



June 19, 2017

Dear Members of the Durham Public Schools Board of Education:

As you consider candidates for our next Superintendent, The People's Alliance would like to respectfully share with you the qualities and experience we hope the ideal candidate will possess. This letter is representative of a thoughtful and thorough group discussion on a wide variety of issues.

Dr. L'Homme was a strong Superintendent who valued the academic success of all students. He began important work we would like to see continued in the following areas: discipline policy and suspension reduction, race equity and consideration of the needs of Latinx and LGBTQ students, the reduction of standardized testing (incl. local mandate opt-outs), teacher training and retention, and unique leadership.

We are deeply concerned about the persistent lack of academic success for so many of our children of color. We feel that there are specific areas of focus that a candidate should speak to when expressing ideas for impacting the achievement gap, including an emphasis on hiring and retaining principals and teachers who are skilled in literacy and numeracy and opportunities for ongoing professional development to reinforce these and other related skills. Part of the solution also includes the expansion of the new office of equity affairs to support Dr. Kelvin Bullock and meaningful district wide initiatives. This means monetary support for additional trainings for teachers and administrators, new approaches to curriculum, and considering the expansion of COSEBOC and the Capturing Kids Hearts programs, should outcome data indicate that these programs are proving successful in their pilot years.

We would also like to see a Superintendent who will improve communication within the school system's existing infrastructure to promote more efficient transmission of policy changes and general communication between administration and teachers (as well as outside communication with parents). The next candidate should have a proven track record in the most significant areas of concern and concrete suggestions on how to address the specific profile of our school district and student population. We support the use of such a profile during the interview process. We ask you to choose an experienced administrator who both understands the needs of Durham and has taken bold steps to address similar issues in their home district with attributable, positive results.

Moreover, if we are to find a Superintendent who can continue the work of Dr. L'Homme and offer innovative new ideas for our district, we continue to believe in the necessity of a thorough and wide-reaching search process that includes internal and external candidates.

In closing, we thank you for your continued support of our school students and unique community in Durham. Our goal is a shared one: to make Durham Public Schools a leader in the state, providing an excellent education and equitable approach to academic success for all students. Please consider our requests where appropriate in selecting our next Superintendent. Thank you for all of the time and hard work you have expended on behalf of Durham Public Schools.

Sincerely,

Amanda Maris & Molly Parks
Education Team Co-chairs

Magan Thigpen & Ryan Smith, Co-chairs
The People's Alliance