



EARL G. JAUQUES, JR.
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
27th District

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE OF DELAWARE
411 LEGISLATIVE AVENUE
DOVER, DELAWARE 19901

COMMITTEES
Education, Chair
Veterans Affairs, Chair
Joint Finance Committee
Appropriations

House Education Committee Meeting Minutes 3.13.19

Chair Jaques called the meeting to order at 2:38 p.m. Members present included Vice Chair K. Williams, and Reps. Bolden, Matthews, Heffernan, Kowalko, Lynn, Minor-Brown, Osienski, Chukwuocha, K. Johnson, Briggs-King, Hensley, Postles, Shupe, Smith, and Collins. For a list of speakers present, please see the list below.

Rep. Lynn introduced **HJR 2: RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF HATTIE BERNICE DABNEY MISHOE, THE “FIRST LADY” OF DELAWARE STATE UNIVERSITY.** This resolution encourages Delaware State University to recognize Hattie Bernice Dabney Mishoe’s many accomplishments by naming a building on campus after her.

Chair Jaques opened the floor for public comment.

Robert Overmiller, member of the Governor’s Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens, extended his support for the resolution.

A motion was made by Rep. Kowalko and seconded by Rep. Hensley to release HJR 2 from committee; motion carried. Yes=15 (Jaques, Williams, Bolden, Heffernan, Kowalko, Lynn, Minor-Brown, Osienski, Chukwuocha, K. Johnson, Briggs-King, Hensley, Postles, Smith, and Collins). No=0. Absent=3 (Shupe, Matthews, Ramone). The bill was released from committee with a F=1, M=14, U=0 vote.

Chair Jaques introduced **HB 55: AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 29 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO FINAL AVERAGE COMPENSATION FOR THE STATE EMPLOYEES’ PENSION PLAN FOR RECIPIENTS OF CERTAIN AWARDS.** Chair Jaques explained that this bill, similar to a bill passed in the 149th General Assembly, puts a dollar amount on awards received for support personnel, and is similar to the Delaware teacher of the year award.

Chair Jaques opened the floor for public comment.

Robert Overmiller, member of the Governor’s Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens, offered his support for the bill.

Susan Bunting, Secretary of the Delaware Department of Education, extended the department’s support for the bill.

Kristen Dwyer, Director of Legislation and Political Organizing for Delaware State Education Association (DSEA), offered her support for the bill.

A motion was made by Rep. Kowalko and seconded by Rep. Briggs-King to release HB 55 from committee; motion carried. Yes=15 (Jaques, Williams, Bolden, Heffernan, Kowalko, Lynn, Minor-Brown, Osienski, Chukwuocha, K. Johnson, Briggs-King, Hensley, Postles, Smith, and Collins). No=0. Absent=3 (Shupe, Matthews, Ramone). The bill was released from committee with a F=0, M=15, U=0 vote.

Rep. Williams introduced **HB 48: AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS**. This bill adds basic special education funding for kindergarten through third grade students. The attached fiscal note is over 12 million dollars, incrementally rolled out over a four-year timespan. She continued to express the importance of early intervention services, specifically to aid in the state's focus on grade level reading by the end of third grade.

Chair Jaques thanked Rep. Williams and directed the attention of the committee members to a letter from Lisa Lawson, the Director of Special Education & Student Support Service for the Brandywine School District. The letter offered her support for the bill. He continued to explain that HB 48 will go to the Appropriations Committee if it passes the Education Committee.

Rep. Collins offered his support for the bill, but emphasized the high number of students entering the public school system with significant disabilities. He suggested the state look into addressing this problem before students enter kindergarten.

Rep. Williams agreed that the General Assembly needs to address pre-kindergarten assessment tools, however, students are entering kindergarten with needs, and this bill will address those needs.

Mary Ann Mieczkowski, Delaware Department of Education Director of Exceptional Children Resources, explained the funding for the bill. She highlighted that needs-based funding is specific to the student and his or her unique needs. This includes all three categories of special education: basic, intense, and complex.

Rep. Bolden asked if DOE's proposed budget to Governor Carney included HB 48's fiscal note.

Secretary Bunting said the proposed budget did not include the funding for HB 48.

Rep. Bolden asked if this bill includes students with special needs or just students in special education.

Rep. Williams explained that the bill includes students identified under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Rep. Kowalko emphasized the importance of early intervention for students with disabilities. He continued by suggesting the state create a state run early education center to reach more students before kindergarten.

Rep. Briggs-King noted that a state funded program called Healthy Women, Healthy Babies highlights the importance of family health before and after pregnancy.

Chair Jaques opened the floor for public comment.

Robert Overmiller, member of the Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens, does not support the bill.

Wendy Strauss, member of the Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens, offered her support for the bill, and explained that kindergarten through third grade is crucial for student growth.

Dr. Tammy Croce, Delaware Association of School Administrators, extended her support for the bill.

Dr. John Marinucci, Delaware School Board Association, offered his support for the bill, and highlighted the importance of brain growth in kindergarten through third-grade.

Linda Barnett, Delaware League of Women Voters, extended her support for the bill. She explained the advancements of early detection evaluation programs, which can identify a student as early as kindergarten.

Penny Delnere, American Association of University Women, offered her support for the bill. She noted that the bill would evoke positive change in the Delaware school system.

Bill Doolittle, Special Education Strategic Plan Advisory Council, extended his support for the bill.

Annalisa Ekbladh, Autism Delaware, shared a personal story, explaining that her family chose to send her son to private school because her local public school did not provide basic special education funding from kindergarten through third-grade. She supports the bill.

Karen Lantz, American Civil Liberties Union Delaware, extended her support for the bill, and said she believes that the initial cost will decrease the costs on the backend.

Dr. Dusty Blakey, Superintendent of the Colonial School District, offered his support for the bill.

Kristen Dwyer, Delaware State Education Association, extended her support for the bill, and highlighted the importance of early intervention in student success.

Kendall Massett, Delaware Charter School Network, expressed her organizations support for the bill, and emphasized that the bill will positively impact thirteen of the state's twenty-three charter schools.

Susan Bunting, Secretary of the Delaware Department of Education, stated that the Department recognizes the need of kindergarten through third grade intervention, and supports the bill.

A motion was made by Rep. Heffernan and seconded by Rep. Postles to release HB 48 from committee; motion carried. Yes=17 (Jaques, Williams, Bolden, Heffernan, Kowalko, Lynn, Minor-Brown, Osienski, Chukwuocha, K. Johnson, Briggs-King, Hensley, Postles, Smith, Shupe, Matthews, and Collins). No=0. Absent=1 (Ramone). The bill was released from committee with a F=6, M=8, U=0 vote.

Chair Jaques introduced Dr. Robin Morgan, Provost of the University of Delaware.

Dr. Morgan thanked Chair Jaques for the opportunity to speak to the committee. She presented a PowerPoint presentation before committee members, which is included in the minutes.

The presentation began by explaining the University's current revenues and expenditures. She highlighted that student tuition and fees primarily fund the University, while the state's operating appropriations account for ten percent of the University's revenue.

Dr. Morgan highlighted the steady increase of undergraduate enrollment, specifically the percent increase of Delawareans from underrepresented minorities enrolling in the University.

Dr. Morgan emphasized the University's focus on keeping tuition affordable for Delaware residents, specifically through state allocated assistance, as well as through the University's merit and need-based aid.

Dr. Morgan explained the University's new initiative to cover the full tuition for every Delaware resident whose family's gross income is \$75,000 a year or less. She emphasized the role the state would play, specifically the University's request for an additional \$2.25 million each year over a four-year time-span.

Dr. Morgan highlighted the *Campus Coalition of Alcohol Abuse Prevention* program that offers University students alternative activities. Since the development of the program in 2015, University student arrests and violations have consistently decreased.

Dr. Morgan explained the University's action plan regarding STEM teacher preparation. Beginning in 2020, the University will allow students to choose one of the 49 STEM majors, such as biology, engineering, and mathematics instead of a traditional secondary education degree.

Dr. Morgan concluded her presentation by noting that the University offers many accommodations and certificate programs for individuals with disabilities.

Chair Jaques asked the Provost how the University of Delaware is increasing the number of undergraduates majoring in education.

Dr. Morgan explained that the University now allows undergraduate students who are interested in teaching STEM subjects the ability to major in their field of choice rather than education specifically.

Chair Jaques asked if classroom student exposure occurs in both urban and rural areas.

Carol Vukelich, Dean of the School of Education at the University of Delaware, explained that each education student has two student teaching placements. She said each placement offers a diverse experience, typically either in an urban or rural area.

In regards to University of Delaware's plan to increase the number of faculty, Chair Jaques asked if the tuition would increase.

Dr. Morgan responded that the University's priority is keeping tuition affordable

Rep. Williams asked if the nine million dollars that the University is asking for would only benefit Delawareans.

Dr. Morgan answered yes.

Rep. Smith commended the University for its efforts in engaging low-income and first generation college students.

Rep. Bolden asked how the University is combating Greek Life misconduct.

Dr. Morgan explained that the University is doing their best to offer students a variety of alternative activities.

Chair Jaques asked how many homeless students are enrolled at the University of Delaware.

Dr. Morgan said she did not have an exact number, but that the University offers a food pantry for those students experiencing homelessness or hard times.

Chair Jaques opened the floor for public comment.

Rich Armitage, City of Newark, addressed the question about the homeless population at the University of Delaware. Within the city limits, he explained that nine churches help the University with lodging and with food for students experiencing homelessness.

Holly Sage, Director of Student Services at Colonial School District, asked if the University has considered a dual certification program for special education and secondary education degrees.

Carol Vukelich, Dean of the School of Education at the University of Delaware, explained that each early education major is dual certified in special education upon graduating from the University.

Chair Jaques adjourned the meeting at 4:14 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Sophia Vassar

Speaker List:

Susan Bunting, Secretary of the Delaware Department of Education
Robert Overmiller, Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens
Carol Vukelich, Dean of the University of Delaware School of Education
Robin Mogan, Provost of the University of Delaware
Holly Sage, Director of Student Services at Colonial School District
Rich Armitrage, City of Newark
Wendy Strauss, Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens
Dr. Tammy Croce, Delaware Association of School Administrators
Dr. John Marinucci, Delaware School Board Association
Linda Barnett, Delaware League of Women Voters
Penny Delnere, American Association of University Women
Bill Doolittle, Special Education Strategic Plan Advisory Council
Annalisa Ekbladh, Autism Delaware
Karen Lantz, American Civil Liberties Union Delaware
Dr. Dusty Blakey, Superintendent, Colonial School District
Kristen Dwyer, Delaware State Education Association
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