

Redding Consortium for Educational Equity
Full Body Meeting
February 22, 2023
Meeting Minutes

The Redding Consortium full body meeting convened at 5:30 p.m. at the Delaware State University (DSU) at the Riverfront (Capital One) Building in Wilmington, DE. Senator Elizabeth Lockman, co-chair of the Redding Consortium, welcomed all in attendance.

I. Approval of Meeting Minutes

The minutes were unanimously approved as submitted.

II. Redding Member Survey Feedback Results

Haley Burns and Alaina Robinson, Redding Consortium staff from the University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration (IPA), presented the 2023 Redding Member Feedback Survey results. The purpose of the survey was to hear members' input for action steps for the Consortium to work on moving forward. Twenty Redding Consortium members completed the Redding Member Feedback Survey. The survey asked members to rank the action steps they felt were most important for the Consortium to take. A summary of the action steps voted most important are listed below.

Consortium members voted that the most important action steps to focus on are:

Priority 1: Prioritizing and Following Through on Redding Consortium Mandates

1. **Voted Most important:** Fulfill the Redding charges and work on the current list of activities in the Status Report
2. Add a "measurement" component to the Redding Consortium's definition of educational equity to ensure outcomes are being met
3. Determine a way to provide more personnel support related to the RFPs (Request for Proposal) for Redding grants and scholarships

Priority 2: Coordinating Cross-District Collaboration

1. **Voted Most important:** Define the relationship between the Redding Consortium and the Wilmington Learning Collaborative (WLC) by coordinating the work and resources of both initiatives
2. Promote cross-district collaboration by leveraging resources and/or identifying opportunities for partnership
3. Shift focus to middle school and high school students (grades 6-12) since many initiatives (like the WLC) promote a focus on early childhood and K-8 education

Priority 3: Leveraging School and Community-Based Partnerships:

1. **Voted Most Important:** Collaborate with statewide agencies, non-profits, and community-based partnerships working on issues related to public education
2. Empower Wilmington residents and community members to voice their concerns about education
3. Map work of outside organizations in education within the City of Wilmington and Northern New Castle County to avoid overlap in Redding-supported programming

Haley Burns provided an overview of the summarized open-ended feedback received from the Redding Consortium members for the survey. The open-ended feedback included input from members on the Redding Consortium's structure, research, and community engagement.

II. Redding Member Survey Feedback: Group Share Out

During the February 22, 2023 full body meeting, Redding Consortium members were asked to list the top three actionable priorities for the Redding Consortium. Members were divided into four groups for a fifteen-minute breakout session. Once reconvened, the collective feedback of the four groups suggested (1) defining the relationship between Redding Consortium and the Wilmington Learning Collaborative, (2) streamlining the RFP application process, and (3) promoting clearer communication on community engagement and potential partnerships with community-based organizations as the top three actionable priorities for the Redding Consortium in 2023.

Director Cerron Cade mentioned how it is important to define how the Redding Consortium and the Wilmington Learning Collaborative will work together before proposing what the Redding Consortium should be doing. He suggested that identifying the priorities in education more generally is a different conversation than what the Redding Consortium should be prioritizing. Secretary Rick Geisenberger agreed with those sentiments as actionable priorities. Dorrell Green added that the Redding Consortium should promote communication and engagement to explore opportunities that expand beyond educational community-based partnerships, such as out-of-school and after-school time. Green mentioned that the Redding Consortium should coordinate those resources for wraparound services with a more holistic approach.

Aaron Bass shared that his breakout group discussed the top three priorities should be to gather feedback about community engagement and report out to share feedback with the Redding Consortium, promote alignment of community and wraparound services with local schools, and better align the RFP process between Redding and DDOE regarding intent and outcomes.

Margie López Waite reported for her group that the top actionable priorities for the Redding Consortium include completing the existing Redding Consortium mandates before beginning new initiatives and evaluating the work groups, their membership, and the charges of the work groups with their deliverables. The other top priorities for her group include coordinating with organizations who share similar goals in education with the Redding Consortium and streamlining the RFP process to simplify or eliminate unnecessary processes.

Shelley Rouser shared that the top three priorities for her group included coordination with the WLC and Redding, potential coordination with non-profits and other organizations with a focus on social determinants work, and strengthening community engagement as the top priority.

Bettina Tweardy Riveros reported the top three actionable priorities for her group. In terms of framing engagement with Redding and the WLC, there should be clearly defined roles for both. The next actionable priority included collaborating with non-profits and community organizations on the social drivers of health equity and education to mobilize community resources to address educational disparities. The last priority involved defining educational equity to determine how the Consortium measures it and if the Consortium has achieved it.

Senator Lockman mentioned how the Redding Consortium has a definition of educational equity, but does not currently have the other components mentioned in terms of measuring it. Additionally, Senator Lockman told the members that the Redding Consortium is working to set up the WLC alignment meeting before the Redding Consortium next meets as a full body again.

Secretary Holodick shared his feedback regarding the relationship and communication between the WLC and Redding as essential and that will start happening now that the WLC Council has come together and is in the process of hiring an Executive Director. Secretary Holodick also mentioned the importance of wraparound services and aligning those efforts with not only the WLC schools but all the schools and how that relates to community-based organizations and the relationships they have with the schools.

III. Update on Full Day Pre-K Services

Matt Denn, co-chair of the Redding Consortium, stated 190 children—ranging from ages three to four—received funding to attend full-day Pre-K within the feeder pattern for a high poverty kindergarten program in the City of Wilmington. Denn shared that this was one of the primary recommendations since the beginning of the Redding Consortium’s establishment. These Pre-K programs have the funding to recruit and retain higher quality frontline early-childhood staff. As a result, professionals will enter positions, receive benefits, and be more likely to stay even if a

new opportunity arises. The goal of the outset was to have enough slots so that every child within the feeder pattern would have the opportunity, regardless of whether parents or guardians decide to send their children to the program.

However, Denn also presented possible implications. Due to the fact that parents can choose whether or not to send their children to the program, the Department of Education (DOE) is unable to know in advance which providers will be serving those children. Furthermore, the DOE does not know the exact number because it is unknown how many children are going to be coming into the kindergarten programs every year. Nevertheless, Denn emphasized that after years of determining the best form and function for the RFP, they are starting to see positive results. Furthermore, the maintenance of feedback from frontline workers to ensure quality service was noted as crucial when preparing those children for kindergarten to fulfill a sufficient assessment level. To emphasize the assurance of quality service, Denn communicated the need to better fund educators. Providers also expressed their fears of losing staff to other expanding schools. Most of the funding in the operating budget is being used by those 190 slots, and there is enough for one or two more providers to enter into the current RFP for available slots. There were four providers, who were a part of the program at the beginning, who have shared helpful, positive feedback about this process.

After Matt Denn presented the update, there were additional comments and questions regarding the Redding pre-kindergarten program. Mayor Mike Purzycki asked how many children within the overall feeder pattern for a high poverty kindergarten program in the City of Wilmington. Denn responded with an estimated 200 children total between the ages of three to four for the incoming kindergarten class; however, he stated this number could be incorrect due to each parent or guardian's choice on when and where to enroll their children. Dorrell Green asked whether DOE had a "Memorandum of Understanding" (MOU) with the districts, depending on where the Early Learners Centers or the child care center are located. Green stated that the Red Clay District covers the largest number of children; however, there is confusion for families within the Christina and Wilmington district borders on where to send their children. Green also suggested the next iteration would be to research where the Early Learning Centers are located, where families are choosing to enroll their children, and where children have "developmental delays." Director Cade asked to clarify whether the program was for either three-year-olds or four-year-olds, and Matt Denn confirmed it was a total of both three and four-year-olds. Aaron Bass mentioned the importance of evaluating the effectiveness of the full-day Pre-K programs for the return on investment. Representative Smith noted that Redding's implementation of the full Pre-K school days could become a pilot for a statewide model, but emphasized the importance of proper funding. Additionally, Raye Jones Avery inquired about if districts and charters consistently collect the data for if a child went to

pre-kindergarten registration and which program they enrolled in as registrants. Dorrell Green confirmed that this information is being collected for those students. Furthermore, Bettina Tweardy Riveros stressed the importance of worker retention by observing certain qualities within schools that prevent turnover. Senator Lockman agreed that there is fear among providers that they will lose their staff by other expanding locations.

IV. Update from the Educator Work Group Concerning the Redding Scholarship

Representative Michael Smith, co-chair of the Educator Work Group, announced that the Redding Consortium Scholarship received 102 applications throughout the 2022-2023 academic year. Smith shared the data collected from the applications by race/ethnicity:

- 64% African American
- 20% White
- 7% Hispanic or Latino
- 4% Multi-Racial or Other
- 6% Preferred not to Answer

He shared the data from the scholarship applicants categorized by gender identity:

- 81% Female
- 15% Male
- 4% Preferred not to Answer

The Institutes of Higher Education in the application included Wilmington University, Delaware State University, the University of Delaware, Delaware Technical Community College, and Relay Graduate School of Education. Rep. Smith stratified the applications submitted to the following IHES:

- 60% Wilmington University
- 15% Delaware State University
- 14% Relay Graduate School of Education
- 7% University of Delaware
- 5% Delaware Tech

In addition, Rep. Smith noted that 87% of applicants were incoming graduate students and 13% were incoming undergraduate students. Rep. Smith reiterated that educators teaching in schools within the City of Wilmington limits identified as Redding Consortium schools can apply to receive scholarships. Furthermore, Rep. Smith noted that partial scholarships would assist students with classroom supplies and some tuition reimbursement.

Consortium members provided feedback on the scholarship information presented. Shelley Rouser mentioned how the funding source is currently not year-to-year funding, but mentioned how the Redding Consortium should unpack the stories behind of the educators who applied for the funding, follow up with them, and learn about the impact of the scholarship for them to spotlight them for future investment in the program. She also suggested offsetting the housing and transportation costs to recruiting educators who are students at Delaware Institutes of Higher Education to eliminate the barriers for them to travel to and teach in Redding schools in Wilmington. Furthermore, Lincoln Hohler requested consideration for P.S. Dupont Middle School to be eligible as a Redding school based on the needs and socioeconomic status of its student population. Aaron Bass conveyed the interest of paraprofessionals in the Redding scholarships accounting for the percentage of undergraduate applicants. He asked about future reimbursement support for paraprofessionals who are currently taking undergraduate coursework from Delaware Institutes of Higher Education, and he inquired about the future funding for the scholarship program. Tika Hartsock, a parent advocate on the Redding Consortium, mentioned how there was not coordinated outreach to school teachers across schools and districts about the Redding scholarships. She shared how a lot of city educators who are new to teaching in their school did not have enough time to gather the materials for the application ahead of the scholarship deadline when compared to other teachers who were in the know about the scholarship opportunity.

Rep. Smith mentioned an idea for the next round of scholarships to go out to the community to share the Redding scholarship opportunity with teachers in Redding schools and students at universities. Senator Lockman how the applications included all of the Redding schools. She also mentioned how she would be interested in joining Rep. Smith for those events. Dorrell Green mentioned how the formerly named Highlands Elementary School was recently renamed to Joseph E. Johnson, Jr. School in reference to this discussion to update its name on the list of Redding schools.

V. Presentation of the Governor’s Proposed Budget by the Settlement Work Group

Aaron Bass and Chuck Longfellow, co-chairs of the Settlement Work Group, announced the Governor’s proposed budget related to Settlement items for Fiscal Year 2024:

- \$53M for opportunity funding
- \$12.2M for the Early Childhood Assistance Program (ECAP)
- \$4M for teacher recruitment and retention.

Bass emphasized the Work Group’s efforts to align with the Public Education Compensation Committee for educators.

Kevin Kelley asked the Work Group to show a list of available Redding funding and include where the current funds and carryover funds in the Redding budget are being distributed across programs at the next Redding full-body meeting. An update about the status of the Redding RFPs was also requested.

VI. Social Determinants Work Group's Introduction to the Data Dashboard

Raye Jones Avery and Jeff Menzer, co-chairs of the Social Determinants Work Group, announced the progress of the Equity Data Dashboard. Following the recommendations of the Social Determinants Work Group in 2020, the Social Determinant co-chairs, members, and IPA staff worked alongside the Data Service Center (DSC) and DOE to create a prototype for the data dashboard. Jones Avery and Menzer emphasized the purpose of the dashboard, which is to view Wilmington students through an equity lens, and highlight Wilmington student data. Focus group meetings with the Work Group members ensured the dashboard was created through a collaborative process. Jones Avery stated this dashboard will be a very important step in measuring equity.

VII. Review of the Data Dashboard with Katey Semmel, Executive Director of the Data Service Center

Katey Semmel, Executive Director of the Data Service Center, reviewed the prototype of the Data Dashboard and emphasized its unique use of City of Wilmington addresses to capture student data. The dashboard does not contain real datasets yet. Semmel announced that the plan is to refresh the data during the regular school year on a monthly basis, except for during state testing.

Semmel virtually displayed the dashboard prototype. The dashboard included a statement of the Redding Consortium's formal definition of equity, a student page capturing students' voices, an educator page, and various visuals and graphs of prototype data. Semmel stated that the prototype will include one hundred charts separated by school type, gender, race, ethnicity, and special programs. In addition, the prototype will demonstrate the availability of AP, IB, and Dual Enrollment programs in comparison to other districts and states.

Kevin Kelley asked how the Data Service Center could humanize the data for the public; he furthered this by inquiring if the prototype included simpler terms or presentations. Bettina Tweardy Riveros from Christiana Care asked when the Dashboard would become available to the Redding Consortium members for review. Semmel responded that Consortium members will have access to the prototype by February 24th, 2023. Secretary Rick Geinsenberger noted

that it may be difficult to find specific data for children and families whose zip codes do not align with their school addresses. Dorrell Green mentioned the importance of analyzing the overlaying data to identify broader trends for students from neighborhoods within the city and for the Consortium to look at services and supports for students experiencing trauma in those communities. Green mentioned that there should also be a disclaimer for the data dashboard for others who may use the data for other purposes rather than the set agenda from the Social Determinants work group, particularly for those individuals or organizations using the data for other non-academic reasons. Green also suggested that we should acknowledge data bias. Moreover, he mentioned how we should use the data dashboard to inform the work of the Redding Consortium for more in-depth research in the future. The synthesis of the data sources can also be used to inform the work of community partners regarding the social drivers of education and how schools can serve as conduits to provide these services to students.

VIII. Public Comment

Bill Doolittle complimented Redding's continual effort with the high-level work in data collection. However, Doolittle highlighted that the Delaware Department of Education is ineffectively using an N15 mask on data. Doolittle suggested following the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) to better drill down into the data.

Senator Elizabeth Lockman adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Attendance

Redding Consortium Members

Senator Elizabeth Lockman, Co-Chair
Matthew Denn, Co-Chair
Raye Jones Avery
Aaron Bass
Sen. Eric Buckson
Dorrell Green
Tika Hartsock
Lincoln Holher
Joseph Jones
Kevin Kelley
Chuck Longfellow, proxy for Dan Shelton
Xavia Mills
Jeffrery Menzer
Mayor Michael Purzycki
Bettina Tweardy Riveros
Rep. Michael Smith
Margie López Waithe
Danya Woods
Director Cerron Cade - *ex officio*
Secretary Rick Geisenberger - *ex officio*
Secretary Mark Holodick - *ex officio*

IPA/DSU Staff

Haley Burns
JennaDeMaio
Grace Diehl
Lauren Dykes
Alaina Robinson
Shelley Rouser
Esha Shah

Members of the Public

Bill Doolittle
Karen Eller
Laurie Girardi
Shannon Griffin
Natalie Hanlon
Roger Harrison
Taylor Hawk
Nicole Kennedy
Nick Konzelman
Christina Koutsoubas
Teri Lawler
Adriana Leela Bohm
Jerome Lewis
VJ Leonard
Monica Moriak
Donald Patton
Yasser Payne
Shanika Perry
Nicole Priest
John Read
Devon Russell
Valdese West
Cora Scott
Katey Semmel
Regina Sidney-Brown
James Simmons
Alethea Smith-Tucker