

Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 20, 2025

Meeting held at Red Clay Consolidated School District, 1502 Spruce Ave, Wilmington, DE 19805
and via Zoom

Public Session

- Helen Anderson chaired and opened the meeting at 6:00 pm
- Welcome and Housekeeping provided by Helen Anderson
- Council Roll Call provided by Helen Anderson
 - **Attendees:** Helen Anderson, AJe English, Dr. Susan Huffman (proxy for Dr. Dorrell Green), RaShona Brown, Dr. Deirdra Joyner, Dr. Lisa Lawson, Alex Najemy, and Mia Elliot. Absent Starr Wilson and Dr. Dorrell Green
 - Approval of 4/15/2025 Minutes - Motion by AJe English, seconded by Dr. Lisa Lawson. Vote unanimous. Minutes approved.
 - AJe English read statement for Public Comment guidelines
 - **Public Comment:**
 - Donald Farrell - no response
 - Jazmin Upshur - no response
 - Allison Santana - no response
 - Antoinette Curry, Cofounder of MASK(Mothers Advocating for School Kids) - Ms. Curry spoke briefly on authentic parent leadership. Families are often invited to participate, but only as spectators not to lead. Parents need a seat at the table to help make decisions for their children. Ms. Curry looks forward to true partnership and collaboration with the WLC.
 - Celita Cherry, Cofounder of MASK(Mothers Advocating for School Kids) - Ms. Cherry spoke on how parent leadership is not optional, it's essential. She also spoke about Community Council meetings she has been attending since December and her observation of those meetings. She commented that a formal letter was submitted to the WLC outlining concerns about transparency, accountability and a conflict of interest.
 - Alisha Simpkins, Cofounder of Mask (Mother Advocating for School Kids) - Ms. Simpkins spoke about parents being in the room, at the table and in the

process of decision making. She stated that parent engagement should be more than just respondents, surveys and listening sessions. Ms. Simpkins said our children deserve clarity and urgency. She wants to stop the gatekeeping of family involvement and start co-creating with the WLC.

- **Partnership Updates:**

- Educator Support Programs
 - Jounce & Transcend Partner Report – Dr. Burgos introduced Carly Highsmith, Director of Educator Pathways with the Wilmington Learning Collaborative.
 - 35 Teacher Leadership Design Fellows across 11 schools
 - 9 WLC schools, plus 2 charter partners
 - Engage in weekly 1/1 coaching, modeling/co-teaching
 - Received a series of two hour training sessions in their chosen pathway of either: Math Instruction, Literacy Instruction, Classroom Culture and Student Engagement.
 - Attended Ron Clark Academy RCA experience conference in Atlanta, GA
 - Visited 5 public schools in Washington, DC – each school showcased innovative practices aligned with the 3 learning pathways
 - TLDF Timeline:
 - September 2024 – Coaching
 - November 2024 – Teacher Leadership Model Design
 - December 2024 – Experiential Learning
 - Spring 2025 – Professional Development Leads
 - WLC and Jounce Partnership
 - Improving student outcomes through coaching of teacher leaders
 - Instructional coaching by Jounce was customized to the role and need of individual teacher leaders.
 - WLC and Transcend Partnership
 - Help teacher leaders design, test and refine innovative classroom experiences that meet the real needs of students

- Move schools towards extraordinary learning environments
- Design a two-week student experience test:
 - Students felt a strong sense of belonging
 - Academic confidence and performance increased
 - Behavior and engagement improved
 - Teachers gained clarity, confidence and momentum

Old Business:

- **Approval of Children & Families First Contract Extension:**
 - Helen Anderson, Council Chair recused herself and stepped out of the room for discussion and vote.
 - Alex Najemy made a motion to approve the Children & Families First contract extension, seconded by Dr. Lisa Lawson. Council voted - 5 yes, 1 abstention, 1 recusal, 2 absent. Vote approved.
- **CSD Update on Principal Search:**
 - Dr. Burgos gave an overview of the Principal Search process:
 - Search started in November 2024
 - Hosted a series of community engagement events
 - 5 month of sourcing candidates, working closely with National Executive Search Firm, Alma Advisory Group in collaboration with Christina School District
 - Recommendation was made to the Council at the April 18, 2025 meeting, with a 6 to 1 vote, then submitted to the Christina School Board which did not successfully pass
 - Dr. Joyner discussed next steps regarding CSD Principals:
 - The CSD team will work closely with Dr. Burgos to reset and identify leaders for The Bayard School and Maurice Pritchett Sr. Academy by July 1, 2025

New Business:

- **Approval of FY26 WLC Budget Proposal:**
 - Proposed FY26 Programmatic Budget Narrative
 - Year 4 - July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026
 - Total FY26 Allocation - \$18,402,513
 - Carryover - \$8,402,513
 - Year 4 Allocation - \$10,000,000

- Proposed FY26 Operational Budget Narrative
 - Year 4 Funding Breakdown - July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026
 - Salaries and OECs for WLC Team - \$1,138,178
 - Travel - \$175,000
 - Supplies and other Operating Cost - \$193,600
 - Educator Supports - \$1,200,000
 - Contractual and Professional Services - \$2, 604,325
 - Capital Project and Investments - \$2,225,000
 - Operational Budget Total - \$7,536,103
- Following Council approval, the WLC FY26 Budget Narratives will need to be reviewed and approved by the Department of Education, Office of Management and Budget, and the Joint Finance Committee.
- Dr. Lisa Lawson made a motion to approve the FY26 WLC Budget Proposal, seconded by AJe English. Vote unanimous. Vote approved.
- **Approval of 2025-2026 WLC Council Meeting Calendar:**
 - Tabled to discussed meeting calendar at the June meeting
 - AJe English will send out a doodle poll regarding rescheduling June council meeting due to the WLC June Educator Symposium on the same day.

Adjournment

Motion by AJe English to adjourn, seconded by Dr. Lisa Lawson. Unanimous. The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.