

**MINUTES
DURHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
JANUARY 22, 2015**

The Durham Public Schools Board of Education held its regular monthly meeting January 22, 2015, at 6:30 p.m. in the Fuller Administration Building, 511 Cleveland Street, Durham, North Carolina.

Board Members present:

Heidi Carter, Chair; Natalie Beyer; Matt Sears; Mike Lee; Leigh Bordley; and Sendolo Diaminah were present. Minnie Forte-Brown, Vice Chair, was in attendance via conference call.

Administration present:

Dr. Bert L’Homme, Superintendent; Dr. Stacey Wilson-Norman, Deputy Superintendent of Academic Services; Hugh Osteen, Deputy Superintendent of Operational Services; Dr. Debbie Pitman, Assistant Superintendent of Student, Family, and Community Services; Tom Crabtree, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources; Chrissy Pearson, Chief Communications Officer; and Aaron Beaulieu, Chief Finance Officer, were present.

Attorney present: Ken Soo

Call to Order

Chair Carter called the meeting to order and presided over a moment of silence.

Be Our Guest

Mike Lee shared comments and thanked the Northern High School Culinary students for the meal during Be Our Guests. He invited the Board Members and Superintendent L’Homme to join him on the red carpet to pay tribute to the parents/guardians of students at Durham School of the Arts, Spring Valley Elementary, Jordan High, Lowe’s Grove Middle, Oak Grove Elementary, and Easley Elementary Schools.

Celebrations

Board Members recognized students, parents, and community partners.

Chief Communications Officer, Chrissy Pearson, recognized the following:

Duke University’s DPS Student of the Month – This program spotlights students who distinguish themselves with character and integrity.

Jose Leno Morales – January Student of the Month.

Assistant Principal, Lisa Bair, from the Durham Performance Learning Center, introduced Jose and shared comments. Jose, known as Leno to his friends at school, a 17 year-old junior at The Durham Performance Learning Center was named the January Duke University Durham Public Schools Student of the Month and holds a 3.6 GPA. He is completely focused, hard-working and always ready with a smile or kind word. Leno is an active student leader who has volunteered with Habitat for Humanity, the annual food and blood drive at DPLC, Linkability, Kidz Notes and the Farmers’ Market for the elderly sponsored by Durham Parks and Recreation and held at

Holton Resource Center (where DPLC is located). Leno is interested in music and hopes to find a career in the medical field, where he can help others either in a hospital, a medical lab or elsewhere. His teachers and principal say that he “is a role model to his peers without effort and a joy to the adults he comes in contact with.” Leno credits his mom for being his inspiration to work hard in school. “She wants me to be the best I can be. She’s the most amazing person in my life”, says Leno. Leno was presented with a certificate, and he and his mother were invited to walk the red carpet.

Community Partners

Biogen Idec

Ms. Pearson invited Linda Tugurian, DPS Science Specialist, to the podium to introduce Amanda Marvelle, Community Lab Coordinator and Steven Goldsmith, Manager of Community Relations of Biogen Idec. Biogen Idec has partnered with Durham Public Schools to provide extended learning opportunities for students at their on-site facility and teacher workshops. Students learned about yeast cells, cellular temperature and various factors that affect cell growth. Students conducted small experiments, visited with Biogen employees and were outfitted in standard Biogen Idec lab attire complete with lab coats, gloves, and safety glasses during the duration of the lab. As part of its partnership with Durham Public Schools, Biogen covered the students’ traveling expenses to the facility as well as the cost of a substitute teacher for the day. Ms. Tugurian thanked Biogen Idec for being such strong supporters of our students and schools, presented them with a certificate, and invited them to walk the red carpet.

Assistance League of the Triangle Area

Ms. Pearson introduced Anna Merrett, President, and Pat Morrison, Public Relations Coordinator. The Assistance League of the Triangle Area has five philanthropic programs that focus on making a difference in lives of children and women in need. They include Operation School Bell, Women in Need, Kid’s Place, Scholarship, and Community Sharing.

Operation School Bell, their signature program, helps elementary children in need of clothing, school supplies and books. This year the Assistance League has partnered with Bethesda, Burton, Eastway, Glenn and CC Spaulding Elementary Schools to provide new clothes and shoes to students. Through this partnership schools were able to organize shop in-store events and reach over 565 students. In addition, over 500 books new and gently used books were donated to the Title I schools: Holt, Pearson town, and YE Smith Elementary Schools. Ms. Pearson thanked the Assistance League of the Triangle Area for being such strong supporters of our students and families, presented them with a certificate, and invited them to walk the red carpet.

Chair Carter stated that Vice Chair Forte-Brown was joining this meeting via conference call due to she was attending the NCSBA’s Policy Conference.

Superintendent's Updates

Superintendent L'Homme shared the following updates:

- Dr. L'Homme shared the following comments in honor of Board Members:

The NC School Boards Association and districts across the US are now celebrating School Board Appreciation Month. On behalf of our schools and students, as well as personally, our gratitude for the time you spend, the care you take, and the commitment you make every day for DPS students. Durham County is blessed with strong community support for education. Just as parents entrust their children to Durham Public Schools in the belief and understanding that we will help them achieve their dreams, Durham citizens entrust our district's leadership to you in the belief and understanding that you will advocate for our children and educators, and represent them thoughtfully and passionately. You are an engaged, active Board that always asks the follow-up question and always puts students first. We are honored to work with you.

- DPS appreciate the patience of families and staff through the brief experience of winter last week.
 - The two-hour delay Wednesday turned into cancellation as we checked the roads and found them to be too dangerous in the north.
 - Safety always is our first priority!
 - Future make-up days are listed on our website in the inclement weather section and on the printable calendars.
- Makeup day on Tuesday, January 20, meant we had to delay Winter Graduation to later in the evening. The patience of the families was most appreciated and the ceremony was very meaningful and full of lasting memories for our graduates. Dr. L'Homme was honored to speak to the graduates and praised them for passing the finish line; whether early or needing more time.
- At this month's Principal's Meeting, Githens Middle School's Tonya Williams was recognized as the Principal of the Year for Region 3. She will now compete for State Principal of the Year and will represent all of the principals in our region at the state level
- Alison Edwards was named Region 3 runner-up for State Teacher of the Year program as well.
- Jason Jowers was named the State Assistant Principal of the Year. DPS is very well represented!
- K-5 science specialist, Dacia Jones, will present at a panel on virtual learning at South by Southwest in Austin this month. She'll be sharing the stage with one of the hosts of TV's MythBusters, a Google Senior Manager and a representative of the White House.

- On March 6, Brogden Middle School's chorus will be traveling to Charlotte to sing the National Anthem for a Charlotte Hornets basketball game. This is a very rare opportunity for a school performance group and there's the potential of a sell-out game. We are very excited for Brogden students to receive this recognition.
- The Minority Focus Committee of the North Carolina Bar Association's Young Lawyer's Division is bringing distinguished attorneys and professionals to Hillside High to help underrepresented students pave their way to higher education. The day's programming begins with a student assembly and panel discussion at 9 a.m. with Daryl Parks, an attorney with Parks & Crump in Tallahassee, Fla., who has participated in a number of high-profile cases including Trayvon Martin/George Zimmerman and Mike Brown/Ferguson, Mo.; Charles Becton, past president of the North Carolina Bar Association and former interim chancellor of North Carolina Central University and Elizabeth City State University; Allan Head, executive director of the North Carolina Bar Association. Friday, January 23 at 9:00 a.m. at Hillside High School.
- SCHOOL PERFORMANCE GRADES STATEMENT

Dr. L'Homme read the following statement:

Members of the Board, as you know the state will be assigning letter grades to each of our schools on Feb. 5. At your last regular meeting you adopted a resolution against this because you know the formula is weighted in favor of proficiency, not growth, and we know proficiency is only one part of the story. Mr. Sears explained that very well in his Herald-Sun column in September.

We know that we accomplish significant academic growth for our students. We work very hard and teach very hard. We think our schools should be graded based more on what they actually accomplished during the school year than on where their students were starting from.

Based on our early calculations, we know that the state's formula will give Ds and Fs to some of our 37 schools that met or exceeded growth expectations. These schools took their students as they came to them at the beginning of the year, and at the end of the year the students had made at least a year's worth of progress.

It's not a fair formula for our schools that are helping our students make up lost ground. We recognize that some of our students entered kindergarten without quality pre-K, came to our district already behind or are trying to climb back after having academic or personal challenges.

Growth is how we close the achievement gap over time. Growth is how we move all of our students to proficiency over time. The state is all but ignoring growth in grading our schools for the 2013-14 school year. Other districts are developing their own formulas, weighting

growth and proficiency differently. We've considered this as well. We join them in telling the state, you can do better than this formula.

Understand this: we know that we can do better too. We want high proficiency and high growth in all of our schools. We want As no matter which metric is used. We also know that a small number of our schools did not meet growth expectations, and even a few of our schools with high growth still have a long way to go to meet our community's expectations. In response, we are providing increased support and resources to teachers, including professional development and mentoring, and we are ensuring a higher-quality learning environment through classroom management training, increasing our alternatives to suspension, and expanding our efforts to reduce dropouts and truancy.

But if you look at growth first, you get a much more balanced look at what our students, teachers and school communities accomplished in the 2013-14 school year. That's actual work and fair accountability.

We are proud of what we are doing for Durham's children and won't sit by and quietly accept a failing grade that suggests we are not teaching and our students aren't learning. We are. They are. And we will continue to fight for our students and schools.

Sendolo Diaminah added that there would be a community conversation regarding what letter grades mean and how this will impact the district. He said this will take place on February 5 at Riverside High School beginning at 6:30 p.m. and there was more information on the DPS website.

Agenda Review and Approval

The agenda was approved as written by common consent.

General Public Comment: Three people signed up to speak.

1. *Ms. Kim Harris* – Ms. Harris reported that she had a seven year old daughter at Hillandale Elementary in an EC classroom who had multiple brain surgeries and was taken to a secret room by a substitute teacher to have fun. She is not satisfied with the investigation or the explanation by the administration so she filed a police report. She stated that her daughter's homebound teacher was now changing due to the situation and she felt it will hinder her daughter's learning progress. She requested that the Board review her information and consider her daughter's medical condition before making any changes to her daughter's education plans.

Chair Carter told Ms. Harris that someone from the administration would follow-up with her.

2. *Ms. Rochelle Robinson* – Ms. Robinson was not in attendance when her name was called.
3. *Ms. Andrea Underwood Petifer* – Ms. Underwood Petifer, President of Durham’s Association of Educators (DAE), stated that DAE stands in support of the resolution the School Board passed regarding assigning letter grades to each public school. She said that this mandate passed by the General Assembly would impact schools, students, and staff. She encouraged everyone to attend the Community Conversation regarding what letter grades mean and how this will impact the district. She said this will take place on February 5 at Riverside High School in the Media Center beginning at 6:30 pm.

Board of Education Meeting Minutes

Presented for approval:

- December 15, 2014 – Joint BOE and BOCC 2nd Quarterly Meeting
- December 16, 2014 – Special Board Meeting – Open Minutes
- December 18, 2014 – Regular Monthly Meeting – Open and Closed Minutes
- January 12, 2015 - Special Monthly Meeting – Open and Closed Minutes

The minutes were approved as written by common consent.

Consent Agenda

Chair Carter noted that the Consent Agenda items were thoroughly discussed in committee.

- a. **Alternative School Accountability Model**
- b. **Forest View Elementary School – Bids for Chiller Replacement**
- c. **Oak Grove Elementary School – Bids for Chiller Replacement**
- d. **Eastway Elementary School – Right-of-Ways and Easement**
- e. **DPS Policy Manual Revisions with the North Carolina School Boards Association**
- f. **Revised Policy 3300 – *Student Access to High School Courses***

Natalie Beyer made a motion to approve Consent Agenda. Matt Sears seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Reports of the Committees

- I. **Administrative Services Committee**
 - a. **Additional Capital Funding for the Whitted Project**
Recommendation: Action
Public Comment: None

Hugh Osteen, Deputy Superintendent of Operational Services, began the additional Capital funding for the Whitted project presentation. He shared that due to increases in the cost of the redevelopment of the Whitted Building, Durham Public Schools, along with the City and County, is being asked to contribute additional capital. He stated that Durham Public Schools is being asked to provide an additional \$800,000 in Capital funds to support the Whitted

Redevelopment Project and that the administration recommends transferring the funds from the 2007 Bonds totaling \$1.8 million now assigned to W. G. Pearson Middle School.

Mr. Osteen thoroughly answered all questions and concerns. Following a thorough Board discussion and comments, Vice Chair Forte-Brown made a motion to approve the additional \$800,000 of Capital funding for the Whitted Project and to accept the recommendation of the administration to transfer the funds from the 2007 bond project totaling \$1.8 million now assigned to WG Pearson Middle School. Leigh Bordley seconded the motion. Following further discussion, Board Members agreed to amend the motion. Sendolo Diaminah made a motion to approve the amended motion to state that the Board approve the additional \$800,000 of Capital funding and to accept the recommendation to transfer the funds from the 2007 bonds totaling \$1.8 million now assigned to the Whitted Project, with the understanding that all bodies will negotiate operating costs, which will require new funding. Mike Lee seconded and the motion passed 6 to 1 (Natalie Beyer opposed).

II. Support Services Committee
a. Made In Durham
Recommendation: Action
Public Comment: None

Superintendent L’Homme began the presentation and shared information regarding Made In Durham. He introduced David Dodson and Julie Mooney from Made In Durham, and from DPS staff, Rick Sheldahl, Director of CTE. Dr. L’Homme stated that the administration recommends spending \$100,000 to Made In Durham and another \$100,000 in year two if benchmarks are met. He shared that this initiative was in support of disconnected youth and young adults to be successful in reconnecting with education and ultimately, completing a postsecondary credential and secure a living wage by the age of 25. Superintendent L’Homme thoroughly answered all questions and concerns.

Following Board discussion and comments, Leigh Bordley made a motion to allocate \$100,000 in the current fiscal year to support the Made In Durham Project. Natalie Beyer seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Closed Session

Attorney Soo requested adding to consider confidential student information protected under NCGS 115C-402 and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 USC 1232g.

On a motion by Leigh Bordley, seconded by Natalie Beyer, the Board convened in closed session to consider confidential student information protected under NCGS 115C-402 and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 USC 1232g, confidential personnel matters under NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6) and 115C-319, and to consult with the board attorney to preserve the attorney-client privilege as provided in NCGS 318.11(a)(3).

The Board convened in closed session at approximately 8:12 p.m.

Open Session – Personnel Recommendations

The Board reconvened in open session at approximately 8:57 p.m.

Personnel Approval

Superintendent L’Homme recommended approval of the January 22, 2015, Personnel Reports. On a motion made by Natalie Beyer to approve the Personnel Reports dated January 22, 2015; seconded by Sendolo Diaminah, the motion passed unanimously.

Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:59 p.m.

Heidi Carter, Chair
Durham Public Schools Board of Education

Dr. Bert L’Homme, Superintendent
Durham Public Schools