

Council Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 1, 2026

Meeting held at Warner Elementary School, 801 W 18th St, Wilmington, DE 19802
and via Zoom

Public Session

- Helen Anderson chaired and opened the meeting at 6:06 pm
- Welcome and Housekeeping provided by Helen Anderson
- Council Roll Call provided by Helen Anderson
 - **Attendees:** Helen Anderson, Dorrell Green (Represented by Suzan Huffman), Deirdra Joyner, Lisa Lawson, Alex Najemy, Deirdra Joyner, Nia Elliot, Celita Cherry and Anthony Paul. Minutes from the March council meeting were approved.
 - **Public Comment:**
 - Online public comment by Sarah Braun
 - **Partnership Updates:**
 - **OST Updates**

The Out of School Time (OST) update discussed the successful implementation of spring break programs and partnerships with organizations like the Boys and Girls Club. The WLC is funding various out-of-school programs to support families, particularly focusing on STEM activities and aftercare services.
 - A STEAM-focused spring break academy was launched with 90 students registered for STEM design activities. Additionally, support was provided to 54 families for before and aftercare expenses, totaling approximately \$91,000 from January to June. The updates stressed the importance of ongoing funding for these positions and programs to ensure continued support for the unique needs of students across various schools.

Old Business:

- **Budget Update:**
- [WLC-Funded Staff](#) - FY27 Projections
 - The projection summary for WLC-funded staff in Fiscal Year 2027 highlighted significant concerns regarding the funding structure. A total payroll projection indicated that WLC is funding approximately 30

positions across nine schools with an estimated total cost exceeding \$3 million, while the fiscal year 2027 allocation is only about \$2 million. This creates a financial gap that raises concerns about the sustainability of these funded positions.

- The breakdown revealed distinct percentages of educators funded by WLC in various schools, with figures such as 11% at Harlan, 64% at Red Clay, and around 26% at Christina. The need for these positions was underscored, particularly in light of the unique staffing needs that arise from enrollment changes and the emphasis on reducing class sizes to improve student outcomes. The council expressed the necessity to communicate these funding needs effectively to the Joint Finance Committee (JFC) and to emphasize the importance of continued financial support to prevent potential disruptions in staffing and service delivery.
- **Carryover Analysis**
 - The carryover analysis summary indicated that the available carryover funds were approximately \$7.8 million, although a significant portion of these funds is already allocated to specific expenses. The analysis identified several key expenditures anticipated in the upcoming months, including operational costs and partnerships.
 - Out of the total carryover, about \$1.7 million was expected from past expenditures after submission of reimbursement reports to the Department of Education. Additionally, another \$856,000 was estimated for April through June expenditures, covering staff salaries, out-of-school time invoices, and related costs.
 - As the funds are utilized for various programs, the carryover amount will decrease, with projections suggesting that around \$1.2 million may remain at the end of the fiscal year, potentially less if additional expenses arise. The summary emphasized the importance of closely monitoring enrollment numbers and expenditures to ensure effective budget management and highlighted the necessity for transparency in funding allocations as discussions with the Joint Finance Committee approached.
- **District Spending Plans**

The district spending plans summary discussed requests from Brandywine for additional funding for staffing and programs.

 - Brandywine's spending plan included two main requests. The first was for \$174,95.52, designated for summer programming and the United Way

initiative. This amount was requested as new funding coming from the carryover funds to support these activities.

- The second request detailed additional staffing needs, including a third-grade teacher and a part-time enrichment teacher, emphasizing the importance of reducing class sizes and providing targeted support for students.
- Council member Lisa Lawson noted discrepancies in the descriptions of positions, with one member pointing out that the enrichment teacher's role was conflated with other positions, indicating that efforts to clarify staffing details were necessary for accurate planning.
- Overall, the discussions underscored the need for clear communication regarding the funding of specific roles and programs, as well as the urgency of approving these plans to ensure that resources are allocated effectively for the benefit of students during the upcoming fiscal year.
- **Get Delaware Reading - Vote on United Way Summer Contract**
 - The "Get Delaware Reading" program was discussed as an important initiative focusing on enhancing literacy for children in the target population. Concerns were raised about the funding and implementation of this program, particularly in relation to the final allocation amounts and whether adjustments were needed based on previous discussions.
 - The United Way's summer contract, which tied into this initiative, involved a financial request that had to be clarified. Council members emphasized the need for adjustments based on a previous meeting where numbers were inaccurately represented. Specifically, there was a proposal to reallocate some funds, amounting to approximately \$319,000, that had initially been put in the United Way budget due to other funding sources being utilized by individual districts.
 - Helen Anderson expressed the need for a special meeting to address these contract approvals, with the idea that the council needed to get accurate numbers and ensure proper alignment of the budget. The urgency was due to the necessity of communicating funding needs clearly to stakeholders, particularly the Joint Finance Committee (JFC).

New Business:

- **WLC Strategic Roadmap**

The WLC strategic roadmap summary highlighted a draft plan that outlines priorities for the upcoming year based on feedback from the

council and schools. The roadmap focuses on four main priorities: teaching and learning, educator pipelines, direct services, and family engagement.

- The strategic roadmap aims to align with the Department of Education's goals to increase student proficiency by 2028. It includes specific strategies, metrics, and desired outcomes that were derived from a SWOT analysis and consultations with school leaders.
- Council member Lisa Lawson expressed the importance of having a working session to review the proposed roadmap. "I think there is room for a larger conversation. Obviously, I think the budget is at the forefront of at least my mind right now, trying to wrap my head around because I believe in the last meeting we were talking about potentially moving away from SBAC around the goal piece, and it looks like it's back."

Adjournment

Motion by Helen to adjourn, seconded by Lisa Lawson. Unanimous. The meeting adjourned at 7:15pm.