

**MINUTES  
DURHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SEPTEMBER 25, 2014**

The Durham Public Schools Board of Education held its regular monthly meeting September 25, 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; and Leigh Bordley were present. Sendolo Diaminah was not in attendance due to a prior commitment.

**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 Chrissy Pearson, Chief Communications Officer, were present.

**Attorney present:** Deborah Stagner

**Call to Order**

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

**Be Our Guest**

Leigh Bordley shared comments and invited the Board Members and Superintendent L’Homme to join her on the red carpet to pay tribute to the parents/guardians of students at Creekside Elementary, Lakewood Elementary, Carrington Middle, and City of Medicine Academy.

**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.

**Dariana Vargas – September Student of the Month.**

Principal Nolan introduced Dariana Vargas who has been named the Duke University Durham Public Schools Student of the Month for September. Dr. Nolan shared that Dariana is a senior that holds a 3.95 GPA and is President of the Latino Ambassadors, a civic organization that she and best friend, Michelle Gonzalez, co-founded three years ago on the campus of Southern High School; a member of the National Honor Society; a volunteer coordinator and math tutor at R.N. Harris Elementary, and a member of the Emily K Center. In her spare time, Dariana can be found volunteering at Qué Pasa; Durham’s yearly Latino Festival; Fayed Law Firm; and at the Ronald McDonald House. Dariana says she enjoys devoting her time to volunteering because it’s “encouraging and inspiring to learn about people and it’s rewarding”. After graduation, Dariana hopes to attend Wake Forest University or Agnes Scott College in Georgia and major in business

management with a focus on international business. Dariana was congratulated and invited to walk the red carpet.

### ***Community Partners***

#### **Durham Civitan Club**

Chief Communications Officer, Chrissy Pearson, introduced Lori Lumpkin, Board Member for the Durham Civitan Club. The Durham Civitan Club is a volunteer service club that is dedicated to helping people in their communities. The organization aims "to build good citizenship by providing a volunteer organization of clubs dedicated to serving individual and community needs with an emphasis on helping people with developmental disabilities." The organization includes 40,000 members in almost 1,000 clubs around the world. On a local level, individual Civitan clubs undertake various service projects which benefit their local communities. The Durham Club is integrally involved in a number of projects that benefit our local community such as working concessions stands at Duke football and basketball games, making sandwiches for the Special Olympics, providing basic necessities to the women and children at the Rescue Mission Shelter, hosting a golf tournament each year and providing a picnic complete with entertainment for the individuals served at the Murdoch Developmental Center. The money that is raised by the club goes directly toward research on developmental disabilities. This year the Durham club saw a need to sponsor Exceptional Children in Durham Public Schools and assembled about sixty backpacks complete with school supplies for students at Holt Elementary and The School for Creative Studies. They are already planning for next year's assembly line. Superintendent L'Homme presented Ms. Lumpkin with a certificate and she was invited her to walk the red carpet.

#### **Eastway Elementary School's Y.E.S. Club**

Ms. Pearson introduced Marcelle Thomas, the DPS School Improvement Specialist. Ms. Thomas shared comments and stated that Y.E.S. is a program of student advocacy, which rewards fifth grade students at Eastway Elementary School who have demonstrated good behavior, academic excellence, and leadership skills. As a culminating activity, the Y.E.S. Club spent four days learning and sightseeing in Washington, DC. She invited the following businesses to join her:

- Beth Lucas, Doubletree by Hilton Hotel, donated \$500 and 4 rooms for 3 nights.
- Luke Czubay, Mark Jacobson Toyota, donated \$1000.
- Nancy Hester, CASE Assessments, donated \$500.
- Rishado Robinson, Glenn School Road Walmart, donated \$500.
- Dave Gephart, Gephart Marketing, donated backpacks and water bottles for every student.

Ms. Thomas stated that it was through the generous support and donations of these businesses that enabled these students to experience this wonderful educational trip. Each representative received a certificate and a special gift from Eastway Elementary School and was invited to walk the red carpet.

Chair Carter recognized the 2013-14 Teacher of the Year, Ms. Allison Edwards and thanked her for attending the meeting.

### **Superintendent's Updates**

Superintendent L'Homme shared the following updates:

- This is the end of the first quarter for Year Round Schools and Traditional School students were receiving their progress reports this week.
- October is National Principals Month
  - Please remember to thank our principals for being the indispensable leaders of our school communities.
- Congratulations to twelve of our schools that won National Healthy School Awards from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation. We made up almost half of all of the winners across North Carolina.
  - Silver Awards
    - ✓ Brogden Middle
    - ✓ Sandy Ridge Elementary
  - Bronze Awards
    - ✓ Durham School of the Arts
    - ✓ Easley Elementary
    - ✓ Forest View Elementary
    - ✓ Glenn Elementary
    - ✓ Hillside New Tech High
    - ✓ Lakeview School
    - ✓ Oak Grove Elementary
    - ✓ Parkwood Elementary
    - ✓ Spring Valley Elementary
    - ✓ The School for Creative Studies
- Congratulations to Jim Keaten and School Nutrition Services for winning a \$50,000 grant from United Way of the Greater Triangle to further support our Universal Free Breakfast program.
  - Five schools with limited equipment will be able to offer breakfast in the classroom, second-chance breakfasts, grab-and-go meals and food kiosks.
  - This continues our expansion of this important program from a 22-school pilot last year to a full-school rollout this year.
  - Mr. Keaten participated in a competitive, entrepreneurial pitch session with Triangle CEOs and community leaders. Out of 40 applicants to four finalists; we won!
- Thanks to National Pawn's, Bob Moulton, for donating more than 100 instruments and \$2,000 for instrument repair to our Arts Education Program at Neal Middle School earlier this week.

- This is the fourth consecutive year he has done this for DPS and is a DPS graduate of Neal!
- Congratulations to Wendell Tabb, who will be honored next month by the NCCU Department of Theatre and Dance with its Distinguished Alumnus Award.
- This week an E-Newsletter, This is DPS, was sent out to promote our public schools. To get on the e-mail list, go to the website, [www.dpsnc.net](http://www.dpsnc.net) and click on link to be added.
- Last night, the Superintendent's Art Reception was held and students received certificates for contributing art for the rooms, offices and hallways of the Fuller Building. Special thanks to all the students who contributed their works of art. All artwork will be returned to the students at the end of the year. Another reception is scheduled for the Staff Development Center for the students who contributed artwork at that location.

Superintendent L'Homme made the following statement:

*I want to take some time as we start our meeting to talk about the allegations that we've seen in the media of an assault allegedly involving students at W.G. Pearson Elementary. There is so much more to this story than has been publicly reported—but we cannot say more. When we are dealing with such alleged situations involving any student--but especially young children--there is so much that we simply cannot talk about because we can't violate student privacy laws or compromise a police investigation. What I can tell you is that the principal acted immediately upon learning of the allegations to begin an internal investigation and determine whether there was an active threat to the students at W.G. Pearson, and it was her determination that there was not. It's our understanding that law enforcement was immediately notified of the allegations. Counseling support has been offered to the child making the allegations. The safety of every child in Durham Public Schools is our highest concern and we are actively cooperating with the Durham Police Department.*

Chair Carter thanked Dr. L'Homme for his comments and stated the Board appreciates the way the district is handling this situation with great care.

### **Agenda Review and Approval**

Natalie Beyer made a motion to add and take action on the Raleigh Dingman Award. Chair Carter added this item as the new #11. Vice Chair Forte-Brown seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

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

1. *Ms. Victoria Peterson* – Ms. Peterson, a Political Activist, asked Board Members to support the Superintendent with a solid educational program in the county jail for those DPS students who are incarcerated while they are attending school. She stated that currently the only DPS students in jail receiving an education are those with an IEP. She made a request for the Board to support a program that educates all DPS students in jail.

2. *Ms. Gwen Gilbert Yueh* – Ms. Yueh, a long-time parent of DPS students, shared her concerns regarding the implementation of the Common Core Math Standards. She stated that smart students are restricted with the new standards, there needed to be more parental input on their children’s education, and that there was no direct instruction in the textbooks for Common Core One, Two, or Three.
3. *Ms. Andrea Underwood* – Ms. Underwood, President of Durham’s Association of Educators (DEA), shared comments regarding a partnership with the PTA Organization, the NAACP, and You Can Vote, to promote voter registration by October 10. She said that on September 27, at Hillside High School, there would be a “community canvas day” to cover traditionally under represented neighborhoods to encourage the community members to register to vote by the deadline of October 10. For more information, contact Ms. Underwood or Jason Ortiz. She thanked the host schools: Southwest Elementary, Bethesda Elementary, Merrick-Moore Elementary, C.C. Spaulding Elementary, and Parkwood Elementary. She thanked the Board for their presence at the Town Hall Meeting at Hillside High School this week and gave a special thanks to Monica Watson at Bethesda and Gerald Snipes at Pearson town for all their hard work and support.

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

Presented for approval:

- August 28, 2014 – Board Retreat and New Member Orientation Minutes
- August 28, 2014 – Regular Monthly Meeting – Open and Closed Minutes
- September 15, 2014 – First Quarterly Joint BOE/BOCC Meeting Minutes

Leigh Bordley 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. **Calendar Approval – Traditional Schools 2015-2016**
- b. **Calendar Approval – Year Round Schools 2015-2016**
- c. **Blackboard Connect Contract**

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

### **Reports of the Committees**

- I. **Instructional Services Committee**
  - a. **Mentoring and Coaching Programs**  
**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 a summary of the Beginning Teacher Mentoring Induction Program. She shared the desired outcomes to include increasing the number of teacher mentors from 6 to 26, to reduce the teacher mentor ratio from 1:103 to 1:26, and to reduce the teacher turnover rate. Dr. Wilson-Norman stated that this program was a collaborative effort between Academic Services, Human Resources, Professional Development, and Finance.

She shared the program overview as follows:

- A three-year program;
- Assign a trained mentor to beginning teachers;
- Train and retain highly effective teachers;
- Provide extra and targeted support to increase teacher effectiveness and retention; and
- Ensure teachers understand and are fully prepared to positively impact teaching and learning and increase student achievement.

Dr. Wilson-Norman shared the key players and their commitment to this program: the district, the teacher mentor, and the teacher mentee. She said the current six full-time release mentors and 20 retired teachers would serve as teacher mentors, and she shared the criteria required to become a teacher mentor. She shared that the Beginning Teacher Mentor Induction Program would cost the district \$430,000 for 2014-15. She shared the timeline and said the program should be up and running by October 15, 2014. She shared the evaluation process from the beginning to ensure funding needs permanently. Board discussion ensued and Dr. Wilson-Norman answered all questions and concerns.

Next, Dr. Wilson-Norman shared a summary of the Principal Coaching Program. She shared the desired outcomes to include reducing the principal turnover rate, to train and retain effective school leaders, and to provide extra support to increase principal effectiveness.

She shared an overview of the program as follows:

- A two-year program;
- Serve school leaders who are new to the principalship, new to DPS, or need additional support to ensure success in the principalship;
- Train and retain effective school leaders; and
- Provide extra support to increase principal effectiveness.

Dr. Wilson-Norman shared the key players and their commitment to this program: the district, the Principal Coach, and the Principal Coachee. She said that retired Principals and District Leaders would serve as Principal Coaches, and she shared the criteria required to become a Principal Coach. She shared that the Principal Coaching Program would cost, for up to 10 Coaches, \$236,000 for 2014-15 and Title II funds would be utilized to support the program. She shared the evaluation process to ensure future funding. Board discussion ensued and Dr. Wilson-Norman answered all questions and concerns.

**The Raleigh Dingman Award**

Natalie Beyer requested Board action to nominate Board Chair, Heidi Carter, for The Raleigh Dingman Award. This award is the highest honor bestowed on a North Carolina School Board Member each year and is named in honor of Raleigh Dingman, NCSBA's first full-time Executive Secretary. Since 2003, recipients of this honor have served as an ex-officio member of the NC State Board of Education and the NCSBA Board of Directors. Ms. Beyer made a motion to nominate Heidi Carter for the Raleigh Dingman Award. Vice Chair Forte-Brown seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Chair Carter thanked her Board colleagues for nominating her and said that if she wins the award, she looked forward to attending the State Board of Education Meetings.

**Closed Session**

On a motion by Natalie Beyer, seconded by Matt Sears, 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 7:26 p.m.

**Open Session – Personnel Recommendations**

The Board reconvened in open session at approximately 8:18 p.m.

**Personnel Approval**

Superintendent L'Homme recommended approval of the September 25, 2014, Personnel Reports. On a motion made by Natalie Beyer to approve the Personnel Reports dated September 25, 2014; seconded by Vice Chair Forte-Brown, the motion passed unanimously.

Chair Carter stated that Sendolo Diaminah was not in attendance due to out-of-town business. Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:20 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