



SAFE Schools Delaware Wilmington Learning Collaborative Recommendations

Safe Schools Delaware represents a group of dedicated advocates, including parents, educators and students determined to improve the educational outcomes of public-school students in Delaware. We accomplish this by amplifying the voices of those most impacted by historical educational inequities and speaking up to educate interested parties about the reality of the current state of our school system. Our work specifically focuses on eliminating the structural disparities that create barriers for Black, brown, low-income, special education, and ELL students.

Over the past thirty years many attempts have been made to address funding disparities, academic achievement gaps, lack of access to occupational resources, and harsh discipline policies in Wilmington schools. Despite reforms efforts like Neighborhood Schools, Race to the Top, Priority Schools, Partnership Schools and Opportunity funding – none have resulted in significant improvements. We acknowledge and value Governor Carney’s efforts to bring substantial change. However, we must be willing to address institutional issues, entrenched class and racial biases, if the latest reform initiative – the Wilmington Learning Collaborative stands a chance of success. ***A comprehensive plan must centralize the needs of students, authentically engage families and provide educator support.*** SAFE Schools has outlined recommendations for inclusion into the memorandum of understanding and school level plans.

Student Needs

- A case management structure at the school level that takes a whole-child/family approach
- Individualized student success plan for every student, incorporating into the MTSS model and assessments similar to the IEP process.
- Supplemental Education Support (SES) stipends for families to secure instructional support outside of schools for students struggling academically or students below grade level in all major subjects. Stipends should include transportation cost.
- Extended Learning Opportunities – schools operating with an extended school year and/or extended school day and includes appropriate transportation to eliminate access barriers
- Career shadowing starting at the 9th grade
- College tours starting at the middle school level
- Schools staffed with a full-time: Librarian, arts and music educators
- Curriculum relevant to minority students

Family Engagement

- Parent representation on all decision-making committees. (Minimum of 4 on the WLC planning team)
- Established school level advisory committees as allowed under ESSA.
- Access to the Equity Dashboard
- Family Engagement Personnel Staff (2 at the elementary level, 3 at the secondary level)
- Replace school resource officers with community monitors/mentors

Educator Support

- Each class staffed with an educator and full-time paraprofessional
- Classes with 40% or more students with IEPs, 504s or behavioral plans staffed with an additional full-time educator
- Educators with 1 – 3 years of experience paired with a master educator for mentorship
- Educators complete specialized professional development focused on restorative practices, implicit bias, trauma-responsive classrooms, asset approach to learning, engaging families and communities.
- Partnership with higher education institutions (Del State, Wilmington Univ., UD) to establish a certificate program that includes an Urban Schools track, topics include: implicit bias, building home/school connections, restorative practices, child brain development, trauma-responsive classroom. Course fees subsidized by the state or districts
- Adopt Grow Your Own initiatives – ex. paid tuition for para to become certified educators, PRAXIS coaching sessions
- A residency program that offers 100% student loan forgiveness for educators who remain in the school for 3 years.
- Minority and male educator recruitment initiative
- School leaders with a proven track record of transformational change, particularly in high poverty schools.
- Extended planning periods