



SPONSOR: Sen. Henry & Sen. Sokola & Rep. Lofink & Rep. Williams  
Sens. Blevins Connor Copeland DeLuca Marshall McDowell Peterson  
Reps. Brady Keeley Kowalko Manolakos M Marshall Oberle Plant Schooley Spence Johnson

DELAWARE STATE SENATE  
144th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 3

CREATING A TASK FORCE TO REVIEW THE FUTURE OF CITY OF WILMINGTON STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

1 WHEREAS, a high quality public education for children residing in the City of Wilmington is important for the  
2 future of our State;

3 WHEREAS, following passage of the School Choice Law of July 1996 and the Neighborhood Schools Act of  
4 1999, declining enrollments and yet-to-be fully researched demographic trends are impacting the vitality of City schools in  
5 unprecedented ways;

6 WHEREAS, out of a total of 22 existing schools in the City of Wilmington in 1978, currently only ten remain  
7 open as regular schools, not including 3 existing charter schools;

8 WHEREAS, notwithstanding recognized improvement, the student achievement gap remains a problem in the  
9 Delaware School system particularly in middle and high school; and

10 WHEREAS, in Delaware the graduation rate for African Americans is 53% and Hispanic students is 42% while  
11 the graduation rate for Caucasian students is 68% ; and

12 WHEREAS, according to recent reports 50% of Delaware's Caucasian 4<sup>th</sup> graders are proficient in Math and  
13 English on national tests, while only 15% of African American students are; and

14 WHEREAS, the present state of schools serving City residents necessitates pulling the interested parties around  
15 the table to analyze recent research, school choice trends, and school finances as a proactive step to address public  
16 education for the City of Wilmington residents before another school is closed.

17 NOW, THEREFORE:

18 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate and the House of Representatives, of the 144<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the State of  
19 Delaware, with the approval of the Governor, that a Task Force be created for the purpose of (1) reviewing the current  
20 quality educational opportunities for students in the City of Wilmington; (2) conducting an analysis of district feeder  
21 patterns/school assignments and the impact on student achievement; (3) exploring the potential need and feasibility of a  
22 traditional middle and/or high school in the City; and (4) researching best practices in urban education. Such a review shall  
23 include, but not be limited to: analysis of demographic and socio-economic trends in New Castle County, including  
24 enrollment in charter and nonpublic schools, and school choice; options for future use on excess space in district buildings  
25 by human service and related organizations that would enhance the quality of education and family and community well  
26 being; examination of successful urban education models in other states; and input from the public.

27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Task Force shall seek input and involvement from city parents, community  
28 members, business leaders, non-profit leaders and any interested parties;

29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Task Force shall consist of the following members:

- 30 1. Two (2) members from the Senate appointed by the President Pro Tempore, one of whom shall act as Chair of  
31 the task force;
- 32 2. Two (2) members from the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House, one of whom shall  
33 act as Vice-Chair of the task force;
- 34 3. Chairperson(s) or member of the Senate and House Education committees;
- 35 4. Secretary of Education or his or her designee;
- 36 5. One (1) Representatives of the Delaware Charter School Network operating a school in the City of Wilmington  
37 for a minimum of five years;
- 38 6. Superintendents of the Colonial, Brandywine, Red Clay Consolidated, Christina, and New Castle County  
39 Vocational Technical School Districts;
- 40 7. One school board member from Colonial, Brandywine, Red Clay Consolidated, Christina, and New Castle  
41 County Vocational Technical School District appointed by the respective school board president;
- 42 8. One (1) representatives of the Delaware State Education Association;
- 43 9. One (1) person representing the Office of Management and Budget;
- 44 10. One (1) community representative, one representative from the City of Wilmington administration, and one  
45 business leader appointed by the Mayor of Wilmington;
- 46 11. One (1) community representative appointed by the City Council President;
- 47 12. City Council President or his or her designee:

- 48 13. One (1) representative from New Castle County appointed by the County Executive;
- 49 14. One (1) representative from the Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League;
- 50 15. One (1) representative from the Rodel Foundation;
- 51 16. One (1) representative from Vision 2015;
- 52 17. One (1) representative from the Hope Commission;
- 53 18. Two (2) parents from traditional public schools and one parent from a charter school whose children reside in
- 54 the City of Wilmington; and
- 55 19. Chair of the Wilmington Neighborhood Schools Committee created by an Act of the General Assembly in
- 56 2000;
- 57 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that each member may be represented by a single designee whom the member
- 58 must keep abreast of task force developments. The designee may attend meetings on behalf of the task force member but is
- 59 not permitted to vote.
- 60 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a simple majority of the members of the task force shall constitute a quorum
- 61 for the transaction of all Task Force business and all decisions of the Task Force shall be approved by the affirmative vote
- 62 of a simple majority of its members.
- 63 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that financial and administrative support for the Task Force shall be provided by
- 64 the Senate.
- 65 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Task Force shall report its findings and recommendations to the
- 66 Governor, President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by November 30<sup>th</sup> 2007.

#### SYNOPSIS

This resolution establishes a Wilmington Education Task Force to examine the current status of public education in the City of Wilmington in light of declining enrollments, the student achievement gap, and proposed school closings.

Author: Senator Henry