

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF EMPLOYEE SPEECH RIGHTS

WHEREAS, freedom of speech is fundamental to a free society and is protected by the constitution of the United States and the North Carolina Constitution; and

WHEREAS, the Durham Public Schools Board of Education recognizes that the expertise of its teachers, administrators and classified staff is essential to debates over school policy; and

WHEREAS, the Board supports the right of school staff to advocate for public education and public school students in a way that does not violate confidentiality laws, interfere with their work responsibilities, or violate district policy; and

WHEREAS, employees experiencing reprisal or retaliation for exercising their freedom of speech rights are protected under Board Policy 5126: Bullying/Harassment; and

WHEREAS, our Theory of Action states that “it is essential for all of our teachers to feel like they are respected and empowered as professionals, that their views are heard and valued”; and

WHEREAS, our Theory of Action states that “teachers [and administrators] should have a voice in the critical decisions affecting their schools”;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The Durham Public Schools Board of Education recognizes the importance of participation by school employees in public debate over local, state and national school policy, commends our staff for its past advocacy, and encourages school staff to continue speaking out for public school students and public education in a way that is consistent with their duties as educators.

This the 29<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2016

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Heidi Carter, Chair

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Mike Lee, Vice Chair

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Minnie Forte-Brown

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Natalie Beyer

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Leigh Bordley

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Sendolo Diaminah

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Matt Sears