

Wilmington Education Improvement Commission
Meeting the Needs of Student in Poverty Committee
United Way of Delaware, Wilmington, DE
Meeting Minutes – October 5, 2016

Co-Chair Michelle Taylor called the meeting to order at 4:10 pm.

Michelle Taylor began by welcoming the members back from their summer break. She then asked the members of the committee to introduce themselves, followed by introductions from members of the public.

M. Taylor continued the conversation with an overview of the meeting. She stated that the co-chairs prepared the agenda to discuss what work was done over the summer and where the committee currently is. She mentioned that her and one of the other Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty (MNSP) Committee Co-chairs, Jackie Jenkins, used the summer to get more information and data surrounding the work of the committee.

Approval of Minutes

M. Taylor then asked if there was a motion to approve meeting minutes from the previous meeting on May 22, 2016. A motion was made and seconded, the May 22, 2016 minutes from the MNSP meeting were approved.

Updates on Wilmington Education Improvement Commission

M. Taylor then provided updates on the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission (the Commission). Michelle noted that the Commission did not meet over the summer but held their first meeting last month. She mentioned that the first Commission meeting discussed battling a common public perception of the Commission's work going away. She noted that there was a two-pager legislative update document that was shared with the Commission and will be distributed to the Committee. Further, she reported that this year, the Commission prioritizes the work of MNSP, Charter District Collaboration, and the Parent, Educator, and Community Engagement Committees. She mentioned that the redistricting and funding student success committees are on hold as of now.

Kelly Sherretz, University of Delaware Institute for Public Administration, mentioned that in response to Senate Bill 300, which was passed in June, a new Fiscal Impact Ad-Hoc Committee was created and will assess the fiscal impact of the proposed transition of students from the Christina School District to the Red Clay Consolidated School District.

M. Taylor concluded the discussion by mentioning that the Commission would like to see some wins around the work that the committee is doing. The committee must continue to look for ways to better meet the needs of kids at all levels and look at tangible and sustainable goals.

Work Accomplished Over the Summer

M. Taylor began the discussion by stating that her and Jackie, Co-chair of MNSP, looked at early wins. One action was creating a partnership at Warner at the end of the school year including a parent engagement piece. Secondly, they hosted My Very Own Library at Blue Rocks.

Additionally, Jackie helped to initiate a youth transition academy for new incoming middle school students. This academy included wrap-around services and has a commitment to expand it this upcoming summer. Jackie created a great relationship with families and leveraged the relationships to meet family and student's needs. The only downside was the lack of attendance, but maybe the Committee can help engage young people and their families. There is potential to grow the program and the committee might help. This work also has a connection to the Parent, Educator, and Community Engagement Committee.

M. Taylor gave an update on the asset mapping and policy inventory projects led by the University of Delaware team. The asset-mapping project is taking longer than expected and the expected timeline for completion is in the spring. Part of the reason for the delay is the work with the legislature in June. But the committee work is more of a focus this year.

Kelly Sherretz gave a brief update on the policy inventory. That specific project has been taken on by Kids Count and will be done in the next few months.

Caprice Torrance, United Way Associate, led a presentation on the Service Mapping Project United Way has conducted. Caprice noted that to conduct this Service Mapping Project, they identified 8 promise communities within Wilmington and picked communities based off of the levels of children in poverty. The goal was to understand the services that exist and how to connect the services to the children and families that need them. In order to assess the information, Caprice noted that they broke down information in to three categories: (1) universal, (2) moderate, and (3) high risk. The universal level included the total population, the moderate level included population of children on public assistance, and the high risk level included children who are in the system. This project looked at kids from birth through age seventeen. Furthermore, there were maps presented on school feeder patterns, services provided to the Wilmington promise communities, and the adult population. This project looked at kids from birth through age seventeen. Furthermore, there were maps presented on school feeder patterns, services provided to the Wilmington promise communities, and the adult population. To see the PowerPoint presentation, please see the attached item titled "Service Mapping."

M. Taylor added that this work demonstrates that services exist but they are just not coordinated. The question remains around in-supports and if there are additional services to be provided by the schools so we can better coordinate services for all children and families. There is always a question on (1) awareness, (2) access, and (3) alignment and integration and (4) gaps. Further, it is important to consider the continuum of services and how they are mapped and what birth – seventeen looks like. She asked the committee to ask additional questions or provide feedback about items that they want to include in further analysis.

Dawn discussed the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Impact grant (ECCS) that has been received in partnership with the Department of Public Health. This grant will help aid the developmental screening processes for schools. The goal of the grant is to both understand which children have received screening and what pockets of communities do not have access to early screening. There was further discussion of the work of the readiness teams in implementing the grant:

- Working with Public Allies to collect data on family access to developmental screening for early stages
- Working with Delaware STARS to ensure accountability in making sure parents receive the information they need
- Affords opportunity to collectively look and monitor the data of children. This provides opportunities for readiness teams to follow up with parents and provide them with options that can benefit their child

M. Taylor noted that this is a recommendation from Dawn as a piece of low hanging fruit for the committee to address and potentially explore. She also suggested that there should be a PowerPoint presentation and invite someone to speak on behalf of the program. Dawn will invite Jeannie Walko to present at the meeting in December and invite Ages and Stages to present in November.

M. Taylor transitioned the conversation back to the work over the summer to recap the different meetings with Principals. Jackie and M. Taylor met with 6 of the 8 Wilmington school principals. All principals were given the magic wand and asked if they could waive it, what would they want to see done differently. Many great ideas were discussed to how MSNP can better work to meet the needs. Overview of the conversations can be found in the attached document titled “Findings from Analysis of Needs Identified Through School Principal Feedback.”

From these meetings, the theme of better integration of services stood out. Organizations are anxious to also create better partnerships with schools. One example is an early learning center that wants feedback on how the program helps students and schools in order to improve the services they provide. Principals want to work more closely with early learning centers and understand feeder patterns but most do not do this. This can be a low-hanging fruit for the committee to explore.

Further, principals are looking for ways to mentor younger students as they talked about programs for college and career readiness. M. Taylor suggested a pilot program to get groups to come in to talk about their career and schools and leave the students with teachers from the schools of the people attended. Adriana mentioned her experience at a PTA meeting as they are looking for speakers to come into their meetings to give information and contacts. She suggested that the committee expand this with other schools.

M. Taylor mentioned that there are more themes from the conversations that are important and will be shared with the committee. She noted that some can be accomplished using the resources among the committee while others can be tougher to accomplish but planned by the committee.

There was a discussion about other ideas the committee could address:

- Work towards ensuring that a student’s cumulative file follows them to kindergarten. It is important for kindergarten teachers to know and have the data on their students.
- Late kindergarten registration is an issue across the board for all principals. The committee can focus efforts on this and consider it as a low-hanging fruit. It was

suggested that registration for Kindergarten be reinforced for students receiving state services. There is already a requirement to receive services, the child must be in school.

- There is no cross-accountability. The registration process is the same for everyone but different schools interact with the process in different ways. This can prevent families from registering their students on time.

Direction of the Committee

M. Taylor transitioned to discuss early wins for the committee. Recommendations for early wins are identified as:

- Better integration of services and linkages between school and community such as community schools and co-location of services in schools, including connection of families to State and community services available to help them address basic needs and employment, and a formal process and support for transitioning children from childcare centers to kindergarten
- More social work and behavioral health services and resources for students and families in school and out of school, such as family crisis therapists, social workers, and counselors; and support for addressing trauma
- More emphasis on cultural competency such as bi-lingual staff and training for parents, staff, and administrators
- Need for more family engagement starting in early childhood and throughout K-5 and beyond, including helping families to realize the need for education for their children and be able to support their child's learning

Nikki mentioned that looking at after school programs and services is also important. She used REEDS as an example and suggested the committee look into it.

M. Taylor noted that there is a taskforce that is working on the alignment of after-school programs to make sure it is all connected. It is clear that resources will be down across the state and we must do our best to look at limited resources and understand where to best invest them overall.

The committee discussed that they must add poverty and trauma training for teachers and administrators. It would be beneficial to come up with a package that has information and resources on the delivery of knowledge and start with school leadership. Districts are also paying attention to suspension rates and how restorative practices can help keep students in school.

M. Taylor mentioned that as a committee, they have the groupings and can begin to build out these to look at some of the work that is being done. She noted we now need to begin to pick the pieces to begin work on and can work on these pieces at the next committee meeting.

Public Comment

Gwen Angalet mentioned that the work aligns with the CDC. She noted that we must align and demonstrate what needs to happen at every level.

M. Taylor adjourned the meeting at 5:35 pm.

**Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty
October 5, 2016
Meeting Attendance**

Committee Members

Nikki Castle
Adriana Bohm
Monique Taylor-Gibbs
Kenny Oates
Michelle Taylor
Dawn Alexander
Madeleine Bayard
Vi Cade
Frederika Jenner – Filling in for Deb Stevens

IPA Support Staff

Kelly Sherretz
Kelsey Mensch

Members of the Public

Caprice Torrance
Gwen Angalet
Gahwni Murugi-Jenkins