

MINUTES
DURHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
PUBLIC HEARING
November 7, 2019

Durham Public Schools Board of Education held its Public Hearing on Thursday, November 7, 2019 at approximately 6:00 in the C.C. Spaulding Elementary Auditorium, located at 1531 S. Roxboro Street, Durham, NC.

Board Members Present: Mike Lee (Chair), Bettina Umstead (Vice-Chair), Matt Sears, Steven Unruhe, Natalie Beyer, Minnie Forte-Brown, and Xavier Cason.

Administration Present: Dr. Pascal Mubenga (Superintendent), Tanya Giovanni (Chief of Staff), Dr. Nakia Hardy (Deputy Superintendent of Academic Services), Julius Monk (Chief Operating Officer), Arasi Adkins (Assistant Superintendent of Human Resource Services), Dr. Julie Spencer (Assistant Superintendent of Research and Accountability), William “Chip” Sudderth III (Chief Communications Officer), Dr. Stacy Stewart (Assistant Superintendent of School Transformation) and Paul LeSieur (Chief Finance Officer).

Attorney Present: Ken Soo

Recorder: Sandra Clemons-White, Executive Assistant to Board of Education

Spanish Interpreters Present: Martha Romo Urgiles is a Durham Public Schools ESL teacher with a Masters in TESOL and 35 years of experience. Ms. Romo Urgiles has 17 years of experience teaching and interpreting in the United States.

Martha Gensemer-Ramirez is at the Registration Center.

Call to Order

Chair Mike Lee opened the hearing by thanking everyone for coming to the Public Hearing regarding the student reassignment. He then called this hearing to order. He stated the purpose of this hearing is for the School Board, Superintendent, and the staff to hear from our parents and anyone who wishes to speak on the subject. Then Chair Lee asked everyone to join in a moment of silence.

3. Agenda Review

Chair Lee called for a review of the agenda. He stated the only topic on the agenda is General Public Comment. Natalie Beyer moved to approve the agenda. Matt Sears seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

4. General Public Comment

Initially, there were eight people signed up for General Public Comment. Then three additional people signed up after the sheet was completed. Therefore, a total of 11 people signed up.

1. *Johnny Pigg (Student at Creekside, Second Grade) – stated he and his dad have a plan that could make DPS and everyone happy. He and other fellow students (Santiago Gonzales and Logan Brown) are affected in the DPS Plan, and they do not want to leave Creekside Elementary School and go to Pearsonstown Elementary School. He chose Creekside Elementary*

School because it sounded cool and was able to meet some awesome friends. He loves Creekside Elementary and his friends. Johnny and his dad have a plan that the kindergarteners who attend next year could be moved to Parkwood Elementary instead. The other idea is to do a lottery. For example, 40 people wanted to sign up, but 20 people would win. We could do what Wake County is doing if students wanted to stay they would have to promise not to ever ride the bus.

- 2. Ryland Pigg (Father of Johnny Pigg) began by stating that his son, Johnny, wrote his own comments. He elaborated on one of Johnny's proposed ideas, involving the current proposal grandfather's middle school students at Githens and 3rd to 5th grade students at Creekside but does not grandfathered students moving from Creekside. He stated Johnny just proposed that DPS consider grandfathering students too at Creekside so that present students can stay. This would require expanding the proposed adjustment to cover a larger geographic area to still achieve the objective of moving approximately 50 students to reduce overcrowding.*

The current adjustment area aligns to the Lowes Grove boundaries. However, this elementary and middle school alignment is temporary as boundaries will be realigned again with the opening of middle school C on Scott King Road. There are neighborhoods on the eastern side of the proposed boundary that will be assigned to school C based on proximity.

By assigning rising kindergarten students and other new DPS families, it is Parkwood vs. Creekside then assigning to school C when it opens. The current proposal will have significant impact on the children that have already started attending Creekside and will be moved to Parkwood and potentially moved again to school C. These transitions are difficult at this age.

Using this alternative proposal can still accomplish all the same numeric objectives and achieve the same solution that DPS is trying to accomplish but does not disrupt the current Creekside children.

- 3. Susan Kinghorn (Parent) has a fourth-grade son at Forest View Elementary School and an eight-grade daughter at Githens. She stated this proposal to move the line dividing Githens and Brogden to Cornwallis Road would separate them from all the other neighborhoods around them. This proposed line would only affect one to three student a year. It is difficult to see how one to three students a year would make a big difference to either school, but will be a huge difference to her son and the family tremendously. This would not be a problem if all of Forest View students were being reassigned to Brogden.*

Ms. Kinghorn asked the board members to consider keeping the border west of US Hwy 15-501 on US Hwy 751 where it currently lies.

- 4. Melanie Jardim shared the same sentiment that Susan Kinghorn spoke. She stated the board needs to approach this either geographically based or feeder school based. If you go with a feeder school method, try to keep all of the elementary schools together. She supports moving some people over to Brogden but if you take a school based approach or feeder based approach, an entire elementary school should be moved together as a community.*
- 5. Jessica Simo (Parent) has two children at Creekside Elementary. Her primary concern is the*

proposed plan to move children that are already established at Creekside and moved them temporarily to Parkwood and then move them to a third school in the future. This proposed plan to redistrict around 50 families seems like putting a band-aid on an open wound for overcrowding, might not accomplish that much other than upsetting a group of families.

She would rather see everyone join forces around trying to get the bond approved for 2020 so the elementary school site C gets approved. Then, we will have something more positive that we can all rally around and look forward to sending our children to a new school.

6. *Beth Newsome concerned that this plan for middle school reassignment is going to concentrate families with more privilege and more wealth at Githens Middle School. We cannot formulate and implement an equitable and fair plan without taking socioeconomic status, wealth, and access to power into account. She wants to expand the reassignment discussion even for this small reassignment, so we can include some issues of equity and fairness, and talk about them.*
7. *Jovonia Lewis (Parent) has two children at Lakewood Elementary School. She voiced her concern regarding equity and engagement, and asked for more information regarding the outreach plan. She understands the need for change to happen regarding overcrowding at Githens Middle School, and the under enrollment at Brogden Middle School. However, she wants to make sure you are considering conveniences for families. Please take in consideration what the traffic will be like going through the city and across Interstate 85 at 7:30 a.m. Will there be considerations for start time changes? Regarding high school assignment, will this decision affect high school decisions?*

Response: Chair Lee responded by stating the board will get back with her regarding information on the outreach plan.

8. *Charlotte Minguez (Parent) with a son at Creekside Middle School. Her son loves it there and has made great friends. Her concern was the small crowd that was there. She stated the board should take in consideration for people who cannot come to meetings like this when they are held at these times and on a week night, and a work night.*
9. *Holland Hale (Vice President of the Colony Park Homeowners Association and Former Student of Durham Public Schools) shared his experiences of being cut off from everybody in the neighborhood due to the splitting of overcrowding schools. He stated it was not a lot of fun. He has a daughter at Forest View Elementary School and a son at Githens Middle School. He lives in Colony Park which has 120 homes near Forest View Elementary and would like to leave it as a unit.*
10. *Elizabeth Dondero (Parent) stated she lives across the street from Holland Hale in Colony Park. She has a child in Githens Middle School and two at Forest View Elementary School. She reiterated and agree with what Holland Hale stated earlier.*
11. *Seth Thomas (Parent) with a child at Creekside Elementary School. He requested to see more information and more data regarding the redistricting. He wants to know are we trading one capacity over another one. He stated at this point we should join together to go for a bond to*

make sure that site C facility gets built.

5. Board of Education Remarks

Chair Mike Lee stated the purpose of this meeting was to hear from our community and those who signed up to speak. We have had meetings and forums to try to provide as much information as we possibly could. Chair Lee reported that the board will not be voting tonight on this plan, because it is not a forum for them to vote.

The sole purpose of this meeting was to receive feedback, and you can continue to provide feedback by sending the board members emails. We have our regular board meeting on Thursday, November 21, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. Please come if you are interested in getting more of your families and friends to speak. If we have updated information, we will be sharing at the regular board meeting.

If there is information you did not receive, please reach out to us, and we will connect you with the people to speak to you. All information is available on the website.

Bettina Umstead (Vice Chair) reported that Durham Public Schools Board of Education has a YouTube site and all of our meetings are recorded there. We encourage you to look at the work session videos because they will have our conversations, our notes as well as our staff presentations That will give more context to the slides.

Steven Unruhe (Board Member) reminded Chair Lee to talk about the upcoming Joint Meeting with the Board of Education and Board of County Commissioners.

Chair Lee announced that on Tuesday, November 12, 2019, there is a Board of Education and Board of County Commissioners Joint Meeting scheduled at 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. This meeting is held at DPS Central Office (downtown) at 511 Cleveland Street, Durham, NC. If you are interested in the 2020 Bond, I agree we should get behind the bond, so please email the Board of County Commissioners. They are the ones who have to provide permission for us to do the 2020 Bond. We, as board members, are advocating for it, and would love for our community members to advocate for it.

Matt Sears (Board Member) mentioned we are launching a full redistricting study in January 2020 but the bond opportunities are few and far between and in previous meetings we have mentioned elementary school F site on Roxboro Road and will be included in our conversations with the Commissioners. We would like for the community to get involved with this as well.

Chair Mike Lee stated it has been presented and defended that we need both elementary schools to be where we need to be as far as our student assignment work. We are not just looking for elementary school C which is on Scott King Road. We are looking for an elementary school F which is at MLK and Roxboro. So when you send your emails to the County Commissioners, talk about both elementary schools.

Minnie Forte-Brown (Board Member) reported that elementary school C site is shovel-ready. It has been shovel-ready for ten years. We have paid the people for the land. The longer it takes for us to build it, the construction cost goes up. We need our community to push for the building of School C and School F.

Natalie Beyer (Board Member) mentioned that the community can reach all of the Board of County Commissioners at www.dconc.gov. She reminded them that the County Commissioners work for the people.

Chair Lee reminded the constituents that they voted for them too, and there is an election next year.

Minnie Forte-Brown stated that November 21, 2019 is the vote day for redistricting because we need to be able to let parents know exactly what is happening by the beginning of the year so they are able to make some decisions.

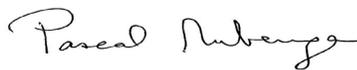
Dr. Pascal Mubenga (Superintendent) thanked the parents for their feedback. He stated they will consider all feedback presented tonight. On Thursday, November 21, we will bring you the final proposal at the full Board Meeting.

6. Adjournment

At approximately 6:44 p.m., Chair Mike Lee adjourned the Public Hearing portion.



Mike Lee
Chair, Board of Education



Pascal Mubenga, Ph.D.
Superintendent