



Office of Educational Advocacy

January 2026

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The Office of Educational Advocacy exists to:



- **Unify** the educational landscape in Wilmington
- **Amplify** the voices of families, educators, and community organizations
- **Influence** legislation and policy decisions that impact Wilmington students
- **Build** a sustainable, long-term infrastructure for advocacy on behalf of the City

Focus Areas

The Office advances its mission in four primary ways:



1. Coalition-Building

- Building purposeful, action-driven bonds with educators, families, community organizations, and policymakers

2. Information-Sharing

- Sharing key information with families and educators
- Creating spaces where community members can share experiences and learn together

3. Policy Engagement

- Engaging and building trusting relationships with legislators and legislative staff
- Influencing education legislation that impacts the City of Wilmington

4. Infrastructure Building

- Creating office infrastructure (staffing, tools, and approach) that is sustainable and impactful



Redistricting & Coalitions

Redding Consortium

- Committee meetings occurring **regularly**
- Frequent meetings leading up to a **final vote in December**

Coalition-Building

- Coalition focusing on raising strategic support for redistricting
- Engaging community leaders, educators, and organizations

Wilmington Interagency Collaboration (WIC)

- Convened **community meetings in October/November** with over **100 attendees**
- WIC includes: WLC, Redding, WCEEP, and the Mayor's Office
- **10 full meetings** held, plus **5–10 planning meeting**

Why is this important?

OEA does not have formal authority over schools and education.

In order to impact schools, educators and agencies will have to band together to create MORAL authority that results in influence and willing collaboration.



Stakeholder Engagement – Direct Connections

- 100+ stakeholder connections (one-on-one connections)

Overall Direct Connections Made: ~600

- Stakeholder meetings/people: 106
- Family Engagement Tour: ~350 attendees
- OEA Introduction Luncheon: ~20 attendees
- Bridging the Gap Expo: 22 community organizations
- Attendees in meetings hosted through Wilmington Interagency Collaboration: ~100

Why is this important?

It is the **DIRECT CONNECTIONS** that build the strongest partnerships that ultimately lead to **CHANGE, IMPACT** and **INFLUENCE**. 600 direct connections is fantastic for an office that just started mid-year.

Community Engagement



Events Initiated / Convenings Hosted

- **Family Engagement Tour – 7 sites**
- **OEA Introduction Luncheon**
- **OEA “Bridging the Gap” Community Expo**
- Through Wilmington Interagency Collaboration:
 - **5 redistricting-focused engagement events**, including:
 - Community Leader Meeting
 - General Public Meeting
 - Educator Meeting
 - District Leader Meeting
 - Three follow-up meetings

Why is this important?

OEA’s hosting of 3 community facing events and 5 community-focused meetings has served to **CONNECT** and **INFORM** the community

Community Engagement – Channels & Reach



Channels launched:

• Website • Facebook • Instagram • TikTok •

Early Efforts (Summer):

- Instagram: 104 subscribers
- Facebook: 40 subscribers
- TikTok: 10 subscribers
- Views (past month):
 - Instagram: 5.3K
 - Facebook: 3.1K
 - TikTok: ~120 (highest 620)

Current Update (Nov/Dec):

- Instagram: 209
- Facebook: 63
- TikTok: 11
- Views (past month):
 - Instagram: 29.6K
 - Facebook: 3.3K
 - TikTok: similar range

Podcast & Content Creation:

- 3 podcast sessions recorded
- 10 video reels produced
 - Aim: continue taping **additional** sessions and designing **engaging clips from content**

Event Participation & Presence

Stakeholder / Community Engagement – Event Attendance

- Total events attended: ~40
- Speaking engagements: 11

Examples by month:

- **June** – WLC Symposium, Freedom Schools EOY, Mayor/Reading Assist Announcement, Redding Consortium Sub-Committee Retreat
- **July** – HBCU Gala, Mandela Fellowship Dinner
- **August** – 4 School District Block Parties/Back to School, CM Hackett Scholarship Dinner, Backpack giveaway, Next Level Youth Leadership Summit
- **September** – St. Michael's Anniversary Celebration, Sen. Lockman Constituent Coffee, Parent Engagement (CEB), Literacy Announcement, Redding Co-interpretation Event, AIDS Walk, multiple Back to School events
- **October** – Hackett Teacher Celebration, CCA Anniversary Celebration, OEA Introduction Luncheon, Wilmington Interagency Community Meeting, Redding Retreat & Full Body Meeting, Leadership Prayer Breakfast
- **November** – Redding Full Body Meeting, Wilmington Interagency General Public Meeting, Wilmington Interagency Educator Meeting, Literacy Panel/Film Screening, OEA Community Expo, Kuumba Parent Engagement Event, Redding Town Hall, Public Funding Commission Town Hall
- **December** – Red Clay Town Hall, Brandywine Town Hall, Redding Full Body, Red Clay School Board Meeting, New Castle County Board Meeting, United Way Winter Wonderland, Bayard School Visit

Why is this important?

As a NEW office, OEA must be a visible presence in as many events as possible so all stakeholders are aware of the office's existence and purpose.



Policy-Maker Engagement



- **Recurring DDOE meetings**
 - Joining Secretary of Education on school visits
 - Focus on CSI schools (lowest performing)
 - **4 Wilmington schools** fall into the CSI category
- Targeting **upcoming education legislation**
- House of Representatives is traditionally **heavily focused on education**
- Meetings with **House and Senate policy teams** to provide feedback on legislation
- The above includes 2-3 days in Dover per week; strategy sessions with Secretary of Education twice a month and 4-6 school visits a month thus shifting the focus of Dr. O's time to legislation advocacy.

Why is this important?

During school visits, OEA is visiting classrooms and having key discussions with school leaders on how to **IMPROVE** Wilmington schools.

OEA is building a foundation so that Wilmington has a say in legislation **BEFORE** it is written.



Impact by the Numbers

- **30,000+** connections made via social media
- **600** direct in-person connections
- **150+** direct stakeholder-to-stakeholder relationships forged through OEA
- **5** community meetings hosted regarding redistricting
- **3** meaningful, impactful community-facing events hosted by OEA
- **3** legislative conversations/policy feedback efforts
- **1** powerful coalition forged

Momentum & Visibility



As a result of the of the work invested, momentum is clearly growing:

- **30–40% of stakeholder meetings** are now happening by incoming request (not just outreach initiated by Dr. O)
- Dr. O has been asked to be part of a **sub-committee engagement group through Redding**
- Redding leadership requested the **Wilmington Interagency Collaboration** to host follow-up engagement meetings due to the success of the first one
- Dr. O secured **22 community organizations** for the first **Bridging the Gap Community Expo**
- Dr. O is **joining the Secretary of Education** on monthly school visits to Wilmington city schools
- The Office was asked by DOE to participate in the **DDOE Literacy Announcement**
- Dr. O has been asked to speak on **two education panels**
- Dr. O has been invited to present to **school and community organization audiences**
- Dr. O received an **EDUCATION ADVOCACY AWARD** in December!

There are Different Types of Advocacy...

Advocacy Type	Education Advocacy	Legislative Advocacy	Community Advocacy
Goal	<p>To ensure every student has access to quality education.</p> <p>This includes: addressing inequities in education; improving education quality; supporting teachers; influencing education policies</p>	To influence the outcome of a legislator's vote on a proposed legislation or bill	To actively promote or defend a cause or issue that impacts a certain group; drive social change
Steps to effectively advocate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Inform and Educate 2) Engage with Key Stakeholders 3) Leverage Existing Relationships 4) Focus on Long-term Goals 5) Be Transparent and Authentic 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Set Goals/Identify Priorities 2) Build a Coalition 3) Research and Understand your key issue 4) Engage with Lawmakers 5) Create strategy for specific outcome (strategy could pull from education or community advocacy based off target) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify the Issue 2) Define Goals 3) Engage the Community 4) Communicate Effectively 5) Mobilize Support 6) Implement the Advocacy Plan
Sources:	Impactful Education Advocacy: 7 Proven Steps To Revitalize Learning Systems (Children Foundation)	Legislative Advocacy Introduction Public Affairs TCW (The Campaign Workshop)	Community Advocacy: The Complete Guide to Mobilize Change - Grassroots Unwired

In PHASE 1, the Office of Education Advocacy has focused on EDUCATION advocacy and LEGISLATIVE advocacy



Ideal Office Structure for the Future of OEA

The OEA is currently in its beginning stages. A Sustainable Office Infrastructure for the future includes:

Community Engagement Department

- Focused solely on connecting with community organizations, educators, and families
- Facilitates regular convenings and engagement activities
- Builds sustainable, collaborative teams across sectors

Legislative Department

- Builds relationships and social capital with policymakers and staff
- Attends and participates in education committee meetings
- Shares key information with City Council and the public about upcoming legislation
- Builds grassroots advocacy on behalf of Wilmington's educational needs

Administration / Records / Data

- Documents office approach and progress
- Manages data, records, scheduling, and event-planning
- Supports reporting and accountability
- Social Media Management



Office of Educational Advocacy Focus – Jan-Feb

OEA's continued education and legislative advocacy will focus on the below:

Education Advocacy Focus:

- Continued support of CSI schools
 - Monthly school visits with Sec. Marten
 - Maintaining partnership with school districts
- Keep community informed regarding redistricting efforts
- Inform the community on how to engage throughout the consolidation process.

Legislative Advocacy Focus:

- Engage in current process for largest pieces of education legislation: Public funding Commission and District Consolidation
- Continued convening and facilitation of Wilmington Interagency Collaboration
- Continued engagement with Wilmington Delegation – unity is key!
- Begin initial partnerships with non-Wilmington General Assembly members