**Statewide Afterschool Initiative Learning Task Force**

Tuesday, August 30, 2016

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

House Hearing Room

Legislative Hall

411 Legislative Avenue

Dover, DE 19901

**Meeting Attendees:**

**Task Force Members:**

**Present:** **Title/Organization**

Jack Polidori Chair

Rep. Valerie Longhurst State Representative

Sen. Nicole Poore State Senator

Mike Jackson Deputy Controller General

Amelia Hodges Department of Education

Jim Kelly YMCA

Michelle Taylor United Way

John Fisher-Klein Newark Day Nursery

Carol Scott Delaware Afterschool Network

Rich Heffron State Chamber of Commerce

Frederika Jenner DSEA

Dusty Blakey Superintendent, Colonial School District

Susan Bunting Superintendent, Indian River School District

Rep. Timothy Dukes State Representative

Ashley Biden Delaware Center for Justice

**Absent:**

Sheila Bravo DANA

Cynthia McKenzie Principal

**Staff:**

Lauren Vella House of Representatives

Jillian Luchner Afterschool Alliance

Tynetta Brown United Way

John Hulse Department of Education

Karen Lantz House of Representatives Attorney

Geoff Heath House of Representatives

**Public:**

**Attendees:** **Organization:**

Rep. Quinn Johnson State Representative

Patricia Scruggs Boys and Girls Club of Delaware

Jodi Grant Afterschool Alliance

Jillian Luchner Afterschool Alliance

Elizabeth Tish Afterschool Alliance

Chair of the Statewide Afterschool Initiative Task Force, Jack Polidori, called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. He provided a brief introduction of his employment history and the intentions of the Task Force and asked the task force members and the public to provide a brief introduction.

The members of the Statewide Afterschool Initiative Task Force introduced themselves and discussed their backgrounds pertaining to education and state government.

Vice-Chair of the Statewide Afterschool Initiative Task Force, State Representative Valerie Longhurst, thanked the task force members for attending the meeting and for their willingness to assist with task force discussions. She acknowledged Jack Polidori for his leadership and commitment to education and the Statewide Afterschool Initiative Task Force.

Vice-Chair of the Statewide Afterschool Initiative Task Force, State Senator Nicole Poore, acknowledged the importance of the task force and discussed its history and need for legislation to assist students and families in Delaware.

Jack Polidori discussed his background with the National Education Association (NEA) and their state affiliates. He highlighted three key considerations that the task force should address within its five meetings, including a focus on the fiscal situation as it pertains to the subject matter, the need for a sound design to move forward, and the importance of pragmatism in their approach.

He discussed an example of Delaware’s movement into full-day kindergarten, which was an excellent idea that included educators, legislators, and various stakeholders and which took about a decade to implement fully.

He highlighted the importance of public comment and succinct remarks from the task force members as they address various topics during the course of the Task Force’s work.

Jack Polidori asked for the task force members present to examine lines 27 through 33 of House Resolution 29, which discusses the focus of the Task Force’s study, findings, and recommendations. He stated that the task force should address the funding sources during the first meeting and the market needs during the subsequent meeting.

Jack Polidori recognized Mike Jackson, Deputy Controller General at the Office of the Controller General, who provided a briefing on state and local funding for afterschool programs. Mike Jackson, highlighting a memorandum provided to the task force members, stated that the annual Budget Act does not contain specific line item funding for school district and charter school afterschool educational programming. This funding, formerly called Extra Time, was eliminated from the operating budget in Fiscal Year 2009. Extra Time funding was exclusively used to provide additional instructional time for low achieving students in the four primary content areas, including Math, Science, Social Studies, and ELA.

Mike Jackson continued to discuss Extra Time funding as it pertains to the previous budget epilogue, which guided the usage of the funds and provided various forms of flexibility. To maximize resources, school districts were encouraged to match their allocations with a local match tax equivalent to roughly 30 % of the funding that was authorized via epilogue and required only a local board vote to establish.

While not required, as part of receiving Extra Time funding, there were applications that could be submitted for funding that would receive higher priority if there was a local share being matched. The local tax does not require a referendum but does require an affirmative vote of the school board to levy. Of the 19 school districts, 13 school districts levy the Extra Time match tax and 6 do not levy the tax. Mike Jackson stated that, overall, without a dedicated source of state funding, school districts are using a combination of Extra Time local revenue, current expense property taxes, discretionary state funding, and a portion of federal funding for afterschool programs.

Mike Jackson discussed that state funding is appropriated to the Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families (DSCYF) in the amount of $2,225,000 for afterschool programs focused on youth and child suicide prevention. The funding is distributed to non-profit organizations where a portion of it supports afterschool homework assistance. He stated that there is no direct state appropriation supporting afterschool programs.

Jack Polidori thanked Mike Jackson for the outline and asked the task force members if they had any questions.

State Representative Valerie Longhurst asked of the money being used by the schools are the schools utilizing the tax incentives offered and which afterschool programs are being utilized.

Mike Jackson responded that the tax incentives should to go toward supporting afterschool programs; however, he does not have the information about what each district is doing with the funds as it varies on need.

State Representative Valerie Longhurst reiterated the importance of having information about school district use of the funds.

Carol Scott of the Delaware Afterschool Network concurred with State Representative Valerie Longhurst, highlighting the need to leverage available resources.

Jack Polidori asked the Superintendent of Colonial School District, Dusty Blakey, if there was available evidence at the district level and if there have been discussions in regards to the absence of funds given the cuts from 2009.

Dusty Blakey, Superintendent of Colonial School District, responded that discussions have occurred especially after the proposal of SAIL. He stated that he would discuss the available evidence of the district levels with the chiefs of superintendents. He explained that many of the districts that previously levied the tax are still examining options to provide afterschool programs, whether they are academic based or in another format. He highlighted one building that provides support to the Hispanic population, which focuses on Saturday school and teaches English courses, as evidence of individual school-based afterschool programs in districts and throughout Delaware.

Jack Polidori stated that it is important to understand when the programs were cut so as to avoid any errors.

Michelle Taylor of United Way stressed the importance of understanding specific outcomes from the afterschool programs, such as how many children were served and what the afterschool programs accomplished.

Mike Jackson responded that what is available is what they were attempting to measure at the time for success; however, there would have to be a follow up to discuss data and results.

Jack Polidori asked Michelle Taylor if her question was referencing the $3 million in tax revenue from the local tax or the $2.2 million appropriated to the Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families.

Michelle Taylor replied that she was referencing the $2.2 million appropriated to the Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families, but that it would be helpful to also review the $3 million in revenue from the local tax. She stated that data should be available for the programs that have been funded for multiple years.

Jodi Grant from the Afterschool Alliance expressed caution about performance measures about what programs can accomplish. She stated that there are strong indicators to look at from the federal level, including attendance, behavior, and course completion; however, is wary of examining test scores as a measure. She also stated that it may be ambitious to find information for all programs.

State Representative Valerie Longhurst asked Mike Jackson about additional funding streams and resources available for afterschool programs, referencing her efforts with the Colonial School District and YMCA Delaware for substance abuse afterschool programs.

Mike Jackson stated that he could examine different funding opportunities in other state departments as well as available federal funds. He believes that there is a variation amongst districts as it pertains to federal resources and will provide a follow-up.

Jack Polidori recognized Amelia Hodges and John Hulse, from the Delaware Department of Education, who discussed Delaware Title I, Part A, focused on improving basic programs operated by local education agencies.

Amelia Hodges from the Delaware Department of Education provided a brief background about the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which focuses on providing financial assistance to local educational agencies and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards. She also mentioned that not all schools are Title I schools, and that funds are allocated using four statutory formulas. Currently, in Delaware, Title I funding distributed to local education agencies in the 2015-2016 school year totaled $42,289,332, with $468,481 Title I allocations estimated for afterschool programs, or 1.11%.

Nicole Poore asked which interventions are being utilized.

Amelia Hodges responded that the interventions vary based on needs and can be additional services for academic, social and behavioral needs, or whatever is needed upon a needs analysis and district plan.

John Hulse from the Delaware Department of Education discussed the background for Delaware 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC), which support the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. He stated that the formula grants are awarded to the Delaware Department of Education, which in turn manages statewide competitions and awards grants to eligible entities. He highlighted that the state must give priority to applications that are jointly submitted by a local education agency and a community-based organization or other public or private entity. He also noted that sub-grant awards are for 3 to 5 years and schools are designated as Title I eligible; however the ESEA law will now state that it is Title I only once it goes into effect. He clarified that schools are granted Title I if they are 40% through a waiver.

Jack Polidori asked if there was consistency between Title I grants, to which John Hulse clarified that there is consistency through the grant competition.

John Hulse stated that the programs are for 3 to 5 years and the sub grantees must submit a sustainability plan for when funding goes away, as well as a continuation plan. He stated that there are 35 21st CCLC sub-grantees in 57 sites serving 3,282 students with out-of-school time services at an annual cost of $4.9 million, or $1,493 per student per year.

Jack Polidori questioned how much of the $4.9 million resulted from new money and funding resources.

John Hulse responded that the $4.9 million is the pass through money that goes directly to the programs and some of the funding comes from the previous year. He continued to explain that there are some funds to assist with future plans and that the federal funding is 27-month funds. The current school year is being funded and that funds from two years ago were being used for summer programs. The competition begins in October for new cohorts and applications will be due in February.

Jack Polidori replied by asking for a document outlining available new funds as opposed to the past funds that were previously promised. He hoped that there would be growing resources to help fund these 21st CCLC programs.

John Hulse stated that the 15-year-old program is level funded and new programs are being offered. Cohort 10, which is in its 5th year, will fund Cohort 15.

Jack Polidori asked John Hulse to examine the past several years for new funds and if the aggregate amount of funds were known in the process. He reiterated the importance of knowing what funds are available to expend for future programs.

John Hulse specified that if the new applicants are similar to those exiting, then about 10 new programs could be funded.

Jack Polidori requested information from John Hulse for information about program and site funding.

John Hulse clarified that he could provide material outlining districts and sub grantees.

Michelle Taylor of the United Way asked if there was an option to determine which programs are effective, or if any have declined due to funding or performance. She stated that it is important to discuss program performance and funding resources and if the analysis could provide details about which programs made a difference.

Jack Polidori thanked Michelle Taylor for her remarks and asked the task force members to revert to House Resolution 39, line 27, which focuses on the assessment of all existing afterschool programs in Delaware including their quality, performance measurements, populations served, and cost. He stated that it is important to see if the task force can address this concern.

Jodi Grant from the Afterschool Alliance stated that it is difficult to identify afterschool program analysis and a roadmap for afterschool programs. She said that it might be worthwhile to obtain a representative sample.

State Representative Valerie Longhurst asked if this section could be redirected to focus on best practices in afterschool programs and performance.

Jodi Grant agreed with State Representative Valerie Longhurst and reiterated the difficulty of identifying every afterschool program.

Carol Scott, the Acting Lead for the Delaware Afterschool Alliance, discussed her role with the public-private partnership formed to examine quality afterschool programs and sustainability issues. She stated that the Afterschool Alliance is assessing the 3-year grant of $225,000, as well as those providing afterschool and summer programming for Delaware students and delivery modes. The partnership with the Mott Foundation Grant has started its examination of the environment in Delaware as it relates to existing programs and replicable national models. She noted that the Delaware Afterschool Network (DEAN) summit provided the organization with input about the needs, opportunities, and challenges for afterschool programming. Their fiscal lead, United Way of Delaware, has assisted them with their efforts as they facilitate committee work, garner data, and utilize tools for various age groups to gain data and focus on best practices and quality training for afterschool programs. She highlighted the competency handbook that resulted from the original afterschool network, as well as qualification courses provided and the STARS program in Delaware. The Delaware Afterschool Alliance is preparing to hire a director for the network.

Tynetta Brown of United Way discussed the required match as it relates to the Charles S. Mott Foundation Grant, so their efforts will focus on securing funds to execute the work of the Delaware Afterschool Network and assist the task force in developing appropriate solutions to the issues addressed in House Resolution 39.

Michelle Taylor of United Way stated that with the allocation of $2.2 million, there should be evidence to prove that there were improvements or differences for children in Delaware’s afterschool and summer programs.

State Senator Nicole Poore agreed that there should be an established measure. With federal funds, she states that there has to be evidence of outcomes. She asked John Hulse what has been gathered from the 21st CCLC participants as it pertains to program outcomes.

John Hulse replied that a national database is in existence; however, it is undergoing revisions and will seek information from sub grantees.

State Representative Valerie Longhurst asked if there was data for Delaware from the 21st CCLC sub grantees.

John Hulse explained that his ability to examine the data is difficult at this time. He stated that he has data from two years ago.

State Representative Valerie Longhurst asked John Hulse to provide the information from two years ago for the task force.

Jack Polidori asked if the $225,000 is an aggregate amount over 3 years, or is a per year allocation.

Tynetta Brown clarified that it is over a 3-year period. She stated that the allocations for the first year total $175,000, and the second and third years each total $25,000 respectively. The recruitment notice has been sent out to hire a director for the Network, given that the fiscal year begins on October 1st, 2016.

Jack Polidori questioned the limited funds and resources invested in program evaluation in Delaware. He understands the limited capacity of the General Assembly and hopes that future program evaluation capacities improve in Delaware.

Jim Kelly of the YMCA of Delaware stated that it is costly to obtain outcome data and that there have been difficulties attaining information from schools.

State Representative Valerie Longhurst outlined the importance of having Delaware’s school districts and non-profit organizations work together, and that the SAIL Task Force will help to address these concerns.

State Representative Quinn Johnson indicated that many of Delaware’s afterschool programs have a different goal or initiative and that measuring performance on one indicator might be a challenge because of the varying starting points. He stated that Delaware’s Purchase of Care (POC) program lone goal was to get families back to work and there wasn’t a discussion about academic achievement. Over the years, the measurement system has adapted and State Representative Quinn Johnson acknowledged that discussions will have to occur if there will be one academic assessment tool.

State Representative Timothy Dukes asked if there has been any outreach to the superintendents in Delaware to assess afterschool programs and program goals.

State Representative Valerie Longhurst replied that Mike Jackson will have to examine the 30% local tax and where it’s being applied.

Jack Polidori explained that the inclusion of Dusty Blakey, Superintendent of the Colonial School District, and Susan Bunting, Superintendent of the Indian River School District, on the task force will help with these concerns.

State Senator Nicole Poore inquired about the number of organizations applying for grant-in-aid and what funding streams are available. She requested a correlation to see where organizations are receiving their funding and to obtain data from these sources.

Superintendent of the Colonial School District, Dusty Blakey, responded to State Representative Timothy Dukes’ question to explain that a large scale discussion between superintendents has not occurred. He stated that it is important to have a collaborative effort to address the concerns and competition surrounding afterschool programs and to examine other opportunities for funding, given the various needs of students, families, and districts.

Jodi Grant from the Afterschool Alliance discussed the organization’s vision and intent to serve as a resource to all stakeholders through various measures. She outlined survey data conducted by an outside consultant that found 18 % of youth in Delaware are in an afterschool program in 2014, most of which are in elementary school, with an average cost of $89 per week for a parent. Jodi Grant continued by stating that afterschool programs are so popular in Delaware and in the nation for their safety and assistance to working parents. She added that there is an equity issue when it comes to afterschool programs and funding, which should be addressed.

Jodi Grant explained that, in 2009, the Afterschool Alliance was examining sources of funding for afterschool programs, which included a sample that found a majority of funding comes from parent fees (76 %), followed by federal (11 %), state (3 %), and local grants (2 %), and then businesses, foundations, religious organizations, individuals and others.

Jillian Luchner from the Afterschool Alliance added that programs are obtaining funds from a variety of sources in Delaware. Jillian highlighted the Delaware Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), which serves 7,400 students on a monthly basis with 46 %, ages 5 through 12. She stated that there are 444 licensed child care providers.

Jodi Grant highlighted state legislation initiatives provided by Jillian, which includes partnerships with community organizations, local match tax, line items in annual spending bills, lottery allocations, and the leveraging of other publicly funded institutions. She informed the task force members that they hope to be a resource moving forward to future task force meetings.

State Representative Quinn Johnson asked the Afterschool Alliance to define what they consider afterschool programs, citing data that afterschool program involvement was 18 % in 2014.

Jodi Grant responded that the data cited was from an America After 3 p.m. survey. Their definition focuses on comprehensive afterschool programs, not necessarily a sports or arts program. She stated that plenty of children may be involved in afterschool activities; however, they might be supervised by their neighbor.

Jillian Luchner from the Afterschool Alliance added that unsupervised would be defined as going home alone.

State Representative Quinn Johnson asked if the Afterschool Alliance representatives feel the current community-based programs in Delaware in the STAR program were included in the survey.

Jodi Grant responded that she believes they would be included, but would contact the researchers involved in the America After 3 p.m. survey.

Jack Polidori added that there is a dilemma with opinion research regarding survey populations and market need.

Jodi Grant agreed with Jack Polidori’s sentiments, stating that data didn’t exist in 2004 regarding the number of unsupervised students. While it is far from perfect, she said the data is much better than past research.

Lauren Vella of the House of Representatives stated that there was a scheduling conflict with the representatives from the Delaware Grant Makers’ Association and Delaware Community Foundation, but they provided information to the task force and are excited to serve as a resource. She stated that the Delaware Community Foundation handles individual donations and the Delaware Grant Makers’ Association focuses on foundation endowments. She added that the data is not currently available regarding the amount of financial resources going specifically into afterschool programs, but will see if they can gather that information for the task force.

When asked to discuss after school needs assessment, Tynetta Brown and John Hulse agreed that the previous discussions highlighted that information.

Jack Polidori recognized Susan Bunting, Superintendent of the Indian River School District, who was also present at the meeting. He asked if anyone present had public comment.

State Representative Quinn Johnson stated that data was a large portion of the task force discussion and that it is important to find out why 19% of Delaware’s children are unsupervised after school. An effort needs to be made to find a rationale for why children aren’t supervised, citing the importance of understanding why students and parents aren’t participating in the programs. He discussed his experience with early childhood education, where noticeable advancements have been made to improve the quality and number of programs provided to Delawareans. He concluded by affirming the importance the Statewide Afterschool Initiative Learning Task Force and looks forward to future discussions.

Jack Polidori asked Rich Heffron from the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce to provide comments about his experience with public policy development with respect to education and business issues in Delaware.

Rich Heffron highlighted the issue discussed by Dusty Blakey, Superintendent of the Colonial School District, regarding so-called ‘silos’ and stated a concern that this must be addressed to ensure that Delaware’s schools, non-profits, and businesses continue to work together to provide adequate afterschool programs. He also noted about the difficulties of funding and the cost of programs, which is a serious concern for education initiatives across the nation.

Jack Polidori asked the task force members to review House Resolution 39, with particular attention to lines 27 through 33. He noted that the task force must focus on the assessment provision and market need, as well as greater collaboration between all stakeholders. He asked the task force members to focus on the issues presented by the General Assembly, and would like to continue to examine program evaluation opportunities.

Jack Polidori adjourned the Statewide Afterschool Initiative Learning Task Force meeting at 10:46 a.m.

 Respectfully submitted by: Geoff Heath