Resolution of the Durham Public Schools Board of Education
Opposing House Bill 324

Whereas, House Bill 324 (HB 324) “Ensuring Dignity and Nondiscrimination/Schools” states that public schools shall not promote “(7) the belief that the United States is a meritocracy is an inherently racist or sexist belief, or that the United States was created by members of a particular race or sex for the purpose of oppressing members of another race or sex,” and

Whereas, if HB 324 is enacted it would prohibit educators from discussing the full facts of American history when several Constitutional Amendments were created to redress racist and sexist beliefs and policies in the original constitution for the purpose of restoring the rights of previously oppressed members of another race or sex, and

Whereas, HB324 asserts that the United States was not created by members of a particular race or sex for the purpose of oppressing members of another race; however, the 13th amendment which abolished slavery in 1865, in which members of a particular race had, in fact, oppressed members of another race, and

Whereas, HB324 asserts that the United States was not created by members of a particular race or sex for the purpose of oppressing members of another race; however, educators would be prohibited to debate or consider teaching about the Jim Crow era in which a series of laws prevented African Americans from voting or holding office, and

Whereas, HB324 asserts that the United States was not created by members of a particular race or sex for the purpose of oppressing members of another race or sex; however, educators would be prohibited to debate or consider teaching that women were not granted the right to vote until 1920 under the 19th amendment, and even then, African American women were still denied their voting rights, and

Whereas, a sound education, including accurate facts about all aspects of American History including systemic racism and discrimination, is guaranteed for every North Carolina student in our state’s Constitution, and

Whereas, in 2017 Durham Public Schools created our Office of Equity Affairs charged with ensuring equity in educational opportunities for all DPS students regardless of race or ethnicity, and

Whereas, in 2018 Durham Public Schools developed a Strategic Plan with a guiding principle which states “We believe in Equity: Our students and schools deserve equitable access to the resources and opportunities they need to succeed. Durham Public Schools and the community must distribute those resources in a manner that eliminates inequities,” and

Whereas, in 2019 the North Carolina State Board of Education adopted a strategic plan which defined equity as an essential guiding principle, and
Whereas, in 2020 the North Carolina State Board of Education passed “A Resolution To Support Equity and Excellence In North Carolina Public Education,” and

Whereas, that resolution stated “that the State Board will review and appropriately revise its policies through an equity lens and commit to work with the Superintendent and the Department of Public Instruction to create and maintain an equity officer to ensure consistency and continuity with this essential guiding principle inside and outside the agency,” and

Whereas, in February, 2021 the North Carolina State Board of Education approved new social studies standards which were developed by educators to ensure that a more comprehensive, accurate and honest history was taught to all students, include teaching on racism, identity and discrimination, and

Whereas, critical race theory is a discipline that seeks to understand how racism has shaped U.S. laws and how those laws have continued to impact the lives of non-white people, and

Whereas, an education, including critical race theory, does not attack individual students for their privileges, but rather it makes them aware of how different systems in the U.S. discriminate against others, and

Whereas, more than sixty-five years after the Supreme Court ruling on Brown vs. Board, segregated schooling is a particularly profound and timely demonstration of the ongoing persistence of systemic racism, and

Whereas, the House of Representatives in the North Carolina General Assembly recently voted along party lines to advance House Bill 324, and

Whereas, if HB 324 is approved by the Senate and signed by the Governor, North Carolina would be the seventh state to ban critical race theory, and

Whereas, these bills are partisan, divisive and are the result of coordinated work by the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) and the Heritage Foundation, and

Whereas, HB 324 would effectively restrict and prohibit honest conversations about race, conflict with existing state and local education standards and infringe on the free speech rights of students, educators and staff, and

Whereas, in Durham Public Schools our curriculum and trainings include a race equity lens as we work together to dismantle racism and work together towards a more just future,

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Durham Public Schools Board of Education urges members of the North Carolina General Assembly to vote “No” on HB324 and if necessary, the Board urges Governor Cooper to veto HB324, and

Be it further resolved that the Durham Public Schools Board of Education urges members of the N.C. General Assembly to focus on developing a robust public education budget with an equity toolkit that fully supports students in North Carolina, and
Be it further resolved that the Durham Public Schools Board of Education urges members of the NC General Assembly to focus on the following recommendations from our 2020-21 legislative agenda to address statewide equity concerns including but not limited to,

1. Fund dedicated Equity Directors for every local education authority (LEA) to develop and share best practices statewide.

2. Adopt comprehensive, anti-racist and inclusive curriculum for every school.

3. Incentivize funding for professional development that includes diversity, equity, inclusion, culturally competent, and anti-racist training.

4. Expand the NC Teaching Fellows Program especially at HBCUs and to increase representation of teachers of color.

5. Expand state protections for LGBTQ+ students and staff.

6. Expand Title IX protections to protect students against sexual assault.

Signed this 20th day of May, 2021