

**MINUTES
DURHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
AUGUST 28, 2014**

The Durham Public Schools Board of Education held its regular monthly meeting August 28, 2014, at 6:33 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; Sendolo Diaminah; and Leigh Bordley 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; and Tom Crabtree, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources were present.

Attorney present: Ken Soo

Call to Order

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

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.

Mattiyah Jones, The School for Creative Studies – August Student of the Month.

Principal Renee Price introduced Mattiyah Jones who has been named the Duke University Durham Public Schools Student of the Month for August. The School for Creative Studies sophomore holds a 2.67 weighted GPA and is a member of the Choir Club, the Spoken Word Club, the Student Advisory Council, Students Against Violence Everywhere, and Tithe One On - an organization based on showing random acts of kindness. Mattiyah is also involved in the P.R.O.U.D (Personal Responsibility to Overcome with Understanding and Determination) Program of Durham, a program that seeks to offer enrichment activities and life-skills training for at-risk youth. For fun, Mattiyah likes to write songs, write poetry, and paint. Her favorite subject is math and she hopes to someday work with special education students or study neurogenetics at Howard University or UNC-Chapel Hill. Mattiyah says she credits her mom for being an inspiration and always putting her children first no matter what. Mattiyah received a certificate and she was invited to walk the red carpet.

SOAR –

Ms. Jackie Love, the DPS Homeless Liaison, shared comments about the SOAR program. The acronym SOAR means Students are Obtaining Skills, Achieving Academic Success, and Realizing their Potential. SOAR is a 7-week academic and enrichment program for homeless and

at-risk students. SOAR was created to support our homeless students academically during the summer in hopes of decreasing their summer loss. This is the third year that we have operated the SOAR program. This year we enrolled more than 100 students, although the daily enrollment fluctuated. The highlight of the program was the SOAR store. Students received money (SOAR Bucks) as a reward for exhibiting good behaviors. The students shopped weekly with donations from the community. Additionally, the students received tutoring in the morning from certified DPS teachers and participated in a variety of academic and enrichment activities in the afternoon. They received weekend backpacks filled with food from PORCH Durham and Calvary Baptist Church.

Ms. Love said on behalf of the SOAR program and DPS Student Services, she acknowledged the DPS team who helped to make this program a success and the community partners who made generous contributions. They were all invited to walk the red carpet.

Board of Education:

Minnie Forte-Brown, Vice Chair

Durham Public School's Staff:

LaManda Pryor (Principal – W.G. Pearson)
Tammorah Mathis (Dean of Students – W.G. Pearson)
Jackie Battle Love (Homeless Liaison)
Tracey Super-Edwards (Coordinator of Extended Learning)
Teresa Dafford (Elementary Specialist)
Lisa Wilson (Elementary Specialist)
Bridget James (Manager)
Sherina Farmer (Asst. Manager)

Community Partners:

Calvary Baptist Church (GUM Drop Ministry)
PORCH – Durham (Backpack Buddies Program)
Theresa Jones (Donations)
Calleen Herbert (Donations)

Teacher Spotlight -

Ms. Pearson introduced Juliana Mendelsohn, a 5th Grade teacher at Mangum Elementary School. After hearing about the delayed school opening in Ferguson, Missouri, Ms. Mendelsohn became concerned about students who receive free and reduced lunches going without. Instead of sitting on the sidelines watching, she decided to create an online fundraising campaign which has caught national attention. To date she has raised over \$154k for the children of Ferguson. We are truly proud to call her one of our own. Ms. Mendelsohn was presented with a certificate and invited to walk the red carpet.

New Principals and Transfers –

Dr. L’Homme acknowledged all the new Principals. He said that during the summer, nine principals took on new assignments in our schools, either as new principals or veterans moving to a new challenge. All of us in Central Services are committed to supporting them in their new roles, just as they are committed to serving their school communities, supporting their teachers and staff, and encouraging greatness within their students. He welcomed the following new principals:

- Burton Elementary School- Dr. Kimberly Ferrell**
 - Club Boulevard Elementary School- Christian Hairston**
 - Jordan High School- David Malechek**
 - Lowe’s Grove Middle School- Dr.Tekeisha Mitchell**
 - Mangum Elementary School- Karen Kellett**
 - Sandy Ridge Elementary School – Keri Pitchford**
 - Southern School of Energy and Sustainability - Jerome Leathers**
 - Soutwest Elementary School- Nicholas Rotosky**
- Each Principal was congratulated and invited to walk the red carpet.

Community Partners

Carayons2Calculators -

Ms. Pearson introduced the Community Partner, Crayons2Calculators, who aims to serve the educational and creative needs of students in the Durham Public School system by providing free school supplies to classroom teachers. Supplies help teachers be more effective and efficient in their quest to educate the next generation. They operate a free warehouse store in Durham where teachers can "shop" for supplies. Teachers from the highest poverty schools are invited to come into the warehouse once a month to pick out approximately \$50-\$75 worth of supplies as part of our Monthly Shopping Program. Teachers from other schools are invited once per year to a Giveaway Event when they can choose about \$100-\$150 of supplies they need for their classes. The 2013-2014 Fill The Bus supply drive was a record setting year. Ms. Pearson recognized Julie Marshall, Executive Director of Crayons2Caluculators, and thanked her for being an outstanding partner with DPS. Ms. Marshall introduced Joyce McKinney from Rotary, which started the Fill The Bus Campaign. She also thanked DPS staff, Marlon Watson, Delbert Foust, Steve Whitehead, and Tyra Dixon for their hard work to make this happen. Ms. Marshall and Ms. McKinney were invited to walk the red carpet.

Resolution to Honor Ann Little Majestic

Chair Carter shared comments about the late Ann Little Majestic and presented a resolution to honor her and to respect her memory. Board Members took turns reading the resolution as follows:

**DURHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION RESOLUTION
OF RESPECT FOR THE MEMORY OF ANN LITTLE MAJESTIC**

WE, the members of the Durham Public Schools Board of Education, wish to express our deepest respect, gratitude, admiration, and affection for our School Board Attorney, Ann Little Majestic.

WHEREAS, Ann was a powerhouse leader in education law with a brilliant legal mind that brought clarity to the complexities of the field nationwide;

WHEREAS, Ann worked tirelessly for the principles of fairness, justice, and access to excellent educational opportunities for all students;

WHEREAS, Ann was one of the most fierce advocates for public schools, in general and for Durham Public Schools in her own community, sending her children to our schools and constantly believing in their potential;

WHEREAS, Ann consistently provided us with the most solid legal counsel and approached her representation of our district with unmatched and lasting care;

WHEREAS, Ann gave us so much more than professional advice by sharing her personal insights with us about improving Durham Public Schools and helping us work effectively together as a Board and to all be better Board Members;

WHEREAS, Ann brought a majestic presence with her into any room, where we had the privilege to learn and grow in the tall and graceful shadow she cast;

WHEREAS, the loss of Ann has left a hush of sadness in the hearts of her DPS family;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that members of the Durham Public Schools Board of Education commit to honor and remember Ann by relentlessly fighting for the resources, policies, programs, and people we need to ensure superior public schools for all of Durham's children; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Durham Public Schools Board of Education expresses its profound sorrow upon the death of our attorney, counselor, and friend, Ann Little Majestic.

This the 28th day of August, 2014.

Vice Chair Forte-Brown made a motion to accept and approve the resolution to honor the memory of Ann Little Majestic as written. Natalie Beyer seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Superintendent's Updates

Superintendent L'Homme shared the following updates:

- The opening of traditional schools was a success! He thanked the principals and teachers for a job well done!
 - Dr. L'Homme visited the bus lot and six schools; totaling 18 schools since his arrival.
 - Nearly 30,000 students started this week; bringing our total to almost 34,000 students.
 - Almost no teaching vacancies because of the hard work of Human Resource Services along with our principals and staff.
- Last week we presented preliminary test scores to the Board: scores are holding steady.
 - Final, school-by-school results will come out in October.
 - Bright spot: Graduation rate has increased yet again, to 81.3 percent!
 - Proficiency gains in some grades and subjects, but declines in other areas.
 - Looking carefully at the data to reinforce what's working and address what's not.
- Dr. L'Homme thanked our partners and other community agencies for supporting our students over the summer and on the way back to school. Whether supporting summer reading through Book Harvest or providing school supplies through Crayons2Calculators; through fitness activities and camps; at libraries, churches, and Freedom Schools — you make a difference for Durham Public Schools students all year.

Agenda Review and Approval

The agenda was approved by common consent.

General Public Comment:

None

Board of Education Meeting Minutes

Presented for approval:

- August 14, 2014 – Special Called Meeting – Open and Closed Minutes

Vice Chair Forte-Brown made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Mike Lee seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Consent Agenda

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

- a. **2014 – 2015 Signature Learning Resources, Inc. Contract**
- b. **Applications to Lottery Funds for Capital Projects**
- c. **Holton Facility Agreement Amendment #3**

- d. **Head Start Lease at Eastway Elementary School**
- e. **Budget Resolution Amendment #3 (2013 – 2014)**
- f. **Contract for Professional Services between Durham County Department of Social Services and Durham Public Schools Contract**

Natalie Beyer made a motion to approve Consent Agenda. Vice Chair Forte-Brown seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Reports of the Board of Education

a. Federal and State Liaisons for Advocacy Appointments

Chair Carter presented the agenda item and began discussion of appointing the Federal and State Liaisons for Advocacy. She thanked Natalie Beyer for serving in this capacity the past 4 years and for a job well done. She said that Ms. Beyer had agreed to continue in this role. Chair Carter explained that the jobs of the Federal and State Liaisons for Advocacy were to advocate at the Federal and State levels, to develop a Legislative Agenda, and to vote as a delegate at the North Carolina School Boards Association Annual Conference. Sendolo Diaminah expressed his interest in joining together for this effort. Chair Carter stated that Natalie Beyer and Matt Sears would share the role as Federal and State Liaisons for Advocacy and Sendolo Diaminah would be a contributing partner.

Reports of the Committees

I. Instructional Services Committee

a. Graduate Durham

Recommendation: Information

Public Comment: None

Committee Chair, Minnie Forte-Brown introduced Dr. Stacey Wilson-Norman, Deputy Superintendent of Academics, who began the presentation. Dr. Wilson-Norman shared an overview of Graduate Durham, the work plan for the Academic Services division. The key strategies of this initiative are to keep students on track and to ensure that all students are college, career, and life-ready. She shared the four focus areas:

- Focus Area I: Curriculum, Leadership, Assessment, Support, and Sustainability (C.L.A.S.S.)
- Focus Area II: Prevention, Intervention, and Engagement
- Focus Area III: Talent Development
- Focus Area IV: Design for Accelerated Progress

Dr. Wilson-Norman stated the job of the administration and staff of DPS is to provide the necessary tools to Graduate Durham. She said that there would be clear communication to the public on what was being worked on from choosing the right professional development to communicating high expectations for quality teachers. All departments, principals, teachers, and parents will partner together for all students and will Graduate Durham!

Board Members thanked Dr. Wilson-Norman for her brilliant leadership and to staff who stepped up when they could have stepped back while waiting for a new Superintendent. Dr. Wilson-Norman stated that Graduate Durham was the result of great team effort!

II. Administrative Services Committee

a. Teach for America (TFA) Contract

Recommendation: Action

Public Comment: 11 people signed up to speak.

1. *Robyn Fehrman* – Ms. Fehrman is a proud DPS parent and the Executive Director of Teach For America (TFA). She stated that TFA had partnered with DPS for over a decade recruiting and retaining great teachers. She urged the Board to approve the TFA contract.
2. *Andrew Kakis* – Mr. Kakis is a long time Durham resident and a former teacher and DPS employee. He said that he worked with the district and school leaders in the high need schools of East Durham and stressed the need for good quality teachers. He asked the Board to approve the TFA contract.
3. *Aliyah Abdul-Rahman* – Ms. Abdul-Rahman stated that she was speaking on behalf of her colleagues at TFA and urged the Board to approve the contract. She said she was a long time resident living in East Durham for 10 years and that education was the most important tool in transforming a community. She said that TFA had a positive impact on educating students and they were constantly looking for ways to bring in the best teachers.
4. *Jackie Novotny* – Ms. Novotny is a teacher at Hillside High School. She said that without her mentor, she would have never stayed at Hillside. She stressed the importance of good mentors for beginning teachers and urged the Board not to renew the TFA contracts but to use the \$30,000 to support mentors.
5. *Bryan Proffitt* – Mr. Proffitt is a teacher of eleven years and is in his eighth year at Hillside High School. He stated that the General Assembly doesn't support veteran teachers and they were no friend to public education. He asked the Board to use resources to keep good teachers in our buildings instead of renewing the TFA contract.
6. *Carmelo Montalvo* – Ms. Montalvo is a teacher at Southern School of Energy and Sustainability, and a graduate of NCCU. She said that she was a TFA teacher and that removing TFA teachers would not be a step forward. She said that she was a second year core member and urged the Board to approve the TFA contract.
7. *Jeff Howell* – Mr. Howell is a second year TFA core member at Southern School of Energy and Sustainability. He said that TFA rallies together to get these teachers to go above and beyond to connect with students in need. He asked the Board to consider approving the TFA contract.
8. *Dov Rosenberg* – Mr. Rosenberg is a teacher and represents the People's Alliance Education Team in support of veteran teachers. He stated that after a minimum bump in salaries after years of no raises, he recommended using resources to support a teaching training model and to investigate such a program as Teaching Fellows. He asked the Board and the administration to support our beginning teachers and find the funds for veteran teachers to mentor the younger teachers. He said that mentoring is critical and he urged the Board to make the right decision for Durham.

9. *Andrea Underwood* – Ms. Underwood, the President of Durham Association of Educators, asked the Board not to renew the TFA contract. She said that this was not personal but it was political. She stated that funding could support our veteran teachers to mentor new teachers. She asked the Board to value longevity and experience in the classroom. Ms. Underwood stated that selecting quality educators is the most important task of school leadership. She urged the Board to make the right decision and to support the 1:118 ratio of mentors.
10. *Ann Rebeck* – Ms. Rebeck encouraged the Board not to renew the TFA contract. She stated that a long standing model of TFA was to become a teacher with only six weeks of training without student teaching. She said that ending the contract would be a small gesture but hoped that current TFA teachers were retained. She urged the Board to enhance avenues to find quality teachers and to use funds for mentoring new teachers.
11. *Meredith Flowe* – Ms. Flowe stated that she joined the core as one of six first year teachers and only two remained, and they were both TFA teachers. She said that this was personal because we all care about kids and want the best education for them. She urged the Board to approve the TFA contract.

Committee Chair, Natalie Beyer, gave thanks and appreciation to all speakers for their love of students. Chair Carter asked for a review of the key elements of the contract.

Tom Crabtree, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, stated that we currently had seven 2nd year and five 1st year TFA teachers. He said this is a 3 year contract starting with the 2014-2015 school year and ending with the 2016-2017 school year. Durham Public Schools would pay Teach for America the cost of \$3000.00 per year, per teacher hired, and the contract calls for up to ten core members for 2 years. He added that hiring another cohort next year would actually total four years. Ms. Beyer asked Mr. Crabtree to explain what the Board would be paying for. Mr. Crabtree stated that DPS would be paying for training, recruiting, and that professional development was on-going with TFA.

Vice Chair Forte-Brown, a teacher of 42 years, expressed her support of the TFA contract and the need for great teachers who expect great things like that of TFA teachers. Sendolo Diaminah stated that this decision was political and a part of dismantling public education. He questioned what was happening with public education and that the role of TFA was undermining teachers as a profession. Leigh Bordley conveyed her appreciation to the efforts of creating Durham's TFA; however, she said that funds should be spent to support the Graduate Durham initiative rather than the renewal of the TFA contract. Matt Sears was thankful that this contract had engaged conversation around the need for a nationally recognized mentoring program and he felt that Graduate Durham was a step in the right direction. He suggested not to approve the contract as written but to support the five teachers that were affected by the current contract. Mike Lee expressed concern of the low percentage of TFA teachers that remained past two years and the short amount of training that TFA teachers received. He said that he would like to see educators complete all necessary coursework prior to becoming a teacher. In addition, he understood that TFA was working hard at retaining teachers; however, he stated that little had changed since out of the 200 TFA teachers hired, only 25 were still teaching. Natalie Beyer stated that TFA had talented and dedicated individuals; however, she shared concerns that the program only provided

five to six weeks of training to teach and how this was a slap in the face to career teachers. She agreed to support the current TFA teachers but was not in favor of moving forward with TFA. Ms. Beyer stated that she was in favor of investing in our own people.

Attorney Ken Soo stated that DPS had an obligation to TFA's 2013-2014 core members. He stated that whether or not the Board approved moving forward with a new TFA contract, the Board still needed to decide what to do for the teachers already placed for the next two years. In addition, he said that TFA teachers that started this year are like a first year teacher and their contracts did not have to be renewed just because they were affiliated with TFA.

Superintendent L'Homme conveyed that changing anything for this school year would be very disruptive and harmful to pull teachers from classrooms. Chair Carter stated that the Board needed to honor commitments to teachers right now. She shared that the Board of Education wants the very best teachers in our classrooms and the need for systemic improvements to develop a pipeline of career talent. Vice Chair Forte-Brown expressed concerns that long-term substitutes would be placed in hard to staff schools without TFA and when the hiring pool is low. She said that there was a need to recruit better candidates for teaching positions. She added that every teacher should be committed to every child, every day, and if they weren't doing that, then it didn't matter if they had become a veteran in the classroom. Chair Carter stated that the teacher turnover rate is high and has been high, and was a direct reflection of the General Assembly diverting funds from public education. She shared the need to devote resources to develop a pipeline for the teaching profession.

Following thorough Board discussion regarding whether or not to renew the TFA contract and how to support the commitment to the current core members, Chair Carter asked for a motion. Matt Sears moved to direct the administration to honor our obligations with TFA and pay the administration fee for the 5 core members at \$3000 per member for a 2 year period, but not to engage in further contracts at this time. Natalie Beyer seconded and the motion passed 6 to 1 (Vice Chair Forte-Brown opposed).

Superintendent L'Homme shared that for the past six weeks, the administration had been planning to re-establish a mentoring program for new and struggling principals and teachers. He stated that he would be bringing a plan to the next committee meeting and that staff development funds would be used and there would be no additional cost to Durham Public Schools.

b. Annual Security Contracts
Recommendation: Action
Public Comment: None

Committee Chair Natalie Beyer recognized Scott Denton, Assistant Superintendent of Auxiliary Services, who began the presentation. He shared the following annual contracts for review and approval.

- Durham County Sherriff's Office (DCSO) School Resource Officers (SRO)
- Durham County Sherriff's Office (DCSO) Security Liaison
- North Carolina Detective Agency (NCDA) Burglar Alarm Response

Mr. Denton stated that there were no material changes in the contract partners or the partnership agreements from last year.

Sendolo Diaminah stated that he requested a meeting and met with Tina Ingram, Director of Security, and Captain Raheem Aleem, who is in charge of the SRO Program and has been with the program for 15 years. He shared his concern regarding the increase of police violence and the safety of students in schools. He questioned whether or not the SRO's needed to carry firearms and said that we are not going to arrest our way out of the problems in our community. He stated that if he didn't support these contracts, it didn't mean that he didn't support the people that dedicated their lives in law enforcement. He requested the need for future community conversations.

Chair Carter stated that it was good to hear more about SRO training and how their work is based on relationships with students. She stated the need for effective crime prevention and keeping our schools safe. She said that she looked forward to a future date for further conversation. Matt Sears thanked Mr. Diaminah for his research around the security contracts and meeting with Captain Aleem.

Captain Aleem shared comments and stated that SRO's try desperately to build bridges not walls. He said that they are a primary resource for teachers and students and many times the first person a student might see when arriving at school. He stated that there are many students that come to school as it is better than the reality at home.

Mike Lee made a motion to approve the three Annual Security Contracts as written. Vice Chair Forte-Brown seconded and the motion passed 6 to 1; (Sendolo Diaminah opposed).

Closed Session

On a motion by Sendolo Diaminah, 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 9:04 p.m.

Open Session – Personnel Recommendations

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

Personnel Approval

Superintendent L'Homme recommended approval of the August 28, 2014, Personnel Reports. On a motion made by Natalie Beyer to approve the Personnel Reports dated August 28, 2014; seconded by Vice Chair Forte-Brown, the motion passed unanimously.

Attorney Soo expressed his sincere appreciation for the resolution in honor of Ann Little Majestic. He stated she had worked with this Board for 20 years, and that she loved this school system. He thanked the present Board and previous Boards, and said that this resolution will mean so much to the family of Ann Majestic.

Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 10:13 p.m.

Heidi Carter, Chair
Durham Public Schools Board of Education

Dr. Bert L'Homme, Superintendent
Durham Public Schools