



# Redding Consortium for Educational Equity

Redistricting Update for Wilmington City Council  
*Committee of the Whole Meeting*

State Representative Nnamdi Chukwuocha

New Castle County Councilman Jea P. Street

OCTOBER 30, 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

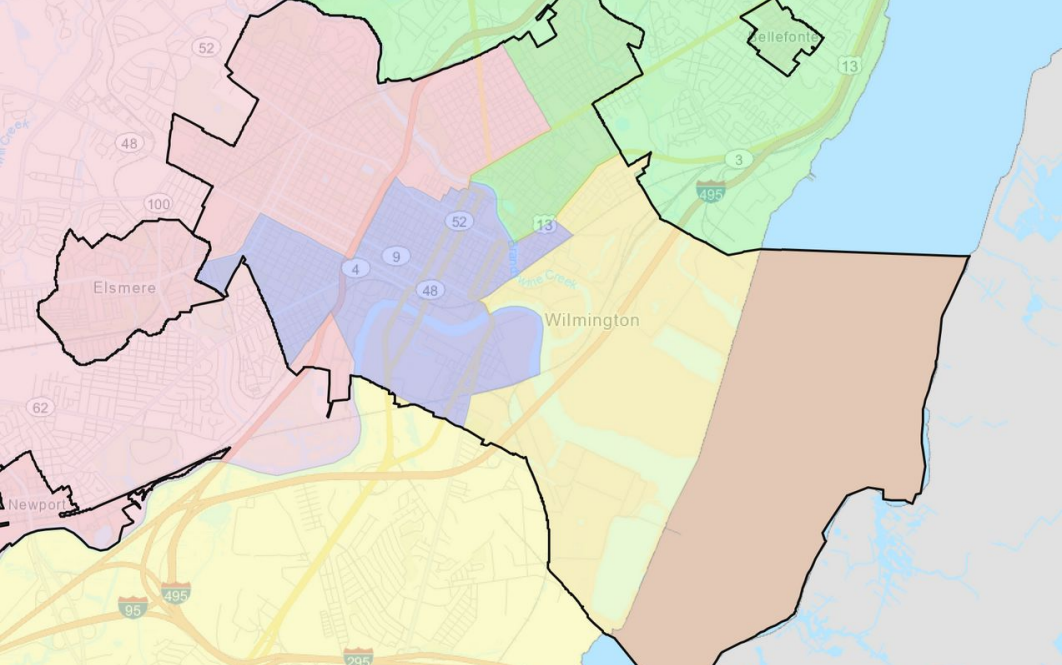
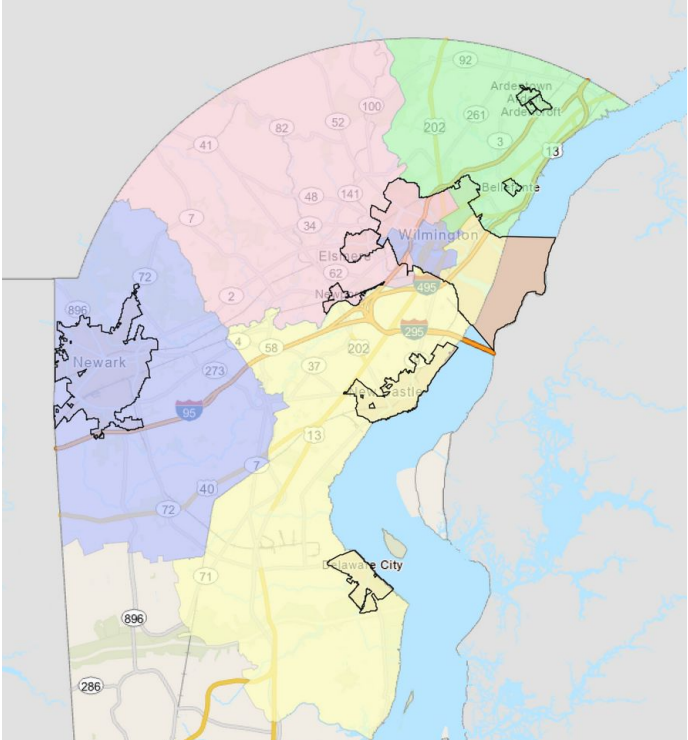




# Decades of Efforts

- 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



# Redistricting Historical Context

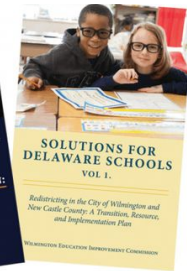
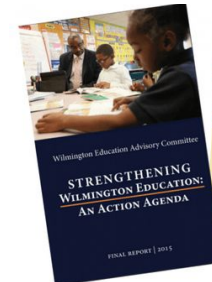
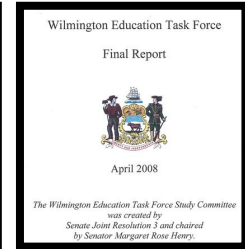
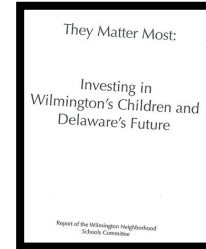
- There are currently **twenty-eight separate governing units (public school districts and charter school LEAs)**, including 16 located in the City of Wilmington, responsible for delivering public education to approximately **11,000 Wilmington children**.
- There has been progress made in collaboration to support Wilmington students, but governance for students must be streamlined to create more effective and equitable change.

# Decades of Previous Redistricting Efforts

- 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.

## ***Decades of Previous Redistricting Efforts:***

- The Neighborhood Schools Committee (2001)
- Wilmington Education Task Force (2008)
- Wilmington Education Advisory Committee (2015)
- Wilmington Education Improvement Commission (2016)



## ***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]educ[e] 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 (WEIC)** 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, the Redding Consortium utilized its ability to create an interim plan that is more high level to ensure progress moves forward.

# Redistricting Updates



# Approved Interim Plan Recap



Key areas of the approved interim plan include:

## ***The Removal of the Christina School District from the City of Wilmington***

- In any redistricting approach put forward, it is recommended that the Christina School District be removed from the city of Wilmington

## ***18-month timeline to create final redistricting plan***

### ***Subcommittee structure to create final redistricting plan***

- Operational Impacts Subcommittee
- Fiscal Impacts Subcommittee
- Community Engagement Subcommittee

## ***Social Drivers of Health and Education Landscape Analysis for the City of Wilmington and Northern New Castle County, Delaware***

- Facilitate social drivers of health and education needs assessment to examine the broader ecosystem around the implications of lived conditions that impact students and families before and after school

## ***A framework for a final redistricting plan to include more detail on broad policy reforms related to revenue, state investment, and charter and choice reform.***

# Christina School District - Redistricting Efforts

- The Christina School District is the **only non-contiguous school district in Delaware.**
- This **district has also endured systemic challenges** in educating and supporting city of Wilmington students.
- The actualization of the removal of the Christina School District is dependent on the Redding Consortium's final redistricting plan being approved by the State Board of Education, General Assembly, and Governor.
  - **Student and personnel shifts would only occur after the final plan is approved, with a transition period between plan approval and shifts beginning.**
  - **Under current understanding in 2024, such shifts will not occur for another 3-5 years,** but the appropriate transition and implementation period remains to be determined during the plan's development and adoption.

## The Redding Consortium: Interim Plan and the Path Forward on Redistricting

- The Redding Consortium's vote to approve the redistricting interim plan marks an important first step for improving educational governance in the city of Wilmington and northern New Castle County.
- The Redding Consortium has submitted this approved interim plan to the State Board of Education for its review. The State Board of Education will also provide input and guidance on the Consortium's development of a final redistricting plan.
  - The goal is to engage regularly with the State Board in this work to collect feedback, ensure open dialogue, and work to build a final plan that is best for students and families in the city of Wilmington and northern New Castle County.

# Subcommittee Membership

## Three subcommittees include:

- Operational Impacts
- Fiscal Impacts
- Community Engagement



- Selection is based on Redding Consortium members' expressed interests, areas of expertise and experience, and community representation on the Consortium
- Appointees who are not members of the Consortium have been placed on recommended subcommittees as designees by district superintendents, DSEA, and the charter school leads on the Redding Consortium

# Redistricting 18-Month Timeline Highlights

**May-August 2024 (Months 1-4):** Preparation work (work plan development, subcommittee discussions, vendor meetings, etc.)

**September 2024 (Month 5):** Full body meeting



**October 2024 (Month 6):**

- Joint community town hall with Wilmington City Council
- Community Engagement Subcommittee begins to co-create the community engagement strategy with a diverse set of stakeholders
- Landscape analysis vendor work begins

**November 2024 (Month 7):** Create an Educator Advisory Board with DSEA

**December 2024 (Month 8):** Full body meeting

**January 2025 (Month 9):**

- Subcommittee convening
- Landscape analysis 3-month deliverable

# Redistricting 18-Month Timeline Highlights

**February 2025 (Month 10):** Subcommittee convening

**March 2025 (Month 11):**

- Full body meeting
- Subcommittee co-chairs meet to discuss redistricting alignment

**April 2025 (Month 12):**

- Subcommittee Convening
- Landscape analysis 6-month deliverable

**May 2025 (Month 13):** Public hearings

**June 2025 (Month 14):** Subcommittee convening

**July 2025 (Month 15):** Landscape analysis 9-month deliverable

**August-September 2025 (Months 16-17):** Vote on redistricting plan approval

**October 2025 (Month 18):**

- Send final redistricting plan to State Board of Education
- Landscape analysis 12-month deliverable



## Social Drivers of Health and Education Landscape Analysis Update



- This comprehensive landscape analysis will help to inform the Redding Consortium's work toward the development of its final redistricting plan.
- The study findings will inform the vision and strategies for redistricting to improve educational outcomes and support services for city of Wilmington students, families, school personnel, and surrounding neighborhoods.

## Social Drivers of Health and Education Landscape Analysis Update



- **June-July 2024:** Redding Consortium leadership and staff convened a series of meetings to discuss the vision, goals, and scope of work for the landscape analysis.
- **August 2024:** Redding Consortium leadership team had two discovery meetings to discuss the project with state-approved vendors.
- **September 2024:** The leadership team vetted vendors to conduct the analysis.
- **October 2024:** The Department of Education is working with the vendor to secure the contract.
- The goal of the landscape analysis will be to help to inform the work of the 3 subcommittees.

# The City of Wilmington's Role in Education - Historically vs. Present

- **Wilmington City Council established the Office of Education under the administration of Mayor James H. Sills, Jr.**
  - There have been previous efforts to re-establish the Office of Education
- **The City of Wilmington has carried the legislation to create the Office of Education and supported lawsuits on behalf of city children and their families**
- **Additional educational investments made by Wilmington City Council:**
  - Placement of city-funded tutors inside of community centers
  - Creation of community-based college hubs that support students and families with the enrollment process to higher education
  - Instituted a mentoring program throughout the city in partnership with fraternities and sororities
  - Established before-school and after-school programming through Parks & Recreation

# **Wilmington City Council's Recommended Engagement in Education in Wilmington**

## **Calls to Action:**

- Encourage Wilmington City Council to rejoin its fight for equity in education
- Support the work of the Redding Consortium in its redistricting planning and community engagement efforts

## **Additional Considerations:**

- The potential for future litigation to support city children
- Re-establishing the Office of Education for the City of Wilmington
- Proposed city wage tax to increase funding for educational initiatives

# Discussion with Wilmington City Council

