

## **PA PAC Questionnaire for Durham Board of Education - 2022**

Please return the completed form along with your resume or biographical statement describing education, work history, community service, and prior political experience, as well as a high-resolution headshot of yourself as soon as possible, but by Sat Mar 19 at 5pm, at the latest.

Please e-mail your responses to PAC Coordinators at [papacboard@googlegroups.com](mailto:papacboard@googlegroups.com) by Saturday, March 19 at 5pm.

Please note that following the Saturday, March 19 at 5pm deadline, the People's Alliance PAC may publish your responses to this questionnaire and your resume.

When answering this questionnaire, please repeat the questions in your response document with each question numbered and organized as it appears here. Type your responses in **italics**, **bold**, or a different font to distinguish your responses from the questions. Do not use colors or shading. Please try to confine your responses to no more than 300 words unless another word limit is indicated. Do not feel obliged to exhaust the limit for each question.

If you use words or ideas from another person, please attribute your source.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire and your willingness to serve the people of Durham.

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1. What are the three most important issues facing Durham Public Schools? What are your top priorities in addressing these issues?

- Increased parent/caretaker participation and collaboration. DPS should establish ways to improve the culture in our middle and high schools that invite higher rates of parent involvement and collaboration as they matriculate to graduation. We need to create an experience that helps to foster and develop the independence and executive functioning of our students as they mature while simultaneously keeping parents and community involved, welcomed and encouraged to show up and partner in the educating and nurturing of students academically, social-emotionally and in all extracurricular programing.
- Responding to the Social and Emotional needs of students and staff Post- Covid. DPS must ensure that teachers and staff are equipped to assess the social and emotional needs of students in a trauma informed way and respond using evidenced based strategies. COVID has impacted students throughout the district in critical ways. I believe more needs to be done so teachers can pivot into and apply new strategies to address the students that are in their classrooms today post COVID by recognizing signs of depression, anxiety, and/or trauma. I know that SEL training has been deployed to staff since COVID first emerged. My concern is that training alone is not sufficient. There need to be intentional effort made to ensure that after the training there is evidence that "Transfer of Learning" is happening and demonstrated application in the classroom of NEW SEL strategies and techniques across the district.

- **Activating the potential in every child with a rigorous and responsive curriculum.** DPS has adopted curriculum as an effort to ensure a standard level of instructional quality. I worry that much like my concerns about SEL professional development – more needs to be done to “drill down” and assess which teacher are applying the standardized curriculum with fidelity

2. Durham Public Schools has a commitment to and focus on equity. Name one systemic racial equity issue that impacts students of color in Durham Public Schools. How will you use your seat on the board to rectify this issue?

- **The disparities by race in academic achievement.** DPS has not been able to successfully address this reality, even though they have been working hard and transparent about the data. The challenges I highlighted above have cause additional needs for academic tutoring and remediation efforts to get children performing on grade level. I don't believe those efforts will be effective unless the social and emotional needs of the students are addressed in a more adequate way. They are not going to be able to learn until a “safe normalcy” is established, and they are able to trust that it will not change in an instant. Our educators, administrators and staff must understand and embrace as a fact that this entire student population has been traumatized (all be it at differing levels).
- **I will provide a much needed clinical and trauma lens on topics before the board.** This Mental Health crisis resulting from COVID calls for leadership with real-world experience in implementing change, demonstrated expertise in trauma, mental health and working with children and families. I am ready to lead and navigate how those issues intersect with educating our students and in supporting our staff to develop policies and procedures to assist in closing the achievement gap.

3. The North Carolina Standard Course of Study in Social Studies requires teachers to facilitate conversations about race and racism in the United States. How would you respond to parents and other community members who want to see this history removed from what is taught in the classroom?

- **I would ask probing questions to understand the reason for parents suggesting to have history removed from lessons in the classroom.** Then I would be curious to their motivation and their worries that may be motivating that request. I would then explain the value to all children that teaching history in a holistic provides.

4. What is your take on how restorative justice programs (as an alternative to punitive disciplinary measures) are being implemented in DPS? What successes and challenges have you seen so far?

- **I believe more work is needed to reduce the disparities in discipline in our schools.** DPS has started to address equity around discipline so that more restorative justice practices and balanced discipline applied district wide. so all students are experiencing consequences and accountability in the same way for the same rule violation across the district.

4. What is the role of the BOE? What kind of leadership style do you prefer for the board?

- **The role of the school board is to govern. Members create and oversee policy development to support the district strategic plan and give direction and supervision to**

**the Superintendent. While also facilitating disciplinary practices and grievances from students, parents, and personnel.**

5. What is your view of how DPS Central Office should work with school administrators and staff? How will you encourage the superintendent to train and support building leaders to be responsive to students, parents, and staff?

- **Central office personnel are the foundation of the work being executed at the school level. For that reason, Central office should be provide support, resources, and professional development specific to the school and department as assigned..**

6. Charter schools are controversial. What role do you think they should play in our community?

- **The increase in the number of Charter schools in Durham has occurred because people have felt their children or children they know have been abandoned or failed by DPS in the past. Choice has allowed families to “choose” Charter - instead of staying in the public school system as a part of the solution.**
- **I think it would be a great idea to do a “Stigma Change” Multi-Media campaign - to highlight publicly all the GREAT changes and opportunities available in our Public Schools... I’ve seen some postings on the DPS website...but.. A full out paid for marketing campaign...As new people are moving into our county every day...we have an opportunity to change the “messaging” realtor share at open house.**

8. What is your goal and plan for sustaining and increasing the level of support staff (nurses, counselors, psychologists, social workers) in our schools? **I believe the board has already demonstrated commitment to this task and recognizes the importance of having qualified, committed support staff as mentioned in the question. I believe that this is the appropriate stance given the mental health crisis that our community is currently experiencing.**

9. Choose one of the following topics and address it through an equity lens: **Community Engagement DPS needs to establish ways to improve the culture in our middle and high schools that invite higher rates of parent involvement and collaboration as they matriculate to graduation. (Community School Model)** We need to create an experience that helps to foster and develop the independence and executive functioning of our students as they mature while simultaneously keeping parents and community involved, welcomed, and encouraged to show up and partner in the educating and nurturing of students academically, social-emotionally and in all extracurricular programing. This would require higher levels of communication with parents from school administrators and staff. It would also require the district to do more to ensure that all interpretation and translation services across the district are standardized and best practices (simultaneous interpretation) used to achieve quality engagement and collaboration with all English as Second Language families. I would ensure that appropriate resources are allocated so that enough skilled and professional translators could be hired, trained and then deployed across the district to ensure that any non-English speaking family has quality interpretation services every time they need it. Whether it be a school assembly, community event, a parent teacher conference or an IEP/ESL planning meeting.

10. List two skills and one life experience that you feel you bring to the board.

1. **Clinical skills and expertise in EBP model implementation and fidelity monitoring**
2. **Change Management skills and Quality Improvement facilitation**

- **Experience: Parenting a teen during the COVID pandemic while living in Durham NC**

11. If you have children, where did they attend K-12 school? **Neal Middle School 7<sup>th</sup> Grade**

12. How should we leverage public resources to promote carbon neutrality? For example, what can practically be done with aging bus fleets, school buildings, and so on to move toward this goal? How do we turn our schools green? **I believe that we can continue to pilot innovative strategies to make our districts functioning “greener”. I believe installing solar panels where appropriate would be a good start. When I was on the board of adjustments, I attended a presentation about the new high school being built on Roxboro road and was very pleased to see the many green strategies were already slated to be a part of the site development.**

13. Would you support a renewable energy bond that trained and hired Durham residents to develop infrastructure for renewable energy on all DPS properties? **YES**

14. What is your stance on the minimum wage, including what you consider to be a livable wage? What will you do to make this a reality for all DPS employees? After recent progress on increased wages for DPS employees, including janitors, bus drivers, and cafeteria workers, what more do you think should be done? **I believe we should do as much as we can to get all staff to a living wage of \$20 an hour. I recognize that this cannot be done overnight but I applaud the efforts of the board to ensure that Durham Public Schools remains competitive in the current labor market and is able to offer competitive salaries to attract qualified staff and maintain ones we already have.**

15. What will you do to support more technical and career development? **I will advocate those additional resources be allocated to technical and career development strategies and or programming so that students have a variety of tracks that they can pursue to explore and develop skills in technical fields of interest.**

17. Please list what you feel are your relevant prior employment and/or volunteer experiences.

**See Resume Attached**

18. Does your campaign have specific policies regarding from whom it accepts donations? Please specifically detail any contributions from corporations to your current and prior campaigns. How do you see the influence of donors on policy, both for yourself and for others? **There is not a current policy. This is my 1<sup>st</sup> campaign. It is grassroots and being funded by individual donations.**