

Marsha Carter
213 West 18th Street
Wilmington, DE 19802

December 7, 2015

Wilmington Education Improvement Commission
C/O The Institute for Public Administration
111 Academy Street
Newark, DE 19716

Dear Dr. Tony Allen and WEAC/WEIC Members,

All information has been obtained from Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) School Profiles. Information reflects 2014/2015 school year except where noted.

Let me first state that adopting WEAC/WEIC recommendations should include 1 to 2 additional board member seats for residents in the City of Wilmington as a prerequisite.

Red Clay School district serves 15 Elementary Schools whereas 47% did not meet annual yearly progress (AYP). Compare this to Christina School District where they served 19 elementary schools and 21% did not meet AYP. About half of the elementary schools in Red Clay that did not meet AYP are in the City of Wilmington compared to three-quarters for Christina.

The middle and high schools have a different trend. However, it appears that the charters within Red Clay help change the game. For example, 3 out of 5 high schools in Red Clay met AYP yet 2 of them were charters. In essence when looking outside of the charter population, Red Clay only had one high school meeting AYP while Christina had none. Clearly, this is a concern.

Red Clay already has more students than Christina. For 2015, Red Clay had 18,046 students while Christina had 16,255. So, why would we add an additional 3,000 plus students to Red Clay? That would involve ***increasing their numbers by more than a tenth for a population that Red Clay continues to struggle with.*** For example, DDOE reported that for both Warner and Shortlidge ***less than 2 out of 10 third graders met the standards in math and reading.*** The number gets worst for fifth graders.

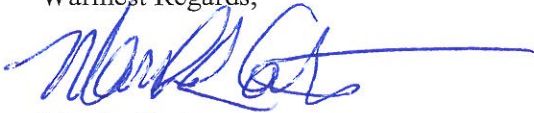
Why would we take schools from Christina (where 21% of their elementary schools are failing) and place them with Red Clay (where 47% of their elementary schools are failing)? Although impossible to prove, I personally wonder if this plan is about privatizing education (particularly in Wilmington) by your decision to choose a district that is amenable to the charter market. Red Clay has demonstrated that they are unable to bridge the education gap for current students. It appears we are justifying Red Clay failing our students by increasing funding to them. ***Instead, your plan should include a criterion to ensure administrators that have historically failed our students are asked to resign (or not be rehired).***

Furthermore, the possibility of reassessing property homes or raising property taxes may leave an undue hardship on the families we intend to assist.

Lastly, we have yet to discuss specific variables that may directly impact a student's academic performance—discrepancies in school disciplinary, curriculum and instruction, design of the school day, teacher dynamics, diversity in the schools, textbooks/resources (or lack thereof). These specific variables, which can aid in bridging the education gap, have been left out of the conversation. ***Consequently, I say we should oppose implementing these changes until a more comprehensive plan outlining how Red Clay proposes to directly improve student performance for both current and proposed students to be reassigned as recommended by WEIC.***

I can be reached by phone at (302) 407-9966 or by email at MarshaCarterSpeaks@gmail.com.

Warmest Regards,



Marsha Carter

Opinion

I remember when the Wilmington Public School System existed which encompassed the city schools. I was doing my Student Teaching at, was then, Lore Elementary School.

That system didn't work out then and I doubt that putting all but Colonial schools into one district will work now.

I suggest the following:

Have parent educators go into homes of social economically disadvantaged mothers and teach parenting skills. Education begins in the home with proper diet, activities, books and language. When children from SED (Social Economically Disadvantaged) homes start preschool, give the "normal to advanced" children extra help through paraprofessionals. Have children exhibiting educational delays, evaluated by preschool professionals. Then, have preschool special needs teachers prepare genuine IEP's. Not select a number from a computer generated list of educational goals.

When the children enter school, hopefully, there will be a "normal" amount of special needs children whose needs can be addressed in classrooms with paraprofessionals to work with the teacher.

If parent(s) can't attend conferences then a teacher and paraprofessional go to the child's home, unless, of course, the home is designated as not a safe environment. In this case

there should be a social worker following the case.

Have reading and math labs in every city school staffed with reading and math specialists who work with small groups. Additionally, the children will have a mentor from the community who will present a teacher generated reading or math lessons once a week.

Work with community, church leaders and retired teachers to provide mentors for all children providing a positive relationship with someone who cares for both the personal and educational development of the child.

Please don't tell me that there is NO money to have these ideas incorporated into the public schools. Look at the budgets and eliminate unnecessary personnel. Go to city government and ask for money. Look into grants-state, federal and private. How much does it cost to incarcerate one prisoner for ten years? My guess is that these proposals are much less expensive and will build up our youth and future leaders of Delaware.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Francine M. Passerini".

Francine M. Passerini

Retired City Educator

Bill Doolittle drafting comments 12-4-15

The resolution was also discussed and in particular the conditional clause if the funding does not come to be. I was very concerned that "suspend" language was included. As you remember the SBE was very strong in your first presentation that they wanted language that would cause the plan/their actions to revert back if the funding was not forthcoming. To meet the SBE "request" and to avoid the issue that the legislature has a long history of shelving initiatives by suspending them I suggested that it would be much stronger to include language that if the funding was not substantially in line with the goals in the timeline that Red Clay could declare that funding goals and not been substantially met/sustained then that their agreement to accept the Christina part of the Red clay would be reversed and that the boundaries and properties would revert. This would require affirmation by the SBE that the funding goals were substantially met/sustained. Of course this would need specific supportive legislation to allow this reversion

The above requires a realistic milestone phase in schedule for the unit supports which is another one of my concerns with the current draft. As I read it and based on my day at JFC this week and my modeling the current milestones will almost certainly cause the bills supporting this plan to die on June 30th in JFC.

First I think the wording should be that of "goals" which give the legislature some wiggle room if we want this to pass this year. As an advocate and with Red Clay reversal option I think it is workable to keep it moving as fast as possible. Realistically if we were to get for the Wilmington students some early childhood funding, full finding for the priority schools and K-3 funding that would be the most optimistic goals for FY 17. Even in FY 18 it is unrealistic to expect full unit funding for Wilmington. Although I do not think we need to express a particular percent I see 25-40% as a realistic fiscal goal and in many ways the most practical and efficient level to move to before the students and teachers actually change districts. I think our line in the sand needs to be fully funding the Wilmington students by FY 19, so that when the Wilmington students transfer in 8/2018, they are fully funded.

The funding committees unit funding model is so far off the mark of actually meeting the needs based on best practices, and having an efficient phasing structure that is a major risk to the success of the WEIC initiative. Even with that it appears that there is enough room within the various wording of the plan to work on that after the final plan submission, as long as no specific numbers from this weak modeling is referenced in the plan (or multiple models are referenced).

AYP is referenced in the document even though it has not been a measure in Delaware since the summer of 2015 and will no longer exist as part of ESEA nationwide as the passage and signing reauthorization which is likely this month. measures of student growth is

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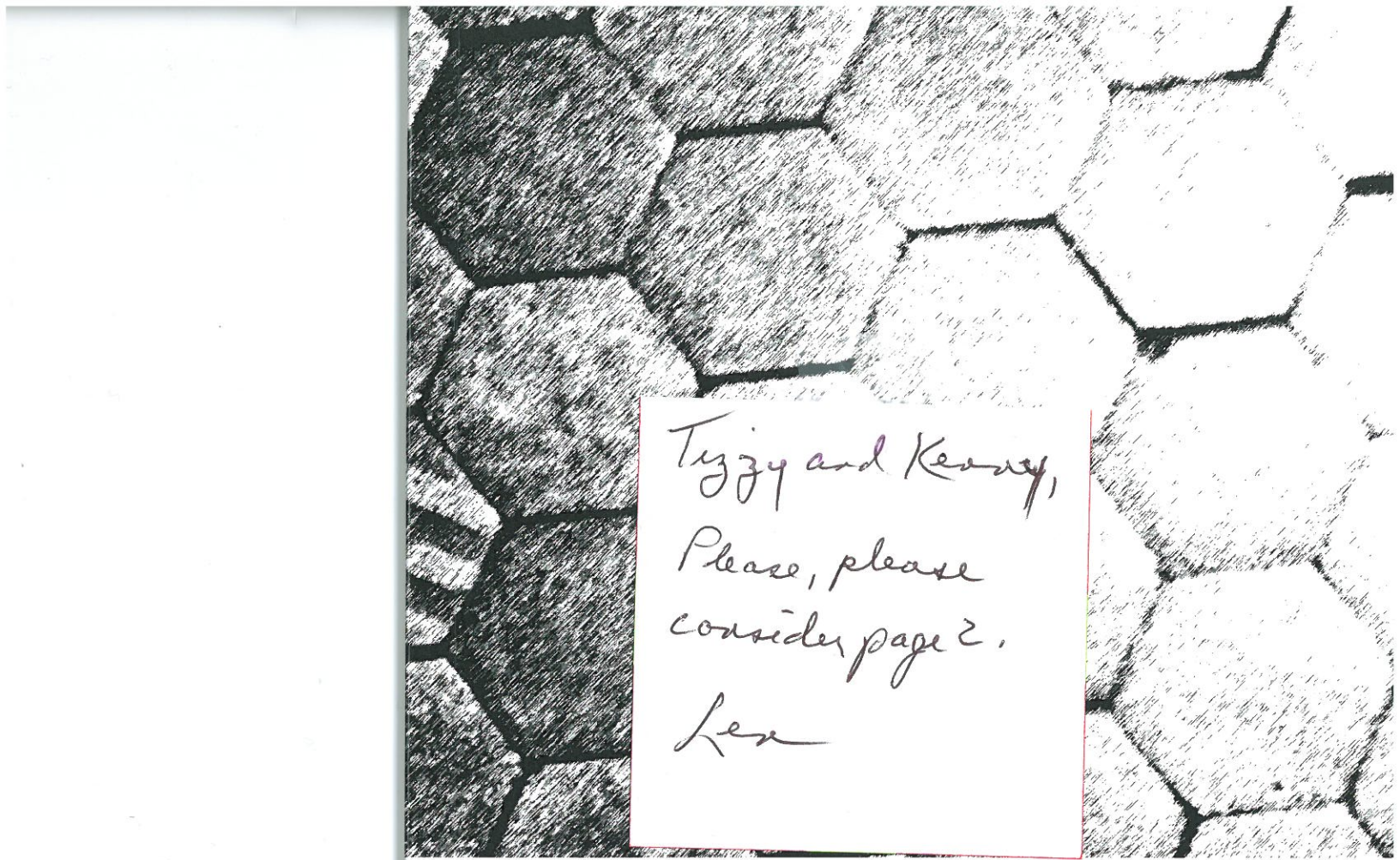
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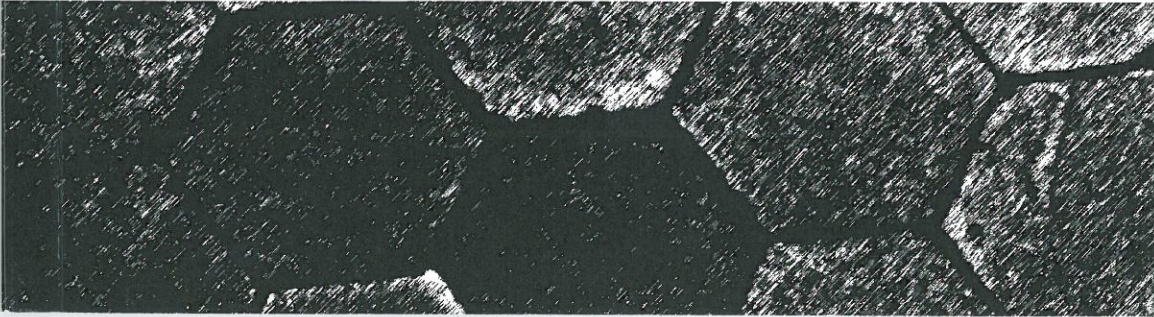
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*Tizzy and Keavy,
Please, please
consider page 2.
Len*

SCHOOL AND PRISON REFORM

LEONARD HENRY BECK
GENESIS CHAPTER 3



Overview and Summary

The proposed Study Cell for School and Prison reform provides for a very personal encounter with SELF in a modest environment. Present school/prison practices do not provide for even one of these program pillars.

Pillar 1. Early Intervention – from truancy alarm

Statistics show an 85% correlation between excessive absences in the 5th Grade, and jail by age 18.

Inmate surveys indicate that 80%+ of convicted felons do not have a high school diploma.

No one, NO ONE, commits murder as his first felony. Criminal behavior is progressive: bully-shoplifting-assault-murder. Murder, as a so-called 1st Offense, is usually Self Defense from abuse.

Pillar 2. Self-Motivation – using the video camera as a diary

Know Thyself : Greek philosophy

To thine own self be true: Shakespeare

“Would some power the gift he give us,
to see ourselves as others see us” Robert Burns

Know Self to “love neighbor as self” Jesus

Because Personal Curiosity is the best source of energy.

Pillar 3. Self-Training from video taped instruction

Course work, counseling, career choices

Develop Self Confidence and HOPE for his future.

Teach us how to deal with your crime.

Dedication
to that little g

During my night school classes I
visit two penal institutions and as
formal education.

As I exited Gander Hill, leaving
approached with visitors to the In
fathers and mothers, grandfathers
with heads down and a slow pace
than the Inmates.

Then, a 4 or 5 year old little girl
down and stuttered steps.

In a flash, I said to myself, “by d
that!”

I can give her a copy of the learn
dealing with, and when she visits
him to do so.

* * * *

Sometimes I visit Judges, Legislat
etc., etc. I am understandably ve
and see this little girl. The adren
am no longer nervous or afraid.

I think, “Lord have mercy on this
back down or retreat.