

**Redding Consortium for Educational Equity
Full Body Meeting
May 9, 2024**

Meeting Minutes

The Redding Consortium full body meeting convened at 7:05 p.m. at Delaware Technical Community College Orlando J. George Jr. Campus in Wilmington, Delaware. Senator Elizabeth Lockman, co-chair of the Redding Consortium, welcomed all in attendance.

I. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Margie López Waite, Consortium member, motioned to approve the April 11, 2024, meeting minutes. Representative Nnamdi Chukwuocha, Consortium member, seconded the motion. All members voted in favor of passing the meeting minutes.

Stephanie Ingram later motioned to modify the April 11, 2024, meeting minutes to recognize the leadership position of Kyle Lynch as the Vice President of the Christina Paraprofessional Association. Senator Lockman seconded the motion. All members voted in favor of modifying the meeting minutes.

II. Updates and Presentations

A. Update from Representative Nnamdi Chukwuocha:

Rep. Nnamdi Chukwuocha provided an update about his presentation with Councilman Jea Street to the Wilmington City Council's Education, Youth & Families Committee meeting on May 8th. Rep. Chukwuocha shared that Wilmington City Council supported the interim plan. He also stressed the urgency of this work to heal divisions in the city to promote systemic change. Rep. Chukwuocha also announced that he and Councilman Street had a presentation scheduled on May 16th to provide an update at the State Board of Education's monthly meeting regarding the Redding Consortium's redistricting interim plan.

III. Interim Plan Framework for Redistricting: Reviewing and Discussing Feedback

Shelley Rouser, a Redding Consortium staff member and meeting facilitator, outlined the goals of the meeting and that there would be a vote on each section of the revised interim plan.

Rouser shared that the legislation stipulates that the Consortium may submit one or more interim plans without including all components of the final plan to provide structure and dialogue for a future comprehensive redistricting plan.

Rouser restated the three sections of the Revised Interim Plan Draft:

- **Section 1:** The Removal of the Christina School District from the City of Wilmington

- **Section 2:** A Process and Timeline for Developing a Final Redistricting Plan and Stakeholder Strategy
- **Section 3:** Further Recommendations for Action

Through Consortium member discussion, it was confirmed that one section could pass even if others could not and that a "no" vote means the plan would not go to the State Board of Education.

IV. Voting on Interim Plan by Sections

A. Section 1: Removal of Christina School District

Section 1 of the interim plan discussed the removal of Christina School District (CSD) from the city of Wilmington and removed the specifics around Wilmington Learning Collaborative's immediate support to CSD from the plan.

Kevin Kelley inquired about the specific boundaries of the Christina School District and asked if there was a document detailing these boundaries. Sen. Lockman responded that these details would be included in the final redistricting plan.

Maria Matos asked if there had been a determination about what would happen to the Christina schools in the city if the vote passed. Shelley Rouser explained that the interim plan is a framework for redistricting and that future planning about this would be required for the full plan. Sen. Lockman added that section 1 reflects the consensus heard from Consortium members' previous feedback, and Rouser emphasized that the approach and timeline in the interim plan would account for these planning considerations.

Tika Hartsock asked about the number of districts affected. Sen. Lockman indicated that section 2 of the interim plan would address this issue.

Dan Shelton relayed on behalf of the Christina School District Board of Education that the Christina School District is committed to being part of the solution, but that the board voiced concerns about the need for community input, recognition of staff uncertainty, and questions about the clarity of the plan. Shelton emphasized the importance of supporting and retaining CSD teachers due to concerns about this instability around redistricting and getting support from the city's residents. Representative Chukwuocha clarified that the discussion was about the interim plan.

Stephanie Ingram asked if the agreement meant that the Christina School District no longer had governance over the students in question. Sen. Lockman confirmed this, acknowledging that this agreement could raise subsequent questions. Ingram also expressed concern about not submitting a fully developed plan to the State Board without context, which might cause stress to educators due to this potential uncertainty. Sen. Lockman hoped for more momentum to

move forward with planning. Ingram requested a more detailed plan with clearer steps to achieve the goals stated in the interim plan.

Joel Coppadge, proxy for Consortium member Jennifer Thompkins, questioned the benefit of removing the Christina School District and asked for clarification on the advantages of this section of the plan. Rep. Chukwuocha explained that starting with Christina's removal in the interim plan addresses existing challenges and sets the stage for further decisions on redistricting planning.

Hartsock echoed Ingram's sentiments and shared her experience at the Christina School District. Hartsock stated that targeting a specific district for removal can have adverse effects.

Kim Rice, proxy for Consortium member Ayanna Khan, asked if community feedback had been gathered. Rep. Chukwuocha explained that a subcommittee would be formed for community engagement and that the proposed action to remove the Christina School District was due to long-standing challenges faced by this non-contiguous school district in the city of Wilmington.

Raye Jones Avery noted that having multiple governing bodies is inefficient for impacting children's education. Jones Avery believed the motion could help narrow down options for a redistricting approach without excluding future considerations.

Kevin Kelley motioned to approve the plan with Rep. Chukwuocha seconding the motion.

The motion to approve section 1 passed.

B. Section 2: Development of Two-District Approach

Section 2 provided an overview of the development of a two-district approach and incorporated it into the redistricting planning timeline and stakeholder engagement strategy. Rep. Chukwuocha and Councilman Street will co-chair the redistricting efforts with the Consortium vetting various plans over the next 18 months. Additionally, this section also establishes the three Redding governance subcommittees: Operational Impacts, Fiscal Impacts, and Community Engagement.

Rice emphasized that community engagement should be prioritized, suggesting that a committee's pulse should be taken before making decisions. Rep. Chukwuocha shared that the committees are not ranked in order of priority and acknowledged that community engagement is an integral part of each subcommittee's work.

Maria Matos noted that there are already five previous redistricting plans. She stated that the current plan is not new, referencing the WEIC plan. Matos highlighted that community involvement has been an ongoing part of the process with each previous commission.

Stephanie Ingram asked about who would be serving on the Operational and Fiscal subcommittees since the potential appointments are not as detailed as the Community Engagement subcommittee, as written in the interim plan. Rep. Chukwuocha stated the membership in those subcommittees would be decided by the full body. Ingram asked if the interim plan would be submitted as written to the State Board without input from Consortium members about the subcommittee appointments.

Sen. Lockman confirmed that the interim plan would be sent to the State Board for consideration for this iteration of the redistricting framework, but that the Consortium is not bound to wait for further work and could bring additional proposals from the Consortium to the State Board pending their feedback. The purpose is to engage with the State Board and have an open dialogue about the continual development of each iteration of the framework.

Raye Jones Avery motioned to approve this section. Kevin Kelley seconded the motion.

The motion to approve section 2 passed.

C. Section 3: Future Recommendations

Section 3 established a framework for a final redistricting plan to include more detail on broad policy reforms related to revenue, state investment, and charter and choice reform.

Dorrell Green, Raye Jones Avery, and Joel Coppadge, proxy for Consortium member Jennifer Thompkins, emphasized the need to look at the broader ecosystem for families beyond wraparound services in schools, like housing instability and access to healthcare. This discussion emphasized the importance of understanding lived conditions for students and analyzing root causes.

Sen. Lockman acknowledged the need for a comprehensive needs assessment that examines these broader factors impacting students. Green asked who the Consortium could potentially partner with for this data to avoid missing the mark by only discussing proficiency rates without taking into account the broader ecosystem.

Jones Avery added that the Redding Consortium should take the responsibility of leading this effort as a means to conduct an updated analysis of the ecosystem with the potential to identify bright spots in different neighborhoods.

Joseph Jones asked about the lack of clear examples for choice and charter reform under section 3 of the interim plan. Jones asked if there was any additional context to the lack of inequity that currently exists. Sen. Lockman shared that the language is directly from the Delaware Code establishing the body from the Consortium's statute of reforms that the Consortium may consider in a potential redistricting plan, but acknowledged that more work is needed to speak to the evidence and investments in this area.

Matt Denn supported Green and Jones Avery's comments about including the needs assessment. Denn also recommended that the Consortium should not remove the enhanced wraparound services language from the list of recommendations for further action from the interim plan since the teachers and stakeholders he has met with often highlight the benefit of wraparound services for students. He proposed reinstating the wraparound services language into the revised interim plan.

Green made a motion to include enhanced wraparound services language with a stipulation to include a social determinants of health and education needs assessment in the interim plan. Rice seconded the motion. Bettina Tweardy Riveros asked for clarification on the motion to approve section 3 with the addition of the social determinants of health and education language and wraparound services. Maria Matos clarified that this updated motion language would include the needs assessment.

Sen. Lockman restated the motion to approve section 3 as written in the interim plan, pending inclusion of the social determinants needs assessment and the addition of wraparound services.

The motion to approve section 3 passed.

Rep. Chuwkuocha thanked members for their participation in this process and shared that he looks forward to their continued engagement in the development of a full redistricting plan. Councilman Street also thanked members for their vote of support for the interim plan, but he stated the immediate need to provide critical support services for students in the meantime before the long-term redistricting planning process takes place. He recommended providing additional academic support services and mental health services for students in city schools.

V. Public Comment

Dwight Davis, a member of the Wilmington City Council Reparations Task Force, announced that Wilmington City Council passed and accepted the Reparations Task Force Report. Davis shared that the Reparations Task Force Report is the best path forward by the people of Wilmington for the citizens of the city of Wilmington. Davis implored for the Consortium to read the report and work with the city on its implementation.

Kyle Lynch, Vice President of the Christina Paraprofessional Association, raised concerns about not being able to find the meeting location on the Redding Consortium's website. Lynch also stressed to the Consortium the need for staff and personnel engagement and the immediate activation of the community engagement subcommittee. He recommended more robust engagement with impacted school communities as a part of the planning process. Lynch criticized the placement of public comment at the end of meeting and advocated for the public to be heard before actions and votes.

Betty Malar, a paraprofessional in the Christina School District and a resident of the Red Clay Consolidated School District, expressed concern that Wilmington Learning Collaborative and

Redding Consortium's work on these proposed plans and reforms are focused primarily on the interests of consultants and politicians and not on the students. She suggested that these plans are not what is in the best interests of fully supporting students and the need to send them to welcoming districts that have a proven track record of success with city students. Additionally, Malar called for developing a high-impact plan that can successfully turn around city schools.

Kendra Brown, President of PACE, urged the Consortium to prioritize the community and not to put them last. She shared that the community is trusting the Consortium to do the work to better the education of city of Wilmington students. Brown stated that the Consortium needs to invest in doing the work of putting a plan into place and work with the community to make this happen.

James Taylor mentioned some of the recent internal conflicts with the Christina school board and proposed an area of investigation for the Consortium to look into around the ethics, rules, and clarification of the power and authority that school boards have in their districts. Taylor recommended that the Consortium put forth model ethics for these school boards.

Helen Anderson, a community advocate, Christina staff member, and Red Clay resident, emphasized the historical legacy of longstanding educational issues across the school districts serving city of Wilmington students and the need for effective solutions for these underserved students. Anderson stressed the importance of not just questioning plans but actively doing the work and progressing to address these persistent problems across city of Wilmington schools.

VI. Adjournment

Senator Lockman adjourned the meeting at 8:44 p.m.

Attendance

Redding Consortium Members

Senator Elizabeth Lockman, Co-Chair
Matthew Denn, Co-Chair
Raye Jones Avery
Aaron Bass
Councilwoman Maria Cabrera
Representative Nnamdi Chukwuocha
Joel Coppadge, proxy for Jennifer
Thompkins
Dorrell Green
Lincoln Hohler
Stephanie Ingram
Joseph Jones
Kevin Kelley
Maria Matos
Noelle Picara
Kim Rice, proxy for Ayanna Khan
Holly Sage, proxy for Jeffrey Menzer
Dan Shelton
Jim Simmons, proxy for Senator Eric
Buckson
Bettina Tweardy Riveros
Margie López Waite
Danya Woods
Secretary Mark Holodick - ex-officio
Nicholas Konzelman - ex-officio

IPA/DSU Staff

Haley Burns
Jenna DeMaio
Alaina Robinson
Shelley Rouser
Kelly Sherretz
Ashley Wilkinson

Members of the Public:

Helen Anderson
Kendra Brown
Sydney Brown
Laura Burgos
Dwight L. Davis
Steven Davis
Kathy Dulis
Nora Durant
Laurie Girardi
Susan Habersto
Tanya Hettler
Lynne Howard

Jenny Howard
David Kohan
Valerie Jermusyk
Lavina Jones-Davis
Nicole Kennedy
VJ Leonard
Y.F. Lou
Kyle Lynch
Jaclyn Lynch
Betty Malar
Ahdallah McBey
Monica Moriak
Bradley Moore
Collin O'Mara
Kenny Rivera
Rep. Cyndie Romer
Cora Scott
Susan Sander
Brenné Shepperdson
Kathleen Smith
Michelle Smith
Germaine Solomon
Malik Stewart
Councilman Jea P. Street
James Taylor
David Tull
LaToya Winkfield
Shaniqua Williams
Alexis Wrease
Jennie Yeow