

**MINUTES**  
**DURHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**February 26 Rescheduled to March 2**

The Durham Public Schools Board of Education held its regular monthly meeting March 2, 2015, at 4:35p.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; and Aaron Beaulieu, Chief Finance Officer, were present.

**Attorney present:** Eva Dubuisson

**Call to Order**

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

**Be Our Guest**

There was no Be Our Guest.

**Celebrations**

There were no Celebrations this month.

**Superintendent's Updates**

Superintendent L'Homme shared the following updates:

- Dr. L'Homme thanked all of the families served by DPS for their patience during a month of remarkable weather. Our first and most immediate responsibility to our students and their families is safety. Everything follows after that, and we make decisions as quickly as we can once we have enough information to go on. Our buses drive through practically every neighborhood in Durham County, and until transportation crews have treated most residential areas we must be very cautious.
- Our Budget Advisory Committee has been working hard, looking at the challenges we face and suggesting some guiding principles that will help us understand our priorities. We will bring you a budget proposal that reflects both what we want to become as a district and also the realities of what level of funding we might expect. We will have important decisions to make. We expect a \$10 million to \$12 million short fall for next

year after having repeatedly absorbed years of state funding cuts by going to local funding sources. The General Assembly no longer automatically ties the education budget to state enrollment growth, so we can only hope that funding will rise to match the number of students in public schools next year. Last year Mr. Osteen bought you a budget proposal built around three broad principles: impact on students and schools, efficiency, and stewardship. This year, along similar lines, we will bring you a budget proposal that places as its first priority providing funding that directly impacts our students and teachers.

- I attended the Evening of Entertainment at DSA. They put on an extraordinary event with extraordinary talent. I am in awe of the staffs ability to organize 500 students without missing a beat.

### **Agenda Review and Approval**

The agenda was approved as written by common consent.

### **General Public Comment:** Five people signed up to speak.

1. *Ms. Donna Rewalt* –Ms. Rewalt stated that she had children in Lakewood Montessori Middle School and Riverside High School. She stated that her high school student was on Block Schedule and instead of missing 8 days of school he missed 16. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> year in a row that second semester was cut short due to weather. She is asking if the assessments can be halted so that the students receive additional instructional time.
2. *Mr. Alex Herrera* – Mr. Herrera stated that he is a student with Durham Public Schools and wanted to say he was glad that the board members were considering the Resolution Concerning Unaccompanied Migrant Children in Durham, not just brushing it aside. Mr. Herrera stated that he too came from the same place and that even if these children could not stay in the country at least they had the opportunity to feel safe, be looked after and receive an education.
3. *Ms. Helen Charmaine and Mr. Darius Stanton* – Ms. Charmaine and Mr. Stanton stated that they were from Repower Our School. They handed out belated valentines to the Board members and wanted to let them know that on Saturday, March 7, 2015, at the main library from 10:30am to 12:00pm, they are hosting a forum, Re-think, Re-invest and Re-power our schools.
4. *Mr. George Eppsteiner* – Mr. Eppsteiner stated he was an attorney with the Southern Coalition for Social Justice and was in support of the Resolution Concerning Unaccompanied Migrant Children in Durham. He stated that Durham has the third largest population of unaccompanied children in North Carolina. Mr. Eppsteiner stated that he agrees with the statement made by Mr. Herrera and that these children will

receive the Durham Public Schools values and use them even if they could not stay in the country.

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

Presented for approval:

- January 22, 2015 – Regular Monthly Meeting – Open and Closed Minutes
- February 2, 2015 – Special Board Meeting – Open and Closed Minutes
- February 9, 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. Resolution Concerning Unaccompanied Migrant Children in Durham**

WHEREAS, there has been a recent dramatic increase in children and minors traveling to the U.S. without their parents from Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and other parts of Latin America largely as a result of rising rates of poverty and violence in their home countries; and

WHEREAS, more than 300 of these children have settled in Durham according to statistics; and

WHEREAS, gang and drug trafficking violence has driven Honduras' murder rate to the highest in the world and El Salvador's murder rate to the fourth highest; and

WHEREAS, there are tens of thousands of unaccompanied children in the custody of federal government agencies; and

WHEREAS, children are always among the most vulnerable in any emergency; and

WHEREAS, many of the unaccompanied children arriving at the border are suffering from physical illnesses, exhaustion, hunger, dehydration, and emotional trauma, and some have been victimized during their long and difficult journey and are in urgent need of protective adult care, legal services, medical care, supportive supervision, nutritious food and safe housing; and

WHEREAS, many of these children are reuniting with their North Carolina families or other sponsors who can care and provide for them; and

WHEREAS, these families or other sponsors are an important part of the Durham community that should be welcomed and supported; and

WHEREAS, President Obama has called the flood of unaccompanied migrant children seeking refuge from violence and poverty in Central America a "humanitarian crisis;" and

WHEREAS, from October 2013-September 2014, the Office of Refugee Resettlement has reported that 2,064 of these children have been placed in North Carolina alone; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Durham Public Schools Board of Education expresses its commitment to welcome unaccompanied children from Latin America; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Durham Public Schools Board of Education offers special appreciation to Durham Public Schools' staff for educating more than 300 of these children in the current school year without regard to immigration status, an obligation that is required by federal law and is supported by the Durham Public Schools Board of Education; and to non-profits and faith-based organizations which are working diligently to support these children; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Durham Public Schools Board of Education encourages the Department of Homeland Security and other federal agencies to ensure that the minor children seeking safety in the United States and being apprehended by Border Patrol receive due process and legal representation in court hearings; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Durham Public Schools Board of Education will forward this Resolution to all members of Congress that have Durham County within their jurisdiction, and to our State legislative delegation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Durham Public Schools Board of Education encourages staff to work in concert with other agencies as they pursue resources for support of these children; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Durham Public Schools Board of Education urges all Durham residents, businesses and government entities to make unaccompanied children welcome in our community and invites the help of our faith-based organizations, non-profits, businesses and government agencies in this humanitarian work.

Chair Carter asked that the resolution be read aloud by Board members.

Natalie Beyer made a motion to approve the read aloud of the resolution. Matt Sears seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Natalie Beyer made a motion to approve Consent Agenda. Mike Lee seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Reports of the Committees**

- I. **Administrative Services Committee**
  - a. **E-Rate Contracts for 2015-2016**  
**Recommendation: Action**

**Public Comment: None**

Hugh Osteen, Deputy Superintendent of Operational Services, began the presentation and shared that the E-Rate applications have been prepared for qualified expenses for the 2015-16 school year. He said that these efforts are supported through federal (E-Rate) and Durham Public School funds and the maximum district match will be 20% of the E-Rate grant request/award. He stated that the E-Rate applications will provide key services at a great discount and are included in the 2015-16 budget plan.

Mr. Osteen thoroughly answered all questions and concerns. Following a thorough Board discussion and comments, Minnie Forte-Brown made a motion to approve the E-Rate Contracts for 2015-2016. Natalie Beyer seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**b. Hillside High School – Chiller Replacement**

**Recommendation: Action**

**Public Comment: None**

Hugh Osteen, Deputy Superintendent of Operational Services, began the presentation and shared that 2007 Bond funds provide for chiller replacement at Hillside High School. The age and condition of the chiller make replacement necessary. He said that bids were received on February 5, 2015 from five (5) qualified bidders. The lowest, responsive, responsible bidder was Southern Piping Company with a base bid of \$209,000.00.

Mr. Osteen thoroughly answered all questions and concerns. Following a thorough Board discussion and comments, Sendolo Diaminah made a motion to approve the Hillside High School Chiller Replacement. Natalie Beyer seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**c. Playgrounds – Bids for Surface Replacement at Various Sites**

**Recommendation: Action**

**Public Comment: None**

Hugh Osteen, Deputy Superintendent of Operational Services, began the presentation and shared that the 2007 Bond funds provide for replacement of seventeen (17) existing rubber tiled playgrounds, repairs to eleven (11) rubber tiled playgrounds, installation of fifty-two (52) swing mats, and certification of all seventeen (17) full surface replacement playgrounds. He stated that the age and condition of the existing playgrounds cause safety issues making replacement and repairs necessary. He said that informal bids were received on January 20, 2015, and the lowest, responsive, responsible bidder was Reese Construction LLC with a base bid of \$266,208.00.

Mr. Osteen thoroughly answered all questions and concerns. Following a thorough Board discussion and comments, Sendolo Diaminah made a motion to approve the Playgrounds – Bids for Surface Replacement at Various Sites. Natalie Beyer seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**d. Budget Resolution Amendment #1 (2014-2015)**

**Recommendation: Action**

**Public Comment:** None

Aaron Beaulieu, Chief Finance Officer, began the presentation and stated that the Budget Amendment #1 shows adjustments for all account balances through January, 2015. He shared that the budget for Durham Public Schools stands at approximately \$ 427.1 million per Budget Amendment # 1 which is an increase of approximately \$ 6.7 million from the FY 14-15 Budget Resolution. Mr. Beaulieu reviewed the amendment in detail showing current budgets and amended budgets for all areas.

Mr. Beaulieu thoroughly answered all questions and concerns. Following a thorough Board discussion and comments, Mike Lee made a motion to approve the Budget Resolution Amendment #1 (2014-2015). Natalie Beyer seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**II Support Services Committee**

**a. Calendar Modification of Make-Up Days due to Inclement Weather**

**Recommendation: Action**

**Public Comment:** Four people signed up to speak.

**Public Comment:**

1. *Ms. Holly Hardin* – Ms. Hardin stated she was a teacher from Lakewood Montessori Middle School. Ms. Hardin expressed her concern about all the assessments that are required to be completed. She is asking the board to suspend them for the rest of the school year; this will increase the instructional time. Ms. Hardin also asked the board to suspend the assessments for the next school year. She stated that there is a push for more testing on the table for next year. Ms. Hardin stated that the assessments are not helpful; there is too much loss of instructional time.
2. *Ms. Kendra Montgomery-Blinn* – Ms. Montgomery-Blinn stated that she was from the Durham Peoples Alliance Education Team and a parent of students in Durham Public Schools. Ms. Montgomery-Blinn stated that for her first grade child's class she provide a presentation on Kwanza. She stated that she could not do the same for her second grade child's class because they were doing assessments. Ms. Montgomery-Blinn stated that the Board has control over the state mandated assessments. She asked that the Board suspend local assessments after the 2014/2015 school year. She stated to the Board that they are a bold board with a bold administration, please preserve the instructional time.
3. *Ms. Gina Cecchino* – Ms. Cecchino stated she was a parent of children in Durham Public Schools. Ms. Cecchino stated that she would like for the early release days be

changed to full days for make-up time, incorporate Saturdays, extend the day by half an hour one day a week, keep Memorial Day as a school day and forgive some of the days. Ms. Cecchino also asked that Spring Break not be used as make-up days.

4. *Ms. Jennifer Whaley* – Ms. Whaley stated that she was a teacher at Club Boulevard Elementary School. Ms. Whaley also stated that the Board should review the weather policy for teacher and staff. The current policy is unfair and not enforced across the schools. Ms. Whaley asks that the teacher workdays be respected; the work doesn't go away when a workday does. Ms. Whaley asks not to use the workdays at the end of year as make-up days.

Dr. Debbie Pitman, Assistant Superintendent of Student, Family, and Community Services, began the presentation by sharing a chart of proposed make-up days for the (5) school calendars and stated that the administration presents to the Board for consideration a modification to the 2014-2015 Traditional Schools calendar for February 19, February 20, February 24, February 25, February 26 and February 27, 2015 inclement weather make up days. She stated that the Calendar Committee recommended inclement weather make up days to the Board of Education, one of which is Memorial Day, May 25, 2015; however, North Carolina law allows any holiday except Veterans Day to be moved to a different day or used for a workday. Dr. Pitman said the administration recommends the removal of Memorial Day from the list of identified inclement weather days because it is a holiday observed across the state. She said that currently, the last day of school is Tuesday, June 9, 2015, and calendar law dictates that the last day of school for students shall be no later than the Friday closest to June 11. She stated that the administration recommends that the inclement weather date for February 19, 2015, be Wednesday, June 10 in lieu of May 25 (Memorial Day).

Dr. Pitman added that the additional make-up days needed for, February 20, 2015, will be Thursday, June 11, February 25, 2015, use Early Release, March 11 and April 29. February 26 and February 27 will use banked instructional time. February 24, 2015 will not be made up due to the buses were in route. The administration seeks approval of the Traditional Schools calendar make-up days.

Following Board discussion and comments, Mike Lee made a motion to approve the make-up days as presented for the Traditional School calendars. Sendolo Diaminah seconded and the motion passed 6 to 1 (Leigh Bordley).

Dr. Pittman then presented the Year Round calendar make-up days, January 14, 2015, February 17, February 18, February 19, and February 20, 2015 will use the first week of intersession, March 23 thru March 27, 2015. February 24, 2015 will not be made up due to buses in route. February 26 and February 27 will use banked instructional time. The administration seeks approval of the Year Round Schools calendar make-up days.

Following Board discussion and comments, Minnie Forte-Brown made a motion to approve the make-up days as presented for the Year Round calendars. Mike Lee seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Pittman presented the Modified Schools calendars (CMA, Early College, and Middle College) make-up days. CMA make-up days, February 17, 2015 will be made up on April 6, February 18, 19 and 20 will use May 26, 27, and 28 respectively. February 24, will not be made up due to buses in route, February 25 will use April 29 Early Release day and February 26 and 27 will use banked instructional time. Early College make-up days, February 17, 2015 will use April 6, February 18, 19, and 20 will use May 26, 27 and 28 respectively. February 24 will not be made up due to buses in route, February 25 will use April 29 Early Release day and February 26 and 27 will use banked instructional time. Middle College will make up time for January 14, 2015 on April 6, 2015. February 17 and 18 will use March 9 and 10 respectively, February 19 and 20 will use May 26 and 27 respectively. February 24, 2015 will not be made up due to buses in route and February 25, 26 and 27 will use banked instructional time. The administration seeks the approval of the Modified Schools calendar.

Following Board discussion and comments, Matt Sears made a motion to approve the Modified Schools calendar make-up days as presented. Minnie Forte-Brown seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Closed Session**

On a motion by Natalie Beyer, 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 7:30 p.m.

### **Open Session – Personnel Recommendations**

The Board reconvened in open session at approximately 8:00 p.m.

### **Personnel Approval**

Superintendent L'Homme recommended approval of the February 26, 2015, Personnel Reports. On a motion made by Natalie Beyer to approve the Personnel Reports dated February 26, 2015; seconded by Sendolo Diaminah, the motion passed unanimously.

Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:03 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