

**RESOLUTION BEFORE THE  
DURHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION  
IN SUPPORT OF THE MISDEMEANOR DIVERSION PROGRAM**

**Whereas**, the mission of Durham Public Schools is to provide all students with an outstanding education that motivates them to reach their full potential and enables them to discover their interests and talents, pursue their goals and dreams, and succeed in college, in the workforce and as engaged citizens, and

**Whereas**, as students grow, learn and mature they occasionally make mistakes, and

**Whereas**, youth under the age of 18 cannot vote, legally drink, enlist in the military or even get a library card without a parent's signature, and

**Whereas**, North Carolina is one of only two states in the country that charges 16 year olds for misdemeanor crimes in adult criminal court, and

**Whereas**, last year in Durham County an estimated 550 students between the ages of 16 and 17 years old faced criminal citations or arrests for minor misdemeanor offenses such as shoplifting, disorderly conduct, underage drinking, marijuana possession, or trespassing, and

**Whereas**, criminal charges and arrests cause direct negative consequences, including jail, probation and fines, and

**Whereas**, criminal charges and arrests cause indirect negative consequences, including denial of employment, denial of public benefits, denial of financial aid for higher education, loss of housing, loss of professional licensure, deportation and other hardships, and

**Whereas**, the Misdemeanor Diversion Program was developed in our community to teach youth about consequences of their actions and enable them to enter adulthood without a criminal record, and

**Whereas**, the Misdemeanor Diversion Program enables officers to make an Incident Report instead of an arrest or criminal citation for non-violent misdemeanor offenses by 16 and 17 year olds, and

**Whereas**, youth are screened and required to attend Diversion Court, an educational program informing youth about the consequences of crime and teaching responsible decision-making, and

**Whereas**, youth are required to complete a certified Diversion Program within 90 days, and

**Whereas**, youth that need mental health and substance abuse services are referred for treatment, and

**Whereas**, the Misdemeanor Diversion Program is endorsed and supported by the Durham District Attorney's Office, the Durham Public Defender's Office, the Durham Police Department, the Durham Sheriff's Department, and numerous other community organizations and leaders.

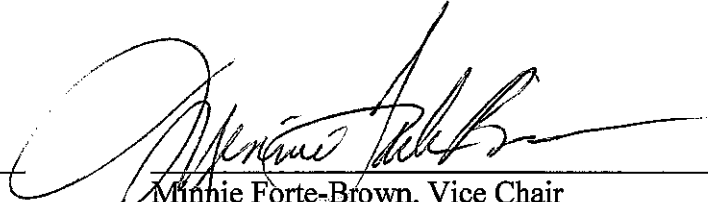
**Therefore, be it resolved,** that the Durham Public Schools Board of Education endorses and supports Durham County's Misdemeanor Diversion Program and encourages district staff and community members to learn about, utilize and support the program, and

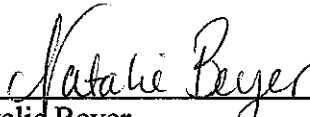
**Be it further resolved,** that the Durham Public Schools Board of Education seeks the support of members of the North Carolina General Assembly and Governor in bipartisan efforts to "Raise the Age" of juvenile jurisdiction in North Carolina, such as HB 725 ("Young Offenders Rehabilitation Act"), and


**Resolved,** that copies of this resolution be sent to local public governing officials, members of the North Carolina General Assembly, Governor McCrory, and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

This the 26<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2014.

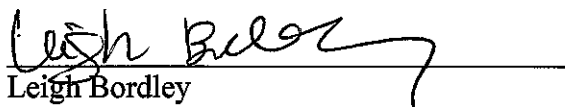
  
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Heidi Carter, Chair


  
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Minnie Forte-Brown, Vice Chair

  
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Hugh Osteen, Interim Superintendent