



# DURHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION

## SUMMARY OF SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH

### KITCHEN TABLE CONVERSATIONS

This document summarizes the comments that board members received at three “kitchen table conversations” held to gather public input as part of the Durham Public Schools (DPS) Board of Education’s superintendent search. Over 30 community members attended the kitchen table conversations and participated in small group discussions with board members, school employees, and other Durham citizens. As part of those discussions, community members and school employees shared their views on the **characteristics, experience, and personality traits** the board should seek in the new superintendent.

The chart below is not intended to capture every comment; rather, it is a representative sample of the comments received at the kitchen table conversations, grouped around general themes. In addition, NCSBA also received two written statements from interested citizens/organizations. A list of those statements is included with this summary, below.

<b>Characteristics, Experience, and Personality Traits the Board Should Seek in the New Superintendent</b>	
<b>Communication and Public Relations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Get non-parents to support the schools</li> <li>▪ Community outreach/involvement               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Interested</li> <li>○ Visible and accessible</li> <li>○ Build community support</li> <li>○ Passionate about involvement and community perception</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Foster relationships               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Within school system and in community</li> <li>○ With businesses, universities, private research organizations, etc.</li> <li>○ With government agencies</li> <li>○ With employers to excite students regarding careers, opportunities, etc.</li> <li>○ With health community</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Understand the deep history of Durham – systemic politics</li> <li>▪ Politician</li> <li>▪ Confidante, diplomat</li> <li>▪ Sounding board</li> <li>▪ Ability to interact with county commissioners</li> <li>▪ Visible in schools</li> <li>▪ Support/restart kitchen table conversations</li> <li>▪ Obtain parent input – reach out and respond to parents</li> <li>▪ Limited buffer between superintendent and public</li> <li>▪ Network between schools and administrators</li> <li>▪ Encourage administrators to know and connect with schools, community, parents, and organizations, and to be responsive</li> <li>▪ Understand community resources</li> <li>▪ Knowledgeable of district, community, mission of schools</li> <li>▪ Able to use local knowledge, community leaders</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cheerleader for district; communicate strength of base options</li> <li>▪ Use of technology/social media to communicate</li> <li>▪ Advocate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For more resources (e.g., more counselors)</li> <li>○ Beyond Durham</li> <li>○ For DPS and for all children</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Face challenges and reality of N.C. General Assembly</li> <li>▪ Consider a full-time government liaison and/or business community liaison</li> <li>▪ Engage parents and listen to prevent problems</li> <li>▪ Interested in and accessible to PTAs</li> <li>▪ Good experience as community builder</li> <li>▪ Talk to everyone head-on</li> <li>▪ Truthful messaging</li> <li>▪ Better job promoting schools</li> <li>▪ Public face of DPS</li> <li>▪ Creative partnerships throughout Durham</li> <li>▪ Communication across district</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Leadership and Management</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Do something creative with public schools</li> <li>▪ Partner with charter schools</li> <li>▪ Willing to do things differently to get different results</li> <li>▪ Plan for the future</li> <li>▪ Balance best of new ways while still embracing the old</li> <li>▪ Be able to mobilize a team of people</li> <li>▪ Servant leader</li> <li>▪ Praise the positive, hard-working staff</li> <li>▪ Develop a team of experts to accomplish goals; board evaluates performance</li> <li>▪ Transition/succession plan</li> <li>▪ Innovative ideas, try new things</li> <li>▪ Intentional – use the experts that have done the research</li> <li>▪ Able to inspire people/team; not a manager/paper-pusher</li> <li>▪ School improvement access;</li> <li>▪ Provide training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For principals</li> <li>○ Principal academies (for training regarding data)</li> <li>○ Principals’ executive program – collaboration, teamwork</li> <li>○ For all employees, especially those working with students</li> <li>○ For future/current leaders</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Generate passion, purpose, and energy</li> <li>▪ Craft vision for district and communicate it</li> <li>▪ Able to articulate a vision, including 90 days, 1 year, and long-term, with sense of timeliness</li> <li>▪ Bring back excitement, new initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “Get back in the news for good things”</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Experience rethinking use of time, space, people, and other resources to make things happen</li> <li>▪ Open to new ideas, not just his/her vision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Look at other best practices, ideas elsewhere</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Able to make difficult decisions</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Build the right culture throughout the district that enables teachers and principals to take risks</li> <li>▪ Speak to and confront challenges, equity gaps</li> <li>▪ Empower schools to creatively teach/innovate</li> <li>▪ Use research</li> <li>▪ Solicit “buy-in” from senior leadership and down <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Top-down approach to motivate teachers and parents</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Proven success moving a school system forward</li> <li>▪ Broad range of experience (cafeteria to finance to HR)</li> <li>▪ Understand how to address teacher turnover</li> <li>▪ Look for trends in data and interpret</li> <li>▪ Entrepreneurial in sense of seeking out innovation and partnerships</li> <li>▪ Put just as much energy into maintaining what is right, not just fixing what is wrong</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Experience with Diverse Populations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Culturally aware of changes taking place</li> <li>▪ Whole vision</li> <li>▪ Achievement gap <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Have a plan to close the gap</li> <li>○ Collaborative efforts and community involvement to close the gap</li> <li>○ Demonstrated actions in closing the gap and aware it is not going to be fixed at the schoolhouse</li> <li>○ Focus on racial achievement gap</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Equity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Have a plan to provide access to equity</li> <li>○ Supportive of equity focus</li> <li>○ Not just equality</li> <li>○ Committed to equity throughout district</li> <li>○ Equity in technology access</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Citizen Schools; Encore</li> <li>▪ Social justice, especially with discipline practices</li> <li>▪ Understand demographics and guides based on understanding</li> <li>▪ Nurturing climate for increasing minority participation in AIG, etc.</li> <li>▪ Recognize needs of EC population, including resources and needs</li> <li>▪ Experience with diversity/choice options/charter options</li> <li>▪ Understand “flavor” of each school</li> <li>▪ Bilingual school, language immersion</li> <li>▪ Experience with and support of all diversity</li> <li>▪ Support of Spanish-speaking community</li> <li>▪ Understand the complexity of the system</li> <li>▪ National climate affecting marginalized communities</li> <li>▪ Maintain inclusive gifted program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Support teachers in both over- and under-subscribed</li> <li>○ Identify early potential students</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Advocate for children new to America</li> <li>▪ Every school should be welcoming</li> <li>▪ Reach out to diversity of Durham</li> <li>▪ Understand Durham is both urban and rural; requires equity but not “one size fits all”</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understand range of social and emotional needs of Durham children</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Educational and Curriculum/Instruction Experience</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Global school system – technology growth</li> <li>▪ Community schools</li> <li>▪ Pre-K; longer days; longer year</li> <li>▪ Make learning fun</li> <li>▪ Before school and after school (6 a.m. – 6 p.m.)</li> <li>▪ Background in education vs. business background</li> <li>▪ Broad experience: teaching at multiple levels; guidance counselor; social worker; assistant principal and principal; coordinator system-wide; curriculum and instruction; assistant superintendent</li> <li>▪ Embrace and love the arts</li> <li>▪ Experience with traveling or reaching out globally (e.g., study abroad programs)</li> <li>▪ University knowledge applied at K-12 level</li> <li>▪ Connect students and community to the world</li> <li>▪ Emphasis on accounting for what happens to students/graduates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Need data</li> <li>○ Accessibility of data (e.g., jobs, pay, college)</li> <li>○ What are we preparing students for?</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Educational background, but perspective to do things differently</li> <li>▪ Innovation in education</li> <li>▪ Students think creatively and critically (lots of local startups)</li> <li>▪ STEM programs, early college</li> <li>▪ Magnet/CTE programs</li> <li>▪ Focus on strong base schools</li> <li>▪ Former teacher/assistant principal</li> <li>▪ Supportive of AIG programs, instructional excellence</li> <li>▪ Awareness of child-based/student-centered education</li> <li>▪ Building good human beings</li> <li>▪ Support universal pre-K, early childhood education with transportation and funding</li> <li>▪ Expand successful programs to all schools</li> <li>▪ Innovative programs to provide students access to technology</li> <li>▪ Recent teaching experience, preferably urban</li> <li>▪ Experience beyond Durham</li> <li>▪ Advocate for vocational programs as equal status to college prep</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Personal Characteristics</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Visionary</li> <li>▪ Professional</li> <li>▪ Innovative</li> <li>▪ Has compassion for humanity</li> <li>▪ Good listener</li> <li>▪ Person of integrity</li> <li>▪ Perseveres; recognizes there is something in each individual</li> <li>▪ Honest and forthright with self</li> <li>▪ Has courage, real courage; stand for what he/she believes is right, regardless of what stands in the way</li> <li>▪ Cares about all children</li> <li>▪ Strong education, business, political, and curriculum experience</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Charismatic</li> <li>▪ Creative, think differently; break the mold</li> <li>▪ Hopeful</li> <li>▪ People person</li> <li>▪ Warm, safe, huggable</li> <li>▪ Courage to be vocal about support</li> <li>▪ Forward-thinking, see the bigger picture</li> <li>▪ Believe all children can learn</li> <li>▪ Ambitious</li> <li>▪ Passionate about education, students, and teachers</li> <li>▪ Brave</li> </ul>
<p><b>Business and Financial Management</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Resources to benefit students</li> <li>▪ Champion for students even with bare-bones budget</li> <li>▪ Know how to work with/manipulate budget</li> <li>▪ Entrepreneurship</li> <li>▪ “Community asks” based on budget</li> <li>▪ Money to priorities, needs</li> <li>▪ Budget transparency</li> <li>▪ Understand zero-based budgeting</li> <li>▪ School-based budgeting; equity within school budgets</li> <li>▪ Ability to manage budget at central office and schools</li> <li>▪ Advocate for funding and resources</li> <li>▪ Advocate to maintain and expand co-located services</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understand charter schools exist and are here <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How can we work around this fact?</li> <li>○ How will he/she address kids leaving?</li> <li>○ Have a plan to market DPS and to get kids back into DPS</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Understand the erosion of public schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ People want the choices that charter schools present</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Magnet schools – have a vision and a goal for those themed schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Don’t water down magnet schools</li> <li>○ Priority zone: provide equitable access</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Charter schools for DPS improvement</li> <li>▪ Expand options/choices, especially at high school level</li> <li>▪ Work with those staying and understand those fleeing</li> <li>▪ Unafraid to challenge charter schools</li> <li>▪ Redistricting needs for community</li> <li>▪ Protect Durham students and values</li> <li>▪ Vested interest in DPS; maintain residency</li> <li>▪ Experience in a community that looks like Durham</li> <li>▪ Someone who believes in the magic of Durham</li> <li>▪ Long-range plan to stay; stability</li> </ul>

***The following individual community members and community organizations provided written statements to the board. The board has been provided with the full text of the statements.***

- Andrew Lakis, Executive Director, Teach for America – Eastern North Carolina
- Student U