



Redding Consortium for Educational Equity

**Redistricting Update for the
Wilmington City Council**

**Representative Nnamdi Chukwuocha
Councilman Jea Street**

May 8, 2024

Redding Consortium: Mission

The Redding Consortium for Educational Equity was created to recommend policies and practices to the Governor and Delaware General Assembly that will **achieve educational equity** and **improve educational outcomes** for all Pre-K to grade twelve students in the City of Wilmington and northern New Castle County Delaware.

Overview of the Redistricting Mandate



Per **Senate Bill 148 and House Bill 222 (updates in HB 229)**, the Redding Consortium for Educational Equity is mandated to address redistricting in Wilmington and Northern New Castle County.

*“The Consortium shall develop a proposal for redistricting in the City of Wilmington and northern New Castle County that will include provisions stipulated in concurrent legislation formulated specifically for that purpose with designated responsibilities and timelines for action at all levels.” - **Senate Bill 148***

Progress in the Educational Landscape



Progress in the Educational Landscape

Since 2001, reports and groups focused on education governance have also continuously called for:

- **Increased funding and support** for students from low-income families, students with disabilities, and English learners;
- **Increased wraparound services** for children and families;
- **Highly effective educators and building leaders** who are retained—particularly in schools with high concentrations of students in poverty;
- **Increased parent/caregiver/family engagement**, support, communication, and transparency from schools.

Progress in the Educational Landscape

Although not fully solved, the state has made significant progress in addressing these areas through:

Educational equity lawsuit resulting in:

- **Opportunity funding;**
- Improved **K-3 basic special education funding** for students;
- **Annual \$4M investment in teacher recruitment** and retention in high-needs schools;
- The creation and funding of an **Ombudsperson position/office** in each county.
- For all capital projects, school districts must submit an **equity statement**

New school configurations and investments in Wilmington:

- A brand new state-of-the-art **Maurice Pritchett, Sr. Academy** to replace the **Bancroft School**
- A renovated **Bayard School**
- A renovated **Stubbs Early Education Center**
- A repurposed **Pulaski Early Education Center**

Progress in the Educational Landscape

- **The Redding Consortium for Educational Equity** has helped to increase high quality early childhood slots in the City and funded wraparound service grants to support City schools, among other investments.
- **The Wilmington Learning Collaborative (WLC)** was created to provide hyper-focused support for city schools.
- **The Boost '22–'26 initiative** was created to promote cross-district collaboration between the New Castle County Superintendents and is focused on graduation rates for Wilmington students.
- **Early childhood education** has been strengthened across the city and state through the expansion of the state-contracted full-day Pre-K program
- **Mental health** investments have also been increased statewide, with elementary and middle schools now required to have a 250:1 ratio of students to counselors.

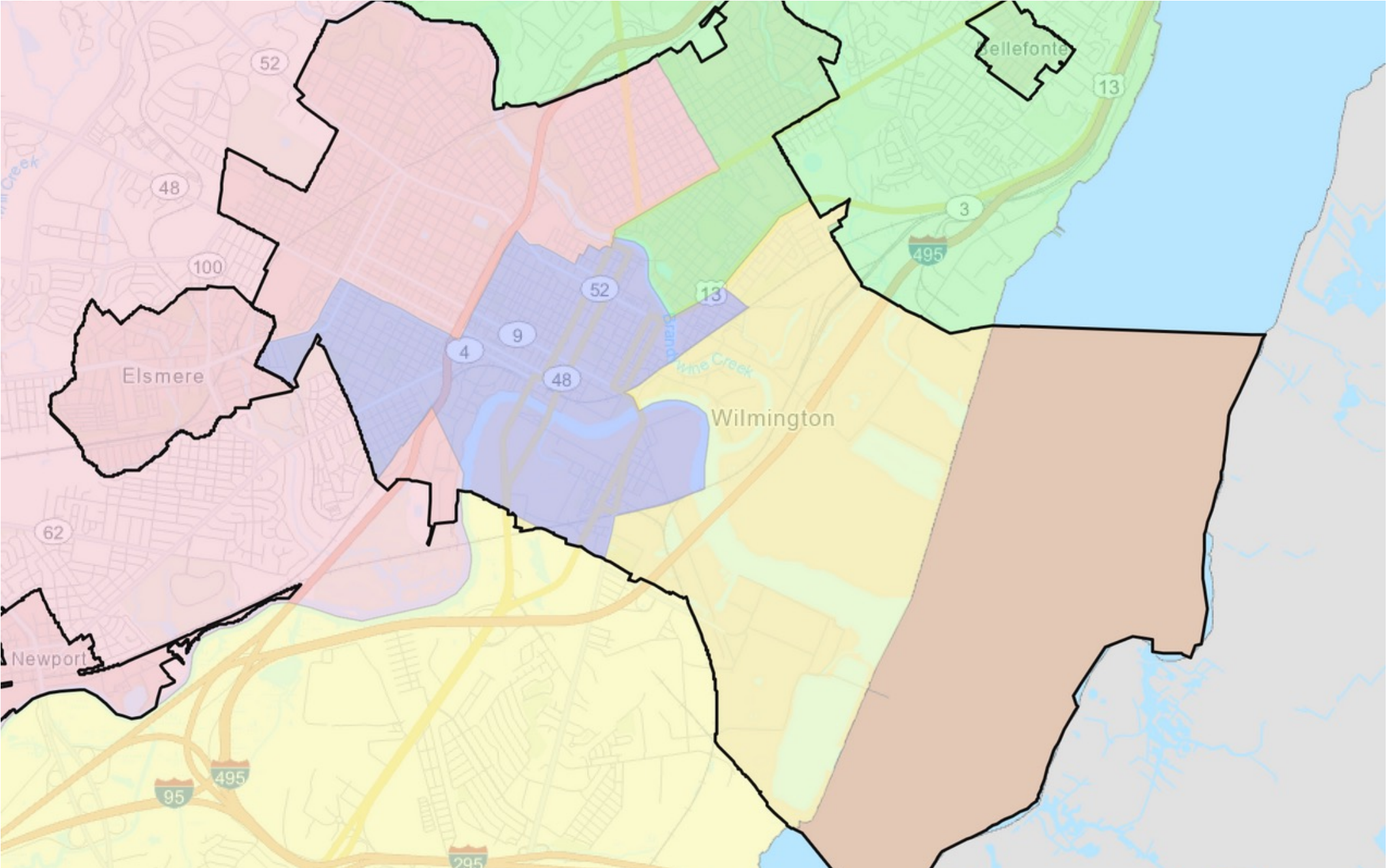
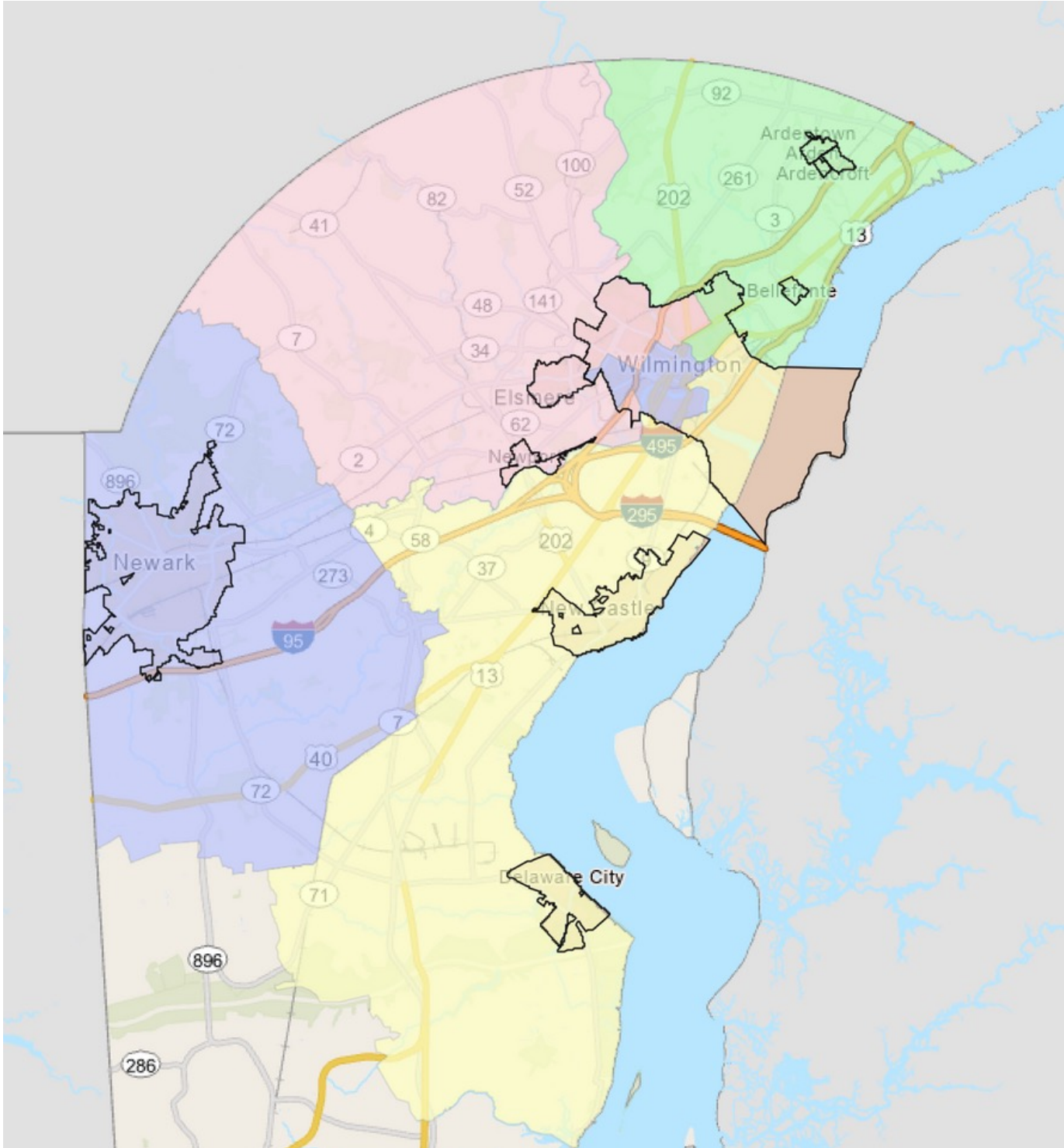
Decades of Redistricting Efforts



Decades of Efforts

- There are numerous other examples of excellent work happening at the state and local levels to support Wilmington students, families, and the community.
- However, **the one remaining area not being addressed is the fractured governance in the City of Wilmington.**
- Addressing the school district reorganization piece of the puzzle can help ensure all these supports discussed above are streamlined and delivered to students with equity, efficiency, and alignment at the forefront.

Current City of Wilmington School District Boundaries



Source: Institute for Public Administration, 2024

Decades of Efforts

- There are currently twenty-eight separate governing units, including 16 located in the City of Wilmington, responsible for delivering public education to approximately **11,000 Wilmington children**.
- There has been progress made in collaboration to support Wilmington students, but governance for students must be streamlined to create more effective and equitable change.
- The Redding Consortium's path forward for redistricting is informed by over twenty years of reports and input from engaged community members and passionate advocates.

2001 Wilmington Neighborhood Schools Committee (WNSC) and support from the City of Wilmington

In 2001, the WNSC produced a report that put forward two main recommendations--one focusing on combining the City of Wilmington with the Red Clay and the Brandywine School Districts to create a consolidated school district that shares students from these districts and forms a common local tax base.

“The City of Wilmington supports the WNSC in their recommendation “that the General Assembly abolish the existing four-district configuration, and that the State adopts the “River Plan” that requires only Brandywine, Red Clay to provide public school education for the City of Wilmington.”

*“The City supports this “River Plan” because suburban schools located in Red Clay and Brandywine School Districts is in closer proximity to the City than the suburban schools located in the Christina and Colonial School Districts. **Accordingly, [this] plan ensures that all students in New Castle County will be closer to home, eliminates long bus rides and results in savings to all districts.**”*

2008 Report from the *Wilmington Education Task Force*

“In June 2007, Senator Margaret Rose Henry sponsored a joint resolution to establish a Wilmington Education Task Force to examine the current status of public education in the City of Wilmington.

*Overall, a majority of the Task Force felt that **the design for city schools created in the early 1980s—to divide up the City of Wilmington into four school districts—had outlived its purpose, particularly in light of the subsequent passage of the Neighborhood Schools Act.**”*

The primary recommendation from the subcommittee assigned to conduct an analysis of district feeder patterns and school assignments was to “[r]educe the number of regular school districts serving Wilmington to two districts instead of four. One possible model for re-districting the city is that the children living to the east of Market Street be considered part of the Brandywine School District and the children living to the west of Market Street be considered part of the Red Clay School District, thus eliminating the Christina School District and Colonial School District from the geographic confines of the City of Wilmington.”

2015 and 2016 Reports - WEAC and WEIC

In 2015, the **Wilmington Education Advisory Committee (WEAC)** recommended streamlining the configuration for traditional school districts operating in Wilmington to better address the needs of Wilmington students and more fully support continuous improvement and community responsiveness.

- **This process would be done by removing the Christina and Colonial so that these school districts no longer serve Wilmington and allowing the Red Clay, Brandywine, and New Castle County Vocational-Technical (NCC Vo-Tech) school districts to continue to serve Wilmington children.**

In 2016, the **Wilmington Education Improvement Commission** recommended that the **Christina School District should no longer serve the City of Wilmington and focus on serving the students in the western portion of the current district;** Red Clay boundaries be altered to include the portion of the City of Wilmington now served by the Christina School District; Colonial and Brandywine continue to serve students who reside in the City of Wilmington within their current boundaries.

Where Are We Now?



Where We Are Now: The Redding Consortium

- The WEIC plan failed to pass the General Assembly and efforts toward redistricting have stalled since.
- The Redding Consortium was created in 2019 with one of its main charges to address redistricting. There was a significant effort in 2019-2020 towards redistricting, however, these priorities had to shift due to the COVID-19 pandemic and extra strain and demands on schools, districts, students, and families.
- The Redding Consortium has recently reignited these efforts to fulfill its charge. There was a full proposal developed, but members felt it moved too fast. Therefore, we are utilizing our ability to create an interim plan, that is more high level, to ensure progress moves forward.

Thank you!

Questions?

Redding Consortium website: solutionsfordelawareschools.com/