



Wilmington Education Improvement Commission

Solutions for Delaware Schools

A FRAMEWORK FOR CHANGE

Introduction

The Wilmington Education Improvement Commission (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 how to 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 as described in *Strengthening Wilmington Education: An Action Agenda*.

The Commission's framework for change focuses on three areas of critical importance for an improved education system and student outcomes: creating responsive governance, funding student success, and meeting the needs of students in poverty.

Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty

Integrate existing public, private, and nonprofit services

Align and mobilize cross-sector initiatives and resources

Enhance parent and community participation

Increase in-school, out-of-school, and early childhood supports

Funding Student Success

Strengthen the education finance structure (both state and local)

Fund low-income students, English language learners (ELLs), and students at risk

Provide sufficient state and local revenue base

Fund early childhood education and college and career readiness programs

Creating Responsive Governance

Streamline governance

Improve and sustain charter and district collaboration

Focus responsibility and leadership for the education of Wilmington students

HIGHER-QUALITY SCHOOLS



Highly qualified teachers



Increased resources to students



Updated facilities



Improved instruction and learning



Extended in-school and out-of-school services

IMPROVED STUDENT OUTCOMES



MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS IN POVERTY

Poverty is a dominant force limiting educational success for a growing number of Delaware children. The condition of poverty has become increasingly widespread among Delaware children. Children in poverty, particularly in the City of Wilmington, often face harsh circumstances because their environment imposes burdens upon them that extend far beyond the limits of their families' incomes. Most schools are not equipped to help students who carry the traumas they experience in their daily lives to school. Supporting schools with high concentrations of students in poverty, ELLs, and students at risk requires the mobilization of resources from all sectors at all levels of education.

Priorities and Recommendations

- High-quality programs, services, and early childhood education for all children in Wilmington
- A comprehensive plan for improving and integrating state and local services for low-income children and their families and for schools with high enrollments of low-income students
- Increased in-school supports for students experiencing trauma and other social and emotional challenges
- Improved P–20 alignment of resources and programs to support student learning and development from birth through college and workforce
- Coordinated community (nonprofit and private) support of schools with high concentrations of students in poverty



Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty

Integrate existing public, private, and nonprofit services

Align and mobilize cross-sector initiatives and resources

Enhance parent and community participation



Increase in-school, out-of-school, and early childhood supports



FUNDING STUDENT SUCCESS

Although Delaware spends a great deal on the public education system, there is no state allocation for low-income students, ELLs, and basic K–3 special education. Providing these funds is the Commission's top priority and the essential foundation for equitable funding of public education that meets the differing needs of all Delaware students.

Priorities and Recommendations

- Statewide funding for low-income students, ELLs, and basic special education students K–3
- Funding for early childhood education programs to meet the needs of students in poverty in Wilmington and statewide
- Increased funding for extended in-school and out-of-school services and supports, including after-school programs
- Strengthened revenue base that supports public education at both the state and local levels, including property reassessment

Funding Student Success

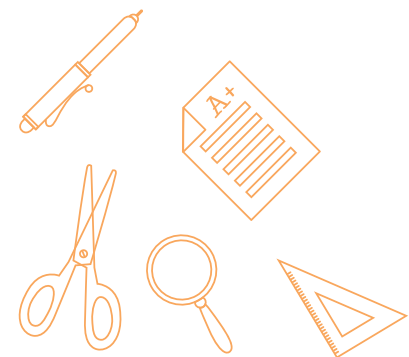
Strengthen the education finance structure (both state and local)



Fund low-income students, ELLs, and students at risk

Provide sufficient state and local revenue base

Fund early childhood education and college & career readiness programs





CREATING RESPONSIVE GOVERNANCE

Public education governance for City of Wilmington students is fragmented among districts and charter schools, with little coordination or collaboration. Coherent and responsive governance is essential to improve student outcomes. Achieving greater collaboration among charter schools, among districts, and among charter and district schools is critical to overall student success.

The Commission is committed to a new vision of public education through which all public schools—traditional district schools, vocational-technical (vo-tech) schools, and charter schools—accept a shared responsibility for, and act in concert to support, the effective education of all Wilmington students. Such collaboration should be a keystone of public education throughout Delaware.

Priorities and Recommendations

- Streamline the delivery of public education in the City of Wilmington to support greater coherence and accountability
- Use a statewide assessment of the developmental needs of students to guide the approval and expansion of new schools and programs
- Develop all schools in accordance with a new vision that promotes shared capacity, collaboration, and best practices among charter and traditional schools
- Establish a collaborative compact to better support operational needs and best practices of all public schools serving City of Wilmington students

Creating Responsive Governance

Streamline
governance

Improve and sustain
charter and district
collaboration

Focus responsibility
and leadership for
the education of
Wilmington students



COMMISSIONERS

Tony Allen, Ph.D., Chairperson

Wilmington resident and Provost and Executive Vice President, Delaware State University

S. Elizabeth "Tizzy" Lockman, Vice-Chairperson

Wilmington Parent, Education Advocate, and Public Allies Alumna

Ralph Ackerman

Vice-President, Brandywine School District Board of Education

Adriana Bohm, Ph.D.

Member, Red Clay Consolidated School District Board of Education and Sociology Professor, Delaware County Community College

Eve Buckley, Ph.D.

Parent and Education Advocate, Christina School District

The Honorable Nnamdi Chukwuocha

Chair, Education, Youth & Families Committee, Wilmington City Council

Karen Eller

Teacher, Christina School District and Member of Wilmington Education Advisory Committee

Tim Foxx

President and Chief Executive Officer, Communities in Schools Delaware

Reverend Meredith L. Griffin Jr., D.Min.

Chairperson, Interdenominational Ministers' Action Council of Delaware Education Committee and Member, Christina School District Board of Education

Frederika Jenner

Retired Educator, Red Clay Consolidated School District

Yvonne Johnson

Parent and Education Advocate, Red Clay Consolidated School District

Joseph T. Laws

President, Colonial School District Board of Education

Margie López Waite

Head of School, Las Américas ASPIRA Academy Charter School

Mike Matthews

President, Delaware State Education Association

Valentina Maza

Student, William Penn High School

Harrie Ellen Minnehan

Member, Christina School Board of Education

Tom Ogden

Deputy Chief of Staff for Fiscal and Operations Management, City of Wilmington

Joe Pika, Ph.D.

Former President, State Board of Education

The Honorable Charles Potter, Jr.

Representative, Delaware General Assembly

The Honorable David Sokola

Senator, Delaware General Assembly

Michelle Taylor

President, United Way of Delaware

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (IPA)

Dan Rich, Ph.D., Commission Policy Director

Professor of Public Policy and Senior Public Policy Fellow

Kelly Sherretz, Commission Project Manager

Policy Scientist

Haley Qaissaune, Commission Coordinator

Researcher

IPA DIRECTOR

Jerome Lewis, Ph.D.

IPA PROJECT STAFF

Chris Kelly, Commission Policy Advisor

Assistant Policy Scientist

Sarah Pragg, Commission Communications Advisor
*Policy Specialist***Lisa Moreland, Commission Editor**
Policy Scientist

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION FELLOWS

Stephanie Becker

Chester Holland

Melissa Micek

Cimone Philpotts

As of January 2018.

WILMINGTON EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT COMMISSION

Solutions for Delaware Schools

The Wilmington Education Improvement Commission is a 23-person group mandated by law to 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 and recommend actions to address the needs of all schools statewide that have high concentrations of students in poverty, ELLs, and other students at risk.

Prepared in partnership with the University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration.

Photographs courtesy of the University of Delaware.

Wilmington Education
Improvement Commission
Solutions for Delaware Schools

**For more information, visit
solutionsfordelawareschools.com.**