

RES17-086

Wilmington, Delaware
November 16, 2017

#4446

Sponsor:

Council
Member
Chukwuocha

Co-Sponsors:

Council
President
Shabazz

Council
Member
Harlee

WHEREAS, Governor John Carney has recognized the unique opportunities and challenges faced by Wilmington students, in particular those served by the Christina School District, by creating the Office of Innovation and Improvement for Wilmington schools; and

WHEREAS, the Christina School District's high need/high poverty Wilmington schools have consistently been among the lowest performing in the State according to several indicators: academic performance, absenteeism, suspension rates and teacher turnover; and

WHEREAS, Wilmington City Council joins Governor Carney in saying that "now is the time for change" by establishing new Wilmington specific partnerships with the Christina School District, Christina Education Association, Department of Education and the Office of Innovation and Improvement to focus on the needs of Wilmington students attending Christina schools in Wilmington in order to improve the educational outcome for our children, our future; and

WHEREAS, Wilmington City Council understands the position of the District and Christina Education Association of not wanting to be forced to comply with yet another unfunded school turnaround initiative. However, through attending in-state and out-of-state school visits, compassionate schools trainings and community town hall meetings, this Council believes that the partnership will help to bring in additional support to help address the unique needs of Wilmington schools; and

WHEREAS, abundant evidence documents the relationship between educational outcomes and nonacademic factors, such as neighborhood poverty, exposure to violence and trauma. Students' untreated social, emotional and mental health needs can lead to academic and social failure which increase the risk factors of dropping out of school, and contribute to family and community dysfunction. In order to change the direction of our schools, policy makers and educators must adopt comprehensive "whole child and whole school" educational interventions that can address these learning barriers and concurrently focus on improving student academic outcomes; and

WHEREAS, out of school suspensions, which make academic progress even more difficult, can be decreased by increased compassionate school supports and other restorative approaches that foster less punitive environments within our schools; and

WHEREAS, generational poverty and the impact of pervasive trauma on students, their families and communities has to be recognized. Many of the students and their families clearly have multiple adverse childhood experiences and an array of adverse community experiences, including sustained poverty and exposure to community violence. These hurdles to education are only addressed with compassionate care and trauma informed supports; and

WHEREAS, the partnership would be in alignment with the recommendations of the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission report, that the Wilmington City Council supported through participation and resolution. This supportive alliance would address some of the barriers that prevent academic success for the students, their families, communities and schools, through targeted partnerships geared towards improving academic and social outcomes by increasing parental and community engagement, creating less punitive/

compassionate schools, improving teacher quality and equitable funding to meet the needs of high-poverty schools.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON, that City Council thanks Governor Carney for engaging the Wilmington City Council in this process and looks forward to being a continued invested member of this most critical alliance to highlight and implement evidence-based, promising and proven best practices to alter the trajectory of our students, schools and districts.

Passed by City Council,
November 16, 2017

Attest: Maribel Seijo
City Clerk

Approved as to form this 10th
day of November, 2017

Elizabeth D. Powers
Senior Assistant City Solicitor

SYNOPSIS: This Resolution supports the stance that Governor John Carney has taken regarding the opportunities and challenges facing Wilmington schools and students. This Resolution further thanks Governor Carney for engaging with the Wilmington City Council in the process of implementing evidence-based practices to alter the trajectory of our students, schools and districts.