

**MINUTES  
DURHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
NOVEMBER 20, 2014**

The Durham Public Schools Board of Education held its regular monthly meeting November 20, 2014, at 6:30 p.m. in the Fuller Administration Building, 511 Cleveland Street, Durham, North Carolina.

**Board Members present:**

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

**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:** Neal Ramee

**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 Southern School of Energy and Sustainability, The School for Creative Studies, Club Boulevard Elementary, and Githens Middle Schools.

**Celebrations**

Board Members recognized students, parents, and community partners including:

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

**Myles Harris – November Student of the Month.**

Principal Jackie Tobias introduced Myles Harris who has been named the Duke University Durham Public Schools Student of the Month for November. The City of Medicine Academy senior holds a 4.14 weighted GPA and spends the majority of his time outside of school building rockets as a member of the Durham Area Rocketry Team. Myles says he’s been interested in rocketry since the ninth grade and hopes to attend Princeton University to major in aerospace engineering and propulsion. He is also involved with the Durham County Youth Missionary Department where he assists with efforts to support those in need. Myles credits his aunt and his grandfather for inspiring him to work hard and serving as role models. Superintendent L’Homme presented him with a certificate and invited Myles and his mother to walk the red carpet.

### **Principal of the Year & Finalists**

Chrissy Pearson, Chief Communications Officer, announced the Principal of the Year and this year's finalists:

- **Principal of the Year:** Tonya Williams, Githens Middle School
- **Finalists:**
  - Sheldon Reynolds, Lakewood Montessori Middle School
  - Aisha Howard, Oak Grove Elementary School
  - David Hawks, Durham School of the Arts
  - Kia Eason, Merrick-Moore Elementary School

Ms. Pearson congratulated these outstanding Principals and shared comments about Tonya Williams, this year's Principal of the Year. Superintendent L'Homme presented Ms. Williams with a plaque and invited all Principals to walk the red carpet.

### ***Community Partners***

There were no community partners able to attend tonight's meeting.

### **Superintendent's Updates**

Superintendent L'Homme shared the following updates:

#### **Magnet Fair** last Saturday

- More than 1,000 families and 2,500 people attended.
- All magnet schools and CTE pathways were represented.
- Outstanding programs and we need to get the word out.
- Also, Showcase of Schools coming up to highlight our traditional schools.
- We are committed to every school being a desirable, excellent choice for families.

#### **Important community meetings** over the last month

- Durham CAN: Provided update on major initiatives such as universal free breakfast and bilingual support. Looking forward to continued conversation.
- Met with a working group on school discipline reform in our state, talked about our alternatives to suspension and our commitment to maintaining school discipline while keeping our students engaged and learning.
- Budget Advisory Committee began meeting this week and glad to have expanded community input.
- Also have had very rich conversations with student advisory groups: diverse range of students—not just our senior class presidents, but students who truly represent our school communities.

**Fifth grade parent events** coming up **Saturday morning, Dec. 6 at Rogers-Herr at 9 a.m. or noon:** chance for families to learn how to make the transition to middle school and also about all of our opportunities and offerings.

**A Durham alum** is President Obama's nominee for Attorney General: Loretta Lynch

- One of three valedictorians of Durham High School, class of 1977;
- Went to the Durham County Courthouse with her father to watch cases;
- Graduated from Harvard Law;
- Currently United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York; and
- Proud of this product of Durham schools – she attended Whitted Jr. High and W.G. Pearson.

**Lots of great things have been happening this month:**

- DSA students performing with Susan Boyle at DPAC.
- State championship bicycle racing at School for Creative Studies.
- Broadway stars visiting Hillside for Dreamgirls.
- A number of our students signing athletic scholarships to colleges and universities.
- Durham Public Schools clearly has a lot to be thankful for.
- I visited Durham School of the Arts and the Carr Building is a beautiful place for students to learn.
- Last Monday night was Honors Night, honoring students who take 2, 3, 4, and 5 AP classes. Students were recognized as finalists for National Merit Scholars and Governors School. Over 450 students received awards.

**Chair Carter** was named as honorary All-State Board of Education member by the North Carolina School Boards Association and **Vice Chair Forte-Brown** was elected Treasurer. Congratulations to these exceptional Board Members!

### **Agenda Review and Approval**

Vice Chair Forte-Brown made a motion to approve the agenda as written. Natalie Beyer seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**General Public Comment:** Two people signed up to speak.

1. *Ms. Jennifer Bartnik* – Ms. Bartnik shared her disappointment in the change of the final exam window; changed to January 7 opposed to January 12 as originally planned. She shared reasons why this change negatively effects teachers and students and requested the Board leave the testing window as January 12. Chair Carter assured her that someone would contact regarding her concerns.
2. *Ms. Janice McCarthy* – Ms. McCarthy stated that she was pleased that the Board is addressing later start times for secondary school students. She asked the Board to make a change now instead of years down the road.

### **Board of Education Meeting Minutes**

Presented for approval:

- October 23, 2014 – Regular Monthly Meeting – Open and Closed Minutes
- November 4, 2014 – Special Called Meeting – Open and Closed Minutes

These minutes were unanimously approved by Board consent.

**Consent Agenda**

Chair Carter noted that the Consent Agenda item was thoroughly discussed in committee.

- a. Revised 2104-2015 Board Committee Meetings Schedule**
- b. Githens Middle School – Drainage and Utility Easements**
- c. New Elementary “C” – Design Agreement**

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

**Reports of the Board**

- a. Resolution Supporting Local Control of School Calendars**  
**Recommendation: Action**  
**Public Comment: None**

Chair Carter shared comments about supporting local control of school calendars and presented a resolution supporting this effort. Board Members took turns reading the resolution as follows:

**DURHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
BOARD OF EDUCATION RESOLUTION  
SUPPORTING LOCAL CONTROL OF SCHOOL CALENDARS**

WHEREAS, the North Carolina General Statutes give local Boards of Education powers of supervision and control of local school systems; and

WHEREAS, local control over establishing school calendars is an integral component of school system supervision and administration powers with which local Boards of Education have been vested; and

WHEREAS, State law has usurped local control by imposing a one-size-fits-all mandate on how school calendars are to be set; and

WHEREAS, by usurping local control, the current calendar law has led to the calendar for high schools, community colleges and universities being out of alignment by approximately two weeks, causing scheduling problems. College courses now begin before high school students complete January final exams; and

WHEREAS, by usurping local control, the current calendar law has created a situation where fall semester cannot be completed before the winter break, forcing exams to be administered after the break. This means that students get no break without assessments/assignments pending; and

WHEREAS, by usurping local control, the current calendar law has led to a decrease in the amount of instructional time students have prior to taking Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate tests; and

WHEREAS, the State-mandated calendar law strictly limits the number of days that can be scheduled as inclement weather days, increasing the likelihood of unpopular days like the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, spring break, and Saturdays being used as make-up days. In other cases, districts facing scheduling challenges due to inclement weather may shorten the number of days in the school year and increase the length of school days. But longer school days may negatively impact learning, as children reach a point where they stop effectively absorbing the information they are being given; and

WHEREAS, it is well-documented through multiple studies that children experience learning loss during the summer months when they are away from the classroom and not engaging in educational activities, a phenomenon known as summer learning loss and which has a disproportionate impact on low-income children; and

WHEREAS, long summer breaks can also negatively impact child nutrition, as low-income children who have access to regular meals at school through the free and reduced priced meal program may not have access to regular meals at home; and

WHEREAS, by mandating that every school calendar go into June, the current calendar law has forced retiring teachers who want to finish the school year to wait until July to retire, placing large burdens on the retirement system every July; and

WHEREAS, the schedule for fall athletics has not changed to coincide with the State-mandated school calendar. This means most schools have played two football games before school even begins; and

WHEREAS, restoring local control of school calendars will allow local Boards of Education to best meet the unique educational needs and school calendar preferences of the children and families within their communities, while allowing for innovative experimental approaches to dealing with summer learning loss.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Durham Public Schools Board of Education requests that local control over school calendars be returned to local Boards of Education.

This the 20<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2014.

Natalie Beyer made a motion to approve the resolution supporting local control of school calendars as written. Leigh Bordley seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**Reports of the Superintendent**

**a. Whitted School Project Update**

**Recommendation: Information**

**Public Comment: None**

Hugh Osteen, Deputy Superintendent of Operational Services, and Dr. Stacey Wilson-Norman, Deputy Superintendent of Academic Services, shared an update on the James A. Whitted School

redevelopment process. Mr. Osteen shared background facts to include that the James A. Whitted School was originally constructed in the early 1920's with an addition in the 1950's. The 98,380 square feet facility is located on a 4.062 acre site at 200 East Umstead Street and the building has previously housed Hillside High School, Whitted Junior High and Operation Breakthrough. The facility has been unoccupied for 8 years and the Durham County Board of County Commissioners have clearly indicated a desire to repurpose James A. Whitted School so that it continues to be an important anchor in the Southside Community.

Mr. Osteen stated that a request for proposals from developers was issued on May 1, 2012, and the proposal selected was Integral/Forty AM/Durham Public Schools/Belk Architecture. He shared the progress to date and added that the developer had successfully applied for the building to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places. In Addition, the developer applied for Low Income Housing Tax Credits and credits were awarded for the project in the second year of the application process. He said that County staff was prepared to begin the process where development can begin to include converting the old auditorium into a community center with senior citizen housing and a Pre-K Center.

Mr. Osteen presented the current finance structure and discussed the following changes:

- Recommendation to increase County commitment by \$840,000.
- DPS is being asked to increase their commitment by \$800,000.
- The City has indicated a willingness to increase their commitment from a \$500,000 loan to a \$600,000 cash commitment. Additionally, they have indicated their willingness to pay for the utility improvements totaling \$265,000.
- The Developer has increased their deferred development fee to infuse more cash into the project at the beginning.
- The Developer has been able to secure a new \$350,000 loan (net) from the Federal Home Loan Bank.
- The City has agreed to grants equal to property taxes paid and the Board of County Commissioners is requested to do the same, which would generate an additional \$210,000.

Dr. Wilson-Norman shared funding sources that could fund a Pre-K Center in this facility to include Title I, At-Risk, N.C. Pre-K, and Local funds, and fee-based revenue.

Mr. Osteen stated that PreK classes at Whitted were intended to be an expansion of service to the community and would provide 8 classrooms with estimated operating costs totaling \$1.72 million. He shared options to reduce the new operating costs and explained the benefit of moving PreK classes to Whitted to reduce overcrowding at Southwest, Merrick-Moore, Lakewood, and Little River Elementary Schools. Finally, he shared the two caveats that remained for ensuring a successful project: to verify where the additional \$800,000 in capital funding will come from and that funding from the County for increased operation costs must be provided without negatively affecting Durham Public Schools' operating funds elsewhere. Mr. Osteen and Dr. Wilson-Norman thoroughly answered all questions and concerns. Board

Members discussed their original commitment to this project and requested additional information.

## **Reports of the Committees**

### **I. Instructional Services Committee**

#### **a. Proposal for Little River K-8 Conversion**

##### **Recommendation: Action**

**Public Comment:** One person signed up to speak.

1. *Ms. Barbi Bailey-Smith* – Ms. Bailey-Smith shared her excitement in the new plans for Little River to be converted into a K-8 school. She is the Art Teacher at Little River and is very excited about teaching her students longer.

Dr. Stacey Wilson-Norman, Deputy Superintendent of Academic Services, and Hugh Osteen, Deputy Superintendent of Operational Services, presented a proposal recommending that Little River Elementary School be reconfigured to create a K-8 school in the existing facility, in order to address the schools under enrollment. Dr. Wilson-Norman shared the opportunity for serving students at Little River in a K-8 program structure is driven by the following factors:

- Under-enrollment of Little River student population;
- Significant underutilization of the facility;
- Enrollment beyond capacity at Lucas Middle School (103 percent);
- Opportunity to reduce transitions for students;
- Provide a small school setting for middle school students;
- Reducing the size of existing middle schools (Lucas and Carrington); and
- Students will be allowed to opt out and go back to their original base assignment school (Lucas or Carrington) if a K-8 school is not acceptable.

Dr. Wilson-Norman added that research on the benefits of K-8 schools suggests that these schools have advantages for self-esteem and for student performance over time. She shared statistics indicating the decline in enrollment at Little River since the 2007-2008 school year. She presented an overview of how students would be assigned, the academic day, and how extra-curricular activities would be affected. She said that a phase-in process would be used to transition to a K-8 configuration so that the middle school years would be added one grade each year beginning in 2015-16.

Mr. Osteen presented a facility overview and explained that the layout of the existing facility is conducive to a K-8 program. He shared a floor plan indicating separate wings for Pre-K – 2 grades, 3 – 5 grades, and 6 – 8 grades; however, they could still interact. He said that the Durham Public Schools Long Range Facilities Plan and the Durham County Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) did not list capital improvements for Little River in the next three years and that these recommendations are not funded in any way at this time. Dr. Wilson-Norman and Mr. Osteen thoroughly answered the Board's questions and concerns.

Matt Sears made a motion to approve the proposal recommending that Little River Elementary School be reconfigured to create a K-8 school in the existing facility. Mike Lee seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**II. Support Services Committee**

**a. Truancy Center Proposal: Future Forward Center**

**Recommendation: Information**

**Public Comment: None**

Dr. Debbie Pitman, Assistant Superintendent of Student, Family, and Community Services, presented the Truancy Proposal: Future Forward Center. She said that as the district works towards Graduate Durham, attendance in school and participation in class are essential components to ensure increased academic achievement, reduced dropout rates, reduced suspensions and increased graduation rates. She shared that in order to address students struggling with chronic truancy, Durham Public Schools, in collaboration with community partners, is opening a truancy center in January 2015 called the “Future Forward Center” with two key components: Truancy Reduction Program (TRP), and (2) Future Forward Intervention (FFI) Programs. She added that the Future Forward Center will be housed on the campus of W.G. Pearson Middle School which closed in June 2014.

Dr. Pitman introduced Ms. Elizabeth Shearer, Executive Director of Student Support Services, who stated that the Future Forward Center is a direct response to addressing students that were disconnected from school as evidenced by chronic absences and that DPS’s leadership is prepared to make tangible investments to reduce the barriers to academic success such as truancy reduction. She presented Phase I of the program overview to include 2 components:

1. Truancy Reduction Program (TRP) – to develop re-engagement plan based on initial intake screening for implementation at base school
2. Future Forward Intervention (FFI) – to engage students with necessary resources to set a course for high school graduation and post-secondary readiness

Ms. Shearer shared community partners to include Family Preservation Services, Project BUILD, City of Durham, and the Durham County Sheriff’s Office. Lastly, she shared the budget requirements for Phase I and the continued work in progress. Dr. Pitman and Ms. Shearer thoroughly answered the Board’s questions and concerns.

**b. Revised Policy 4400 – Administration of Medicine to Students – Second Reading**

**Recommendation: Action**

**Public Comment: None**

Dr. Debbie Pitman, Assistant Superintendent of Student, Family, and Community Services, presented the revised policy 4400 – Administration of Medicine to Students, to include the emergency administration of epinephrine in cases of suspected anaphylaxis. She introduced Dr. Rick Lemke, Principal of the Hospital School, who stated that effective November 2014, G.S.115C-375.2A requires schools to have at least two emergency epinephrine auto-injector



devices to deliver emergency medical aid to any person suffering from an anaphylactic reaction during the school day or at a school-sponsored event on school property; at least two school personnel will receive initial training and annual retraining regarding the storage and emergency use of an epinephrine auto-injector; and auto injectors are intended for use on students not previously diagnosed with severe allergies. Lastly, he shared that the school nurses are responsible for ensuring the epinephrine auto-injectors are properly and securely stored, kept up-to-date, and replaced when necessary as part of the Buildings Action Plan.

Dr. Pitman added that these epinephrine auto-injectors were for non-patient specific emergencies. Attorney Ramee stated that in an emergency situation where a student is in need of an epinephrine auto-injector and the parents didn't provide one, the school should administer one to the student. Dr. Pitman and Dr. Lemke thoroughly answered all questions and concerns.

Natalie Beyer made a motion to approve the revised policy 4400 – Administration of Medicine to Students – Second Reading. Mike Lee seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**III. Administrative Services Committee**  
**a. 2015-2016 Bell Schedule Discussion**

**Recommendation: Action**

**Public Comment:** Two people sign-up to speak.

1. *Ms. Ann Rebeck* – Ms. Rebeck shared that the Durham Council of PTA is committed to work with DPS to keep the later start times issue alive and to make small steps in the right direction. She added that this issue needed to be addressed by the entire community. She gave kudos to Ms. Kendra Montgomery-Glenn who spearheaded the new emergency administration of epinephrine in cases of suspected anaphylaxis law and that she worked on this effort for over three years.
2. *Ms. Elizabeth Benson* - Ms. Benson, a DPS parent, stated that she was in favor of moving bell times for more sleep for students and later times for secondary schools.

Chair Carter shared that the Board has been looking at ways to align the bell schedules with adolescent sleep patterns and explained that it was too late for a major shift for next year. She stated that the Board has been forced to think about more dramatic actions and she presented a resolution for secondary bell times not to start before 8:00 a.m. effective in the 2016-2017 school year. Board Members took turns reading the resolution as follows:

**Resolution on the Goal of the Durham Public Schools Board of Education to Start Middle and High Schools at 8 AM or later and to Direct the Superintendent to Engage School and Community Stakeholders in the Development of Feasible Options for Achieving the Later Start Time Goal**

WHEREAS, the National Institute of Health, the Center for Disease Control, and the American Academy of Pediatrics all conclude that adolescents need on average 9 hours of sleep for optimal physical and mental health, performance, and brain development; and

WHEREAS, most teens experience delayed onset of sleep during puberty, and the hormones that regulate sleep make it difficult for teens to fall asleep before 11 PM and be alert before 8 AM, and

WHEREAS, the 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey of Durham Public Schools High School students found that only 16% of students reported getting 8 hours of sleep on an average school night; and

WHEREAS, there is strong evidence that later high school start times result in adolescent students getting more sleep on school nights; and

WHEREAS, research shows there are many benefits of later high school start times, including improved alertness and academic performance and decreases in adolescent depression, automobile accidents, obesity, behavior problems, discipline referrals, tardiness, and absenteeism; and

WHEREAS, these benefits can help achieve the goals of Graduate Durham and the mission of Durham Public Schools;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Durham Public Schools Board of Education has a goal to start middle and high schools no earlier than 8 AM and is committed to engaging the community in support of this goal; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education directs the Superintendent to engage the community in the development of options to inform Board approval of a plan for achieving the school start time goal for the beginning of the 2016-17 school year.

Adopted on this day the 20<sup>th</sup> of November, 2014.

The Board has requested additional information from the administration to include a plan for the 2016-2017 school year and to include community involvement. Superintendent L'Homme stated that there would be a proposal with options ready to present to the Board at the June Monthly Board Meeting.

Matt Sears moved to adjust all school times by 20 minutes for the next school year. Vice Chair Forte-Brown seconded. Following Board discussion, the motion failed 0 to 7 (all Board Members opposed).

Sendolo Diaminah made a motion to approve the Resolution on the Goal of the Durham Public Schools Board of Education to Start Middle and High Schools at 8 AM or later and to Direct the Superintendent to Engage School and Community Stakeholders in the Development of Feasible Options for Achieving the Later Start Time Goal. Matt Sears seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**b. Budget Resolution (2014-2015)**  
**Recommendation: Action**  
**Public Comment: None**

Mr. Beaulieu, Chief Financial Officer, gave a detailed PowerPoint overview of the Budget Resolution for the 2014- 2015 fiscal year. Mr. Beaulieu shared that the resolution is required by the North Carolina General Statute, Article 31, 115C-425 – “Annual Balance Budget Resolution”. Mr. Beaulieu explained that the resolution requires each local school administrative unit to operate under an annual balanced budget resolution adopted and administered in accordance with this article, and a budget resolution is balanced when the sum of estimated net revenues and appropriated fund balances is equal to appropriations. He stated that the Durham Public Schools’ current budget stands at approximately \$420.4 million which is an increase of approximately \$12.5 million from the original 2014-2015 Budget Proposal. Mr. Beaulieu shared his concerns about the Fund Balance and that this fund could not continue to absorb the budget shortfalls and that DPS and the County are working together to come up with a per-pupil formula for funding that the County can meet. Br. Beaulieu thoroughly answered all Board Members’ questions and concerns.

Natalie Beyer moved for approval of the Durham Public Schools FY 2014-15 Budget Resolution which is required by North Carolina General Statutes Article 31, 115-425 “Annual Budget Resolution”. Each local school administration unit shall operate under an annual budget resolution adopted and administered in accordance with this article. A budget resolution is balanced when the sum of estimated net revenue and appropriated fund balance is equal to appropriations. Mike Lee seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Natalie Beyer moved that the Board approve Local Current Expense Committed Fund Balance in the amount of \$11,469,511 for Teacher and Staff Salaries and \$5,242,952 for One Time Funding as described in the budget resolution. This portion of fund balance can only be used for a specific purpose and must be approved by the Board of Education. Any changes or removal of specific purposes requires majority action by the governing body that approved the original action. Sendolo Diaminah seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Natalie Beyer moved that the Board approve Other Governmental Fund (Child Nutrition) Committed Fund Balance in the amount of \$725,000 for one time equipment upgrades to Child Nutrition equipment across the district. This portion of fund balance can only be used for a specific purpose and must be approved by the Board of Education. Any changes or removal of specific purposes requires majority action by the governing body that approved the original action. Mike Lee seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**Closed Session**

On a motion by Matt Sears, seconded by Sendolo Diaminah, the Board convened in closed session to consider 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 10:05 p.m.

**Open Session – Personnel Recommendations**

The Board reconvened in open session at approximately 10:27 p.m.

**Personnel Approval**

Superintendent L'Homme recommended approval of the November 20, 2014, Personnel Reports. On a motion made by Natalie Beyer to approve the Personnel Reports dated November 20, 2014; seconded by Vice Chair Forte-Brown, the motion passed unanimously.

Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 10:29 p.m.

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Heidi Carter, Chair  
Durham Public Schools Board of Education

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Dr. Bert L'Homme, Superintendent  
Durham Public Schools