

**School Consolidation Taskforce Meeting – HCR 39**  
**January 22, 2018**  
**Beacon Middle School**

**Members Present:** Rep. Earl Jaques, Chairman; Rep. Joseph Miro, Co-Chair; Susan Bunting, Secretary of Education; Walk Gilefski; Loretta Greig, Parent Representative; Lauren Hudson; Gina Jennings, Sussex County Administrator; John Marinucci, Delaware School Board; Robert Overmiller, Governor’s Advisory Council for Exceptional Children; Jon Sheehan, Governor’s Office; Rep. David Sokola; Dan Shelton, Superintendent Capital School District; Fred Sears. Also present, Karen Field Rogers, Department of Education.

**Welcome and Introductions:** Welcome and introductions were conducted by Rep. Jaques.

**Subcommittee Reports:**

- a. **Structures** – Dr. Kevin Carson, Chair. We have been hard at it for months, met in December and January. Our next meeting will be held on February 6<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. at Legislative Hall, all are welcome. Spending our time on two primary issues of the 4 options that have been put on the table. We are exploring the 19 school districts and having further conversation around services offered through the districts and possible ways to economize. Drawn on Business Managers, Personnel Directors, Nutrition Services, Facilities and Data Services. On February 6 we will be having a meeting on School Transportation. Purpose is to talk about ways that we can do some things that are running parallel with each other. Our intent is to publish things that are going well and things some people may not be aware of that is being done in the state. The second option we are exploring, is looking at an analysis of county-wide school systems and what would it look like, what the structure would be, how the school board would work, and a centralized district office. We are looking at how it would work and laying on a quality of service for parents and students if in fact a county-wide system would be put in play. There would be some financial costs, and we don’t want to cross into that area. We will also be looking at a organization chart and applying the fences to that as we move forward. Meeting monthly, great conversations, things shared folks didn’t know.
- b. **Academics and Student Needs** - Secretary Susan Bunting. We have been meeting on a regular basis. Had some ideas as to what kind of model we would be looking at. At this point we have been concentrating on whether there is evidence to show that year round schooling has an impact on Academics, we have also looked at trauma impact, compassionate schools, and we now are looking at EL services and what we might need to succeed. We are taking a look more deeply into statistics that we shared earlier. Next big topic is taking a good hard look at what extended time evidence there is. Would it be best to have classes through the summer, after school, extra learning time or if after school makes a big difference. We are looking at data shared by the SAIL taskforce, ways that we might be able to add to it. Will make recommendations on findings. We also meet monthly and will be meeting in Sussex County on February 12<sup>th</sup> at Woodbridge School District.
- c. **Finance** – Fred Sears. The date for our next meeting was just moved, now scheduled for January 31<sup>st</sup> at 4:30 p.m. in Delle Donne Corporate Center. Pretty much looking at the two county-wide school districts as well as if we don’t consolidate, controlled by DOE to be

distributed to schools. We are working on trying to get a handle on Pre-K special assistant teachers, smaller classrooms. What actual cost to that, no sense saying going to do separate funding opportunity to do that then don't raise enough to do it, just another battle. Can't save money because you can't level off everything. A question was raised about the lawsuit that has been in the news. Issues have been raised by seven districts stating they are getting more money on their affluent kids vs. poor kids. Subcommittee will discuss this and is asking if there is any resource we need to assist the subcommittee. Mike Jackson was going to supply some further information. Around the lawsuit. Resource at ECS or NCSL who has a lot of information on other equity lawsuits and might be a good resource to look into. We don't have that kind of history in Delaware, this should be part of our discussions in future meetings.

- d. **Teachers and Staff** – Tammy Croce. We had our most recent meeting on January 10<sup>th</sup>. Nermin Zubaca from the Educator Support Team at DOE shared staffing data. Chief Financial Officers from the districts were asked for examples of staffing differences in job titles and responsibilities. It was found that some districts use DSC or other spreadsheets. We are looking at all education support personnel and comparing countywide to other districts to analyze demographics on students and compare staffing. We are also taking a look at positions and funding sources. We would like to meet with small groups from other subcommittees and make sure that source data is correct. Also need to look at positions to determine who is paid for by federal funds. Jeff Taschner collected data regarding negotiated data and who represents each group, as DSEA does not represent all employees. Rep. Sokola asked for data before the lawsuit but has not received it to date. We need the specific job titles, responsibilities, and we are trying to find out what is best format for us to collect the data. We are looking for positions, not names. Good bit of work for school districts to take on to supply this data. We aren't just asking for teachers, we are looking at all positions. We are reviewing how each position is funded which could change if it goes to county-wide system. We know there is overlap between subcommittees, we have good discussions, take up full amount of time and are making progress in getting good data. Next meeting is February 5 and we will continue to work on our data. Most accurate data is from districts that have their own little spreadsheets, school by school. With number of schools we have, it would be a lot of work but if that's what we need to do, then that's what should be done.

Chair's Comments – Rep. Jaques. Next meeting is February 21<sup>st</sup> at Dickenson High School. We have held meetings in every county, at least 3 times and different parts of that county to allow public to come and make comments if they so choose, we were transparent and people could get a hold of us.

At the end of meeting on February 21<sup>st</sup> will take some time to meet with the Chairs of the subcommittees to talk about the report and format. We need to come to a consensus on recommendations we will have.

I have alked about doing a study of administrations and find out if we have right format, doing the right things. We did have a company we were working with to do the report but they have since backed out. I did have a conversation with SREB and they gave us a name of a company – Afton Partners. We are working on getting the data on how many administrators should each school district need based on enrollment. Compare it to like districts in the country.

Could not find anywhere in Code where State of DE has a process to consolidate school districts. Will be talking to the Senator and Rep. Miro, there is a code for boundaries but not consolidating districts. We should have a process, it should be added to the code. If we come to a consensus to consolidate, we need a process be put in the Code. Rep. Jaques talked to house attorneys about this and it's not in the code.

The 1968-69 Consolidated School District item arose, Rep. Jaques going to obtain further information on it. It may be in the Delaware Laws.

A report on this committee's findings is due May 15<sup>th</sup> and Rep. Jaques hopes that there is legislation that comes forward from this work. Need the support of other stakeholders to get legislation done.

There is no public comment.

Meeting ended.