofit partners supplemented the work of the Commission. These resources include legal services, other administrative support from Tipton Communications, and research support from policy advisors.

Fund for Urban Education

The contribution from the Fund for Urban Education is reflected as a 10-year commitment of a total of \$100,000 to support the work of the Commission. The contributors to the Fund for Urban Education are Dr. Quinetta Roberson and Dr. Tony Allen with a matching contribution from Bank of America.

In addition to the contributions listed above, thousands of hours were contributed from other people involved in the work. The Commission wishes to thank the Red Clay Consolidated and Christina School Districts for the substantial effort and time they put into the fiscal impact analysis; without their support, the work would not have been completed. The Commission would also like to acknowledge the important contributions to this work from other districts and from the members of the Fiscal Impact Ad Hoc Committee, led by Joe Pika and staffed by Chris Kelly. Finally, the work of the members of the commission and its committees has been critical to the fulfillment of the Commission's responsibilities.

Part VII: Commission and Committee Membership

Wilmington Education Improvement Commission Members

As of June 2017

Tony Allen, Ph.D., Chair, Wilmington Resident and Senior Executive, Bank of America

S. Elizabeth Lockman, Vice-Chair, Wilmington Parent, Education Advocate, and Public Allies Alumna

Ralph Ackerman, Vice President, Brandywine School Board

Eve Buckley, Ph.D., Parent and Education Advocate, Christina School District

The Honorable Nnamdi Chukwuocha, Chair, Education, Youth & Families Committee, Wilmington City Council and Member, Wilmington Education Advisory Committee

Karen Eller, Teacher, Bancroft Elementary School, Christina School District and Member, Wilmington Education Advisory Committee

Tim Foxx, President and Chief Executive Officer, Communities in Schools Delaware

The Reverend Meredith L. Griffin, D.Min., Chairperson, Education Committee Interdenominational Ministers Action Council and Member, Wilmington Education Advisory Committee

Frederika Jenner, President, Delaware State Education Association

Yvonne Johnson, Parent and Education Advocate, Red Clay Consolidated School District

Joseph T. Laws, III, President, Colonial School District Board of Education

Margie López Waite, Head of School, Las Américas ASPIRA Academy

Harrie Ellen Minnehan, President, Christina School District Board of Education

Joseph Pika, Ph.D., Former President, State Board of Education

Chandra Pitts, Parent and Executive Director, One Village Alliance

The Honorable Charles Potter, Jr., Representative, Delaware General Assembly

The Honorable David P. Sokola, Senator, Delaware General Assembly

Michelle A. Taylor, President and Chief Executive Officer, United Way of Delaware of Delaware

Institute for Public Administration, Project Staff

October 2016 – June 2017

Daniel Rich, Ph.D., Policy Director

Kelly L. Sherretz, Project Manager

Kelsey Mensch, Administrative Coordinator

Jerome R. Lewis, Ph.D., IPA Director

Edward J. Freel, Senior Policy Advisor

Christopher Kelly, Policy Advisor

Lauren Barkachy, Research Assistant

Asha Chintala, Research Assistant

Rebecca Glinn, Research Assistant

Chester Holland, Research Assistant

Melissa Micek, Research Assistant

Cimone Philpotts Research Assistant

Lisa Moreland, Editor

Sarah Pragg, Policy Specialist

Pialee Roy, Research Assistant

Emily Thomas, Research Assistant

Legal Counsel

October 2016 – June 2017

Ian Connor Bifferato, Esq., The Bifferato Firm,
P.A.

Thomas F. Driscoll III, Esq., Tarabicos Grosso,
LLP

Charter and District Collaboration Committee

As of June 2017

Eve Buckley, Ph.D., Co-Chair, Parent and
Education Advocate, Christina School District

Aretha Miller, Co-Chair, Chief Executive Officer,
Community Education Building

Eric Anderson, Vice President, Charter School of
Wilmington

Dusty Blakey, Ed.D., Superintendent, Colonial
School District Superintendent

Ariadna Castaneda, Principal, Lewis Dual
Language Elementary School, Red Clay
Consolidated School District

David Davis, Univserv Director, Delaware State
Education Association and Former Teacher,
Christina School District

Bill Doolittle, Parent, Red Clay Consolidated
School District

Harrie Ellen Minnehan, Christina School
District School Board Member

Byron Murphy, Principal, Dickinson High
School, Red Clay Consolidated School
District

Yvonne Johnson, Parent and Education
Advocate, Red Clay Consolidated School
District

Equetta Jones, Teacher, Warner Elementary
School and Parent, Red Clay Consolidated
School District

Cora Scott, Director of Elementary Education,
Brandywine School District

Margie López Waite, Head of School, Las
Américas ASPIRA Academy

Parent, Educator, and Community Engagement Committee

As of June 2017

S. Elizabeth Lockman, Chair, Wilmington
Parent, Education Advocate, and Public Allies
Alumna

Donovan Alderman, Teacher, Dickinson High
School, Red Clay Consolidated School District

Alexis Andrianopoulos, Public Information
Officer, Brandywine School District

Theodore Boyer, Principal, A.I. duPont Middle
School, Red Clay Consolidated School District

Marsha Carter, Parent Advocacy Council for
Education

The Honorable Nnamdi Chukwuocha, Chair,
Education, Youth & Families Committee,
Wilmington City Council and Member,
Wilmington Education Advisory Committee

Kevin Dolan, Parent, Red Clay Consolidated
School District

Renee D. Duval, Esq., Family Law attorney with
Minster & Facciolo, LLC and Parent

Daphne Evans, Delaware Readiness Team Lead
Facilitator

The Reverend Meredith L. Griffin, D.Min.,
Chairperson, Education Committee
Interdenominational Ministers Action Council
and Member, Wilmington Education Advisory
Committee

Henry Harper, Ph.D., Former Superintendent,
Appoquinimink School District

Devon Hynson, Executive Director, Education
Voices, Inc.

Frederika Jenner, President, Delaware State
Education Association

Evelyn Keating, Parent, Red Clay Consolidated
School District

Wendy Lapham, Public Information Officer,
Christina School District

Pati Nash, Public Information Officer, Red Clay
Consolidated School District

Orrin White, Assistant Director, Community
Engagement, United Way of Delaware of
Delaware

Angela Wilson, Community Advocate

Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty Committee

As of June 2017

Michelle A. Taylor, Co-Chair, President and Chief Executive Officer, United Way of Delaware of Delaware

Tim Foxx, Co-Chair, President and Chief Executive Officer, Communities in Schools Delaware

Dawn E. Alexander, M.Ed., Preschool Expansion Coordinator, Colonial Early Education Program

Madeleine Bayard, Delaware Early Childhood Council and Vice President of Policy and Practice, Rodel Foundation of Delaware

Patricia Belle-Scruggs, M.Ed., Director, Regulatory Compliance, Boys and Girls Clubs of Delaware

Dusty Blakey, Superintendent, Colonial School District

Adriana Bohm, Ph.D., Member, Red Clay Consolidated School District School Board, and Parent Expert, Wilmington Education Advisory Committee

Vilicia Cade, Ed.D., Senior Director, Secondary Education, Christina School District

Paul Calistro, Executive Director, West End Neighborhood House

Nikki K. Castle, Ph.D., Wilmington Education Advisory Committee

Susan Cycyk, Division Director, Division of Prevention & Behavioral Health Services

Karen Eller, Teacher, Bancroft Elementary School, Christina School District

Caitlin Gleason, Education Associate, Alignment & Professional Development, Office of Early Learning, Delaware Department of Education

Gloria Grantham, Retired Educators for Academic Development

Logan Herring, Executive Director, Kingswood Community Center

Harold “Butch” Ingram, Principal, Bancroft Elementary, Christina School District

George Krupanski, President and Chief Executive Officer, Boys and Girls Club of Delaware, Inc.

Maria Matos, Executive Director, Latin American Community Center, Inc.

Patti Miller, Population Health Specialist, Nemours Children’s Health System

Leslie Newman, Chief Executive Officer and President, Children & Families First

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Kenny Oates, Academic Dean, Shortlidge Academy, Red Clay Consolidated School District

Luke Rhine, Director, Delaware CTE and STEM Office, Delaware Department of Education

Gwendolyn Sanders, Ed.D., Chair, Wilmington Early Learning Council

Cara Sawyer, Deputy Principal Assistant, Office of the Secretary, Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth, and their Families

Michael Simmonds, Title I Coordinator, Red Clay Consolidated School District

Deb Stevens, Director of Instructional Advocacy, Delaware State Education Association

Matt Swanson, Executive Chairman, Innovative Schools

Monique Taylor-Gibbs, Teacher, Warner Elementary School, Red Clay Consolidated School District

Ad-Hoc Fiscal Impact Committee

As of June 2017

Joseph Pika, Chair, WEIC Commissioner and Former President, State Board of Education

Ted Ammann, Assistant Superintendent, Red Clay Consolidated School District

Tammy Croce, Executive Director, Delaware Association of School Administrators

Karen Field Rogers, Deputy Secretary, Delaware Department of Education

Jill Floore, Chief Financial Officer, Red Clay Consolidated School District

Bill Freeborn, Executive Vice President, Delaware Contractors Association

Jason Hale, Director of Business, New Castle County Vo-Tech School District

Arthur Jenkins, Senior Legislative Analyst, Office of the Controller General

Mark Kleinschmidt, President, New Castle County Chamber of Commerce

Mary Nash Wilson, Fiscal and Policy Analyst, Office of Management and Budget

Margie López-Waite, Head of School, Las Américas ASPIRA Academy

John Marinucci, Executive Director, Delaware School Boards Association

Robert Silber, Chief Financial Officer, Christina School District

Jeff Taschner, Executive Director, Delaware State Education Association

Ad-Hoc Fiscal Impact Committee Support Staff

As of June 2017

Dan Rich, Commission Policy Director, and Professor of Public Policy, School of Public Policy & Administration, University of Delaware

Christopher Kelly, Commission Policy Advisor, Assistant Policy Scientist, Institute for Public Administration

Lauren Barkachy, Graduate Public Administration Fellow, Institute for Public Administration

Emily Thomas, Graduate Public Administration Fellow, Institute for Public Administration

Alexis West, Graduate Public Administration Fellow, Institute for Public Administration