

**Wilmington Education Improvement Commission**  
**Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty Committee**  
United Way of Delaware  
Meeting Minutes  
November 2, 2016

**Michelle Taylor, co-chair, called the meeting to order at 4:08 p.m.**

M. Taylor welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked everyone to go around the room to introduce themselves. Jackie Jenkins, co-chair, then moved to approve the meeting minutes from October 5, 2016. The motion was so moved; minutes from October 5, 2016 were approved.

**Updates**

M. Taylor then transitioned to talking about updates from the Commission and current research projects as they relate to the committee. She first asked about the progress on both the asset mapping and policy inventory projects.

***Asset Mapping and Policy Inventory***

Kelly Sherretz, University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration, provided an update on both the policy inventory and asset mapping projects. She mentioned that the policy inventory is almost complete; recommendations and findings should be out in December. The team working on the policy inventory would like to present their findings at the December committee meeting. She then mentioned that the asset mapping team is in the process of collecting information, using 211 data base, early education services, and asked for members to look out for a survey about finding more organizations.

***WEIC Strategy Meeting Update***

M. Taylor then transitioned to provide updates from the Commission meeting in October. She mentioned that during the Commission meeting and retreat, there was reflection upon where the commission has been and where it wants to go. The discussion centered on where commissioners believed the group as a whole should focus its time for more progress moving forward, and what priorities or action items it should take next. She mentioned that she requested there be an internal status report that the Commission should work on to revisit the action items, recommendations, and overlapping committee work in order to move forward. This report is in the works.

M. Taylor provided an example of overlap in the family engagement piece between Meeting the Needs and the Parent, Educator, and Community Engagement committee. She noted that they are looking to have a joint meeting in December to align the work. Similarly, Charter District Collaboration committee is also looking to have a shared meeting, but in early 2017 to discuss alignment.

Lastly, M. Taylor discussed some of the priorities that were established at the last Commission meeting. Kelsey Mensch, University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration, added that at the October Commission meeting, the following priorities were agreed upon:

- Having representatives on any statewide initiative to ensure the Commission voice is heard
- Rebranding the Commission to focus not just redistricting or funding student success, but the whole picture of the action agenda
- Stronger connection and focus on programmatic items for early wins

M. Taylor then discussed the programmatic piece and related it to the work of the Meeting the Needs committee. She provided an example of partnering with WEIC on a United Way initiative on “My Very Own Library” (MVOL). The initiative is currently in 14 elementary schools and the Meeting the Needs (MNSP) would take the lead on this initiative and partnering it with WEIC. This partnership will demonstrate that the work is in the City of Wilmington, but also statewide in meeting the needs of all students from high-need communities. Each school gets a stipend to make reading fun for kids and three events for parent family engagement within the school. Additionally, each students gets 10 free books.

The MNSP would leverage some of the programmatic pieces such as volunteering, attending events, etc. for MVOL. Lastly, students will receive giveaways throughout the program after a kick-off event in each county. This program gives WEIC and MNSP a platform to talk about the agenda and meet the needs of all students in a programmatic way. Information on the specific events will be sent out to the committee shortly.

M. Taylor then transitioned into talking about the four areas of early wins. These are:

- Better coordination between out of school and in school supports
- Increase in behavior health/mental health services
- Increase training and focus on culture competences, including trauma and poverty
- Greater focus on parent and family engagement

## **Presentations on Developmental Screening for Children Birth-Five**

### ***Ages and Stages Screening Program***

#### ***Jamie Walko, Technical Assistant for the Office of Early Learning***

Jamie discussed the Ages and Stages program, which involves developmental screening for identifying students at risk, analyzing the communication, gross motor, fine motor, and problem solving skills. Studies have shown that parents are highly reliable when reporting on child’s development, as professionals may underestimate a child’s skills. The screening provides a brief snapshot, which helps prevent us from missing children that may not be detected. The diagnostic component is used to determine whether children would need for special education and re-screened. It is essential be a team with parents and help them understand how to best support their child. To see the full presentation, please see “meeting materials.”

The committee then discussed the Ages and Stages presentation. There was a common question about recommended follow-up with parents. J. Walko mentioned that she is working on it and the Office of Early Learning is trying to get the data on what follow-up is happening. They are currently working on an intake form so that info can be found about referrals and what referrals include to parents and families after results are provided.

Committee member Melissa Froemming talked about how it is a great tool for both parents and teachers as it sets the stage for genuine parental engagement regardless of the literacy level of parent. She asked the committee to consider how the tool can be used for a cultural shift in early grades, as a multifaceted ability to talk about parent engagement, and how can this be used as the intra/inter-agency work.

J. Walko responded by mentioning that she is working with Donna Snyder White who uses PEDs. Both organizations, Office of Early Learning, and Delaware 211 are working together to use the grant they received to improve and track information on referrals. There is a desire to work together to get the data necessary and cross-agency collaboration is already happening. There is a strong push for districts to use the Ages to Stages model as not all districts currently use it.

Dawn Alexander, committee member, added by stressing the importance of making sure many families have access to early screening as they deserve to get the information and know what the results and feedback means. She also mentioned that districts do not always know what the referral means or how to translate it to a parents.

Butch Ingram, committee member, mentioned that the tool is not issue, rather the issue is what to do with received information and how to use it to help the students in the classroom and provide it to parents.

### ***Help Me Grow Delaware***

#### ***D. Snyder White of Delaware 2-1-1***

The Help Me Grow program was first developed with working with physician screenings. The four components of this program include health care provider outreach, family/community outreach, centralized access point, and data collection/analysis. It is meant to be a centralized referral and outreach system for physicians to help children, as well as educating and stressing the importance of developmental milestones to parents. The PEDS screening is 100% electronic, and can be taken at the physician's office or parents can complete it online. It is used to advance developmental promotion, early detection, and linkages to services. To see the full presentation, see "meeting materials."

The committee then discussed the Help Me Grow presentation. There was a question asked about how the program helps to incorporate families and students without primary doctors.

D. Snyder White mentioned that the program partners with family health centers to address this issue. She also noted that Delaware 211 typically serves moderate to lower income students and families. The students primarily served in Help Me Grow Delaware are typically from underserved areas. She noted that outreach back to families is crucial in order to give them more information about parenting tips, next milestones, understanding what is next for their child. It is important as a state to look holistically across the system, regardless of the screening tool being used, to understand how to interpret all of the data.

M. Froemming mentioned that there needs to be a clear identification in the state on a common language and foster collaboration in creating common terminology. She mentioned that it helps to create collaboration between task forces, agencies, and organizations statewide.

***Path Forward for Upcoming Years***

M. Taylor then transitioned to discuss how the presentations relate to the buckets for early wins. She mentioned how she took the feedback from last committee meeting to identify the areas and create action steps. There is a need for sub-committees to form under these four buckets. It is expected that group would identify the short/long term needs under those buckets. Additionally, the group could look at the action needs to be taken, while thinking about the timeline and what is already in motion. It was agreed upon that the committee should partner with things that are already in place and aim for greater outreach. It is also important that the committee focuses on how to execute the early wins.

Nikki Castle, committee member, mentioned that we should also underscore the need to focus on high school students.

D. Alexander recommended a change in language for bucket 2 to read: “making that more social work, early intervention, and behavior health.”

K. Mensch agreed to send out an email listing the sub-committees and asking committee members to sign-up for one of the groups for future work. She also agreed to send out the handouts from the meeting and additional materials for feedback.

M. Taylor concluded the meeting by mentioning the December meeting will include the family engagement piece. She noted that it is time to get to work and begin to make moves on the action items for early wins.

For the upcoming meeting, Committee members will:

- Review meeting minutes and updated meeting materials
- Respond to a poll about subcommittee membership
- Respond to availability for volunteering with MVOL
- Review Meeting the Needs section of the WEIC Solutions book

**The meeting adjourned at 5:41 p.m.**

**Wilmington Education Improvement Commission  
Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty  
Meeting Attendance  
November 2, 2016**

**Committee Members**

Dr. Jackie Jenkins, Co-chair  
Michelle Taylor, Co-chair  
Dawn Alexander  
Vi Cade  
Terrance Newton  
Butch Ingram  
Melissa Froemming  
Madeleine Bayard  
Matt Swanson  
Kristin Dwyer – Filling in for Deb Stevens  
Nikki Castle  
Caitlin Gleason

**Institute for Public Administration Staff**

Kelsey Mensch  
Asha Chintala  
Kelly Sherretz

**Members of the Public**

Donna Synder White  
Jamie Walko  
Orrin White  
Gwen Angalet  
Ann Aviles  
Bisola Neil

**Wilmington Education Improvement Commission  
Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty Committee**

**Opportunities for “Early Win” Impact Projects and “Immediate” Action Steps**

**Overview**

In order to ground its work, the Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty (MNSP) Committee of the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission collected and analyzed feedback from parents, school principals, and other community stakeholders on addressing the “real” needs of students living in Wilmington. During the period from May to October 2016, parents, caregivers, and other community stakeholders participating in two Wilmington community education events were surveyed; and school principals from seven elementary schools in Wilmington were interviewed. The data collected from both groups of participants were aggregated and analyzed for common themes and reported as findings. These findings were further analyzed to recommend opportunities for “early win” impact projects and “immediate” actions to be undertaken by the MNSP Committee. Finally, the MNSP Committee reviewed the recommendations and suggested additional opportunities for consideration in formulating its work plan for 2016-2017.

**Opportunities for “Early Win” Impact Projects and “Immediate” Actions Categorized by Findings from Needs Analysis**

The opportunities for “early win” impact projects and “immediate” actions categorized by finding are summarized below:

***1. Better integration of services and linkages between schools and community***

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

*“Immediate” Action Steps*

- Work with schools to include the name of the pre-school or child care center the child last attended on school registration forms and to request cumulative folders from the identified child care providers on the children enrolled
- Conduct a campaign to encourage families to register their children for school early, such as having a Fire Engine from the Wilmington Fire Department to travel around the city in the summer promoting school registration
- In collaboration with the fifth grade teachers in the Wilmington public schools, help with outreach to encourage more parents to enroll their children transitioning from the fifth to the sixth grade in the Summer Youth Transition Academy sponsored by the City of Wilmington
- Assist the schools with resources to support the engagement of more mentors for their students, such funds to pay for background checks

Updated 11/2/16

- Link the schools with the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Sororities and Fraternities for college and career opportunities and mentoring
- Link schools with community resources that could help students to capture their stories on paper and get them published, such as the Kid Authors Program
- Link the schools to organizations that would be willing to provide turkeys for distribution to families for the holidays
- Conduct training for all Wilmington schools on accessing 211 Helpline resources
- Host community resource fairs for all schools, including resources from the City of Wilmington and Wilmington Police Department

*“Early Win” Impact Projects*

- Improving the integration of services, including facilitating better transitioning of young children to kindergarten and 5<sup>th</sup> graders to middle school, enhancing channels for rapid access to information about services and resources and for networking, and encouraging more co-location of community services and programs in schools such as joint summer programming and workforce development
- Work with decision-makers to change the policy to permit more flexibility in the documentation required to register children for school, including expanding access to obtaining birth certificates for children
- Advocate with decision-makers to better integrate in - school and out- of- school state and community services to better support children and families
- Partner with United Way on promoting early literacy through the My Very Own Library Program

***2. More social work, early intervention, and behavioral health services and resources***

More social work, early intervention, 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

*“Immediate” Action Steps*

- Help schools to foster stronger connections to the Division of Family Services to better support the children who are active with DFS in the school settings

*“Early Win” Impact Projects*

- Increasing behavioral health supports for children and families through training and support for use of trauma informed practice in schools and community organizations and through policy advocacy and other efforts to provide more behavioral health services on site in schools and in community settings
- Work with Readiness Teams to conduct outreach to encourage families to have their young children screened using the “Ages and Stages” tool or the PEDS tool for developmental milestones to promote healthy growth and development
- Advocate for greater follow up with families on the referrals to services they receive for their children who screen positive for signs of developmental needs

Updated 11/2/16

- Advocate with decision-makers to encourage the use of restorative practices to reduce school suspensions

### ***3. More emphasis on cultural competency, trauma-informed practice, and impact of poverty***

More emphasis on cultural competency such as bi-lingual staff and training for staff and administrators on trauma-informed practice and working with children and families living in poverty

#### *“Early Win” Impact Projects*

- Increase the emphasis on cultural competency through providing training and developmental opportunities to staff and administrators, including training on working with children and families living in poverty and those who have experienced trauma

### ***4. More family engagement***

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

#### *“Immediate” Action Steps*

- Partner with the WEIC Family Engagement Committee for work in this area
- Support schools with a campaign to encourage getting to school on time and reduce tardiness
- Host training for parents and student on positive use of social media
- Encourage more schools to use pre-recorded blast phone calls to parents to share information about school activities and relevant community events
- Encourage the use of the Parents As Teacher home visiting model among schools to develop relationships with parents

#### *“Early Win” Impact Projects*

- Strengthening family engagement through efforts to encourage more communication and stronger relationships between teachers and parents
- Leverage the family engagement component of the My Very Own Library Program to implement the literacy activities in the curriculum
- Provide training to parents on trauma-informed practice