

## Wilmington Education Advisory Committee

January 26, 2015

The Honorable Jack Markell  
Governor, State of Delaware  
820 North French Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Wilmington, Delaware 19801

Dear Governor Markell:

On January 9, 2015, I requested that you delay any final decisions on the Christina and Red Clay *Priority Schools* plans until you reviewed the Wilmington Educational Advisory Committee's interim set of recommendations. Enclosed is the Committee's Interim Report containing the recommendations and an initial analysis supporting each item in the proposed *Action Agenda*.

As I have said in the past, we will not comment on the *Priority Schools* plans submitted by Red Clay and Christina. However, the work undertaken by educators and administrators in both districts in developing those plans is important. This work should continue to be refined—and strengthened as appropriate, and will serve as an essential foundation for the recommendations we outline in this interim report.

We will complete the *Action Agenda* when we issue our final report in March. However, we believe that the recommendations in the Interim Report set out the best path forward for public education in Wilmington. This path has extended benefits for public education in New Castle County as well as communities throughout Delaware where there are high concentrations of low-income students with unique needs. With more than 50% of Delaware's school age students now living in poverty, the challenge of strengthening public education for students in poverty is not just a Wilmington problem.

With the submission of our Interim Report, we are beginning a robust period of public comment and are inviting input from the Wilmington community and from citizens across the state. This comment period is meant to enable a vigorous and constructive exchange of ideas that will inform our final recommendations.

The members of the Advisory Committee and I thank you for your willingness to form this group and for allowing us to work unencumbered by the controversies currently surrounding Wilmington education. As such, our focus remains on the best long-term interests of Wilmington students. We strongly believe that a quality education remains a pathway out of poverty and that ensuring all students have access to quality education requires an intentional set of actions supported by policy, resources and political will.

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It's been 60 years since the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and 40 years since Delaware, by legal prescription, first attempted to address the needs of all of its students. Still thousands of Wilmington children are unable to fully benefit from a quality public education. Now is the time to act and to do so in ways that will strengthen Wilmington education for decades to come. The benefits of these actions for Delaware and its largest metropolitan center cannot be overstated.

We look forward to your consideration of the recommendations in our Interim Report.

Sincerely,



Tony Allen, Ph.D., Chairman

cc: The Honorable Mark Murphy, Secretary of Education  
The Honorable Patricia Blevins, Senate President Pro Tempore  
The Honorable Peter Schwartzkopf, Speaker of the House  
The Honorable David Sokola, Senate Education Committee Chair  
The Honorable Earl Jaques, House Education Committee Chair  
The Honorable Jea Street, New Castle County Councilman  
The Honorable Dennis Williams, Mayor of the City of Wilmington  
The Honorable Theopalis Gregory Sr., Wilmington City Council President  
The Honorable Nnamdi Chukwuocha, Wilmington City Council Education Committee Chair  
Mr. John Skrobot, President of Brandywine School Board of Education  
Dr. Mark Holodick, Superintendent of Brandywine School District  
Mr. Frederick Polaski, President of Christina School Board of Education  
Dr. Freeman Williams, Superintendent of Christina School District  
Mr. Joseph T. Laws, III, President of Colonial School Board of Education  
Dr. D. Dusty Blakey, Superintendent of Colonial School District  
Mr. Kenneth Rivera, President of Red Clay Consolidated School District Board of Education  
Dr. Mervin Daugherty, Superintendent of Red Clay Consolidated School District  
Ms. Yvette Santiago, President of New Castle County Vo-Tech School District Board of Education  
Dr. Victoria C. Gehrt, Superintendent of New Castle County Vo-Tech School District

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## Wilmington delegation

The Honorable Margaret Rose Henry, State Senator

The Honorable Robert Marshall, State Senator

The Honorable Harris McDowell, State Senator

The Honorable Stephanie Bolden, State Representative

The Honorable Gerald Brady, State Representative

The Honorable James Johnson, State Representative

The Honorable Helene Keeley, State Representative

The Honorable Charles Potter, State Representative

Members of the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee