

**MINUTES  
DURHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
December 14, 2023**

Durham Public Schools Board of Education held its monthly meeting on Thursday, December 14, 2023, at approximately 6:30 p.m. at the Fuller Administration Building, 511 Cleveland Street, Durham, NC 27701.

**Board Members Present:** Bettina Umstead (Chair), Emily Chávez (Vice Chair), Natalie Beyer, Millicent Rogers, Jessica Carda-Auten, Alexandra Valladares and Jovonia Lewis.

**Administration Present:** Pascal Mubenga (Superintendent), Dr. Nicholas King (Deputy Superintendent), Larry Johnson (Chief Operating Officer), Dr. Tanya Giovanni (Chief of Staff), Paul LeSieur (Chief Financial Officer), Dr. Stacy Stewart (Chief of Schools), Dr. Alvera Lesane (Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources), Sheena Cooper (Senior Executive Director of Public Affairs) and Dr. Deborah Pitman (Assistant Superintendent of Specialized Services).

**Attorney Present:** Rod Malone

**Recorder:** Nicole Smith, Board of Education Executive Assistant

**Call to Order:**

Chair Bettina Umstead called the meeting to order and asked for a moment of silence.

**Spanish Translator Present:**

Interpretation services were provided by the DPS Multilingual Resource Center

**3. Celebrations**

**Student of the Month** - Leila Perjes – Riverside High School, Principal Gloria Woods-Weeks

**Teacher of the Month** - Joy Mason – George Watts Montessori

**Employee of the Month** - Michelle Herrera-Garcia – Glenn Elementary School

**SPARK Pin Presentations:**

- Sherrod Washington, Transportation
- Meredith Mooney, Research & Accountability
- Heidi Perez, Curriculum & Instruction
- Dr. Wanda Boone, Durham TRY

**4. Superintendent's Update**

Dr. Pascal Mubenga shared an update that included how successful the Showcase of Schools event was and the opportunity for families to experience what DPS schools have to offer. He also provided district data for 2023 exams that reflected a 24% increase of exams taken and 24.8% increase in qualifying

schools than our district pre-covid data.

He also mentioned recruiting endeavors for teachers and looks forward to seventeen international candidates that will join the district next school year.

Dr. Mubenga shared well wishes Dr. Kevin Bullock (other opportunity) and Dr. Dan Davis (retirement) as they will be leaving the DPS family.

He closed his remarks by providing updates on the work being done to ensure the safety and well-being of DPS students and staff and ongoing collaboration with local law enforcement.

## **5. Agenda Review and Approval**

Alexandra Valladares moved to approve the agenda as presented. Jovonia Lewis seconded, and the agenda passed unanimously via roll call vote (7:0).

## **6. Board of Education Meeting Minutes dated November 16, 2023**

Natalie Beyer moved to approve meeting minutes dated November 16, 2023, as presented. Millicent Rogers seconded, and the motion passed unanimously (7:0).

## **7. General Public Comment**

There were twenty-one (21) in-person public comments:

Millie Rosen  
Chad Ervin  
Joseph Keever  
Kimberly Gugino  
John Hodges-Copple  
Lawrence Isaacs  
Danielle Hamilton  
Cecilia Polanco  
Jordan Watson  
Jahiem France  
Alix Adrian  
Niccolo Roditti  
Anne Sutcowski-Hemtreet  
P. M.  
Madeline Roper  
Walt Barron  
Tatiana Molina-Hveda  
Anna Zehr  
Sarah Whitehill  
Rachel Meyer  
Ella Jones  
Lorena Perez

## **8. Consent Items**

- a. Monthly Change Order Report (November 2023)
- b. Transfer of 2020 Limited Obligation Bond Project Funds and 2022 General Obligation Bond Projects

Millicent Rogers moved to approve the consent items as presented. Natalie Beyer seconded, and the motion passed unanimously (7:0).

## **9. Board of Education**

- a. Community Safety and Wellness Task Force Update

Samuel Scarborough and Jesse Huddleston reviewed a PowerPoint presentation that detailed the following:

- ✓ Agenda
- ✓ Related Listening Sessions
- ✓ Major Themes
- ✓ Recommendations
- ✓ Social Discipline Window
- ✓ Hold Youth Consent Workshops
- ✓ General Overview
- ✓ Program Goals
- ✓ Durham Sexual Assault Data
- ✓ Durham Youth Listening Project
- ✓ Jordan Students Against Sexual Harassment
- ✓ Recommendations
- ✓ Revise the SRO Program
- ✓ General Overview
- ✓ SRO Program Materials
- ✓ Recommendations

Each board member expressed their appreciation of the work being done and looked forward to additional opportunities for collaboration.

## **10. Chief of Staff**

- a. Policy Updates

The administration presents the following policies for review and adoption on waiver of second reading in response to the Parent's Bill of Rights:

- ✓ Policy 1735/4035/7235 – LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual+) and Gender Supports Policy
- ✓ Policy 1310/4002 – Parental Involvement
- ✓ Policy 3540 – Comprehensive Health Education

She reviewed a PowerPoint presentation that summarized some of the changes pertaining to additional language, edits to existing language.

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The board commented on some of the changes and collectively expressed the desire to set policies and procedures that protect students, families and staff.

Jovonia Lewis made a motion to approve policies 1735/4035/7235, 1310/4002 and 3540. Natalie Beyer seconded, and the motion passed unanimously (7:0).

*Chair Bettina Umstead requested a brief recess. The meeting resumed at 9:30 p.m.*

## **11. Operations Services**

### a. Durham School of the Arts Design Development Presentation

Frederick Davis and members of the design teams from O'Brien Atkins, Perkins & Will and Cate Services reviewed a PowerPoint that detailed the following:

- ✓ DPS Strategic Plan: Priority 5 Goals
- ✓ Durham School of the Arts Update
- ✓ New DSA
- ✓ Big Idea: A Community of Creatives
- ✓ Site Analysis
- ✓ Site Plan
- ✓ Stacking Diagram
- ✓ Building Section
- ✓ Sample Planning Room
- ✓ Number of Classrooms: Instructional Units (IUs)
- ✓ Sustainability
- ✓ Budget Summary – Updated December 2023
- ✓ Cost of Recent School Projects
- ✓ Renovation Option (Schedule and Costs)
- ✓ Milestones
- ✓ Capital Improvement Update

Additional Main Points:

- Board Policy “9020 Facility Design” requires the Superintendent to report the development of facility design to the Board of Education periodically.
- The new Durham School of the Arts will be located at Duke Homestead Road and is currently designed for 2000 magnet students from grades 6-12.
- DPS Board approved the new school in October 2021.
- New Durham School of the Arts is a part of the 2022 Bond and is budgeted at \$240 million dollars.

Board members commented on the following:

- Requested an estimate of how much money has been invested in the current DSA site. Frederick Davis provided a quick overview of the outstanding work orders and previous major renovations.
- Student co-mingling dynamics in the current site.
- Positive aspects of the new site design

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- Taking into consideration the concerns from educators about space and continue collaborating when refining plans for the future.
- Keeping lines of communication open between the educators, students and families

DPS Administration recommends the approval of the. Millicent Rogers made a motion to approve the DSA Design Development package and authorizes staff to move forward to construction document phase of Durham School of the Arts. Natalie Beyer seconded, and the motion passed unanimously (7:0).

b. Budget Resolution FY 2023-24

Paul LeSieur reviewed a PowerPoint presentation that detailed the following:

- ✓ State Budget Update – Certified Pay
- ✓ State Budget – Classified Pay and Bonuses
- ✓ State Budget – Other Key Items
- ✓ Durham County Appropriations
- ✓ Fund Balance Appropriation and Unassigned Fund Balance
- ✓ Budget Resolution Revenues
- ✓ Budget Resolution – Personnel Summary
- ✓ Budget Resolution – Expense by Purpose
- ✓ Budget Resolution – Expense by Object

Natalie Beyer made a motion to approve the Budget Resolution FY 2023-24. Jovonia Lewis seconded, and the motion passed unanimously (7:0).

## **12. Academic Services**

a. DPS BOE LGBTQIA+ Task Force Update

Dr. Kevin Bullock, Office of Equity and Professional Development reviewed a PowerPoint presentation that provided an update on the work of the DPS BOE LGBTQIA+ Task Force. The information included progress on suggested updates/revisions for the LGBTQIA+ and Gender Supports Policy, prioritized topics and resources for professional development, and discussions about the impact of state and federal legislation on Durham Public Schools.

- ✓ Purpose
- ✓ Topics and Responsibilities
- ✓ Activities/Discussion Topics
- ✓ Focus Areas/Next Steps

Board members expressed their appreciation for the work.

## **13. Closed Session**

At approximately 11:09 p.m., Natalie Beyer moved to go into Closed Session for the reasons stated on the agenda. Alexandra Valladares seconded, and the motion passed unanimously via roll call vote (7:0).

## **13. Reconvened Open Session**

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The open session reconvened at approximately 11:50 p.m.

**14. Human Resources**

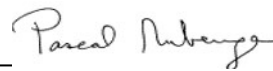
Natalie Beyer moved to approve the personnel reports dated December 14, 2023, as presented. Alexandra Valladares seconded, and the motion passed (6:1 – Millicent Rogers) via roll call vote.

**15. Adjournment**

Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 11:58 p.m.



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Bettina Umstead, Chair  
Board of Education



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Pascal Mubenga, PhD  
Superintendent