

YOUTH CANDIDATE GUIDE

Prepared by Students for Students

DURHAM SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS AND COUNTY COMMISSIONER

PRIMARY

May 8, 2012



TABLE OF CONTENTS

A MESSAGE TO DURHAM

SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES

LEIGH BORDLEY

HEIDI CARTER

MINNIE FORTE-BROWN

COUNTY COMMISSIONER CANDIDATES

YOUTH AND ADULT VOTING INFORMATION

USEFUL RESOURCES

Students -

***Don't forget to vote on May 8, 2012 for Mayor and City Council at a
Kids Voting booth at a precinct near you
or early vote at the Main, North, and South libraries
April 21, April 28 or May 5 from 10 am - 1 pm
- and remind the adults in your life to vote as well!***

Your vote is your voice.

***Kids Voting Durham
721 Foster St.
Durham, NC 27701
919/560-7321
info@kidsvotingdurham.org
www.kidsvotingdurham.org***

A LETTER TO DURHAM'S YOUTH

Hello Durham!

We are kids just like you from Durham School of the Arts, and we would like you to know about the importance of the upcoming elections. You may not think that elections really concern you, but you have a bigger voice than you think. Young people make up a large part of the Durham community, and together we can make a really big difference.

How concerned are you about how the local government affects your life as a citizen of Durham? Think about this: local government – including our School Board and County Commissioners – shapes how the Durham works for you and develops around you. School Board members help make critical decisions about the direction of our schools, and County Commissioners decide about things like social services, some school funding, and libraries – things that impact our every day lives.

Since we – students – are the future and the present of Durham, we need to get more involved. Despite what some adults say, we do have an influence in what happens, and we can make a difference. Even though you cannot legally vote until the age of 18, your opinion still matters. Now you just have to make it heard!

We are Durham, its future and its present, and what the government decides now will impact us for the rest of our lives, so let's make our voices heard.

*Octagon Club
Durham School of the Arts
April 2012*

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL BOARD DO?

Durham's Board of Education plays the key role in setting policies for our schools.

The Board of Education:

- sets the overall vision for the school system
- adopts certain curriculum and education programs for schools
- sets the school calendar
- approves the budget for each school year
- decides about building or closing schools
- evaluates Durham's education system for what is working and what isn't

They also hire and supervise the Superintendent, the leader of the school system. The Superintendent is responsible for the day-to-day running of the school system and for enacting the policies of the Board.

What doesn't the Board of Education do?

- Even though they set the spending budget, they largely do not control the amount of funding the school system is given. The majority of the funding is decided by the State Legislature and the County Government.
- The Board can not hire or fire or direct the work of any employee of the school system except for the Superintendent. The Board does not manage the operations of individual schools.

*From Durham Public Schools Website
<http://www.dpsnc.net/about-dps/board-of-education>*

Durham School Board Core Beliefs

- All children have talents, skills, and unique abilities
- All children want to pursue their goals and dreams
- All children can succeed in their pursuits: college, the workforce, community engagement

Durham School Board Core Commitments

- Our children will be challenged to achieve at their highest capacity
- Our school district will ensure that all of our children have at least one year of growth for one year of schooling
- Our school district will diminish achievement gaps based on race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status until they are extinguished
- Our schools will be filled with high quality, competent, and caring teachers, principals, and staff

Every two years in May, Durham citizens elect 3 or 4 new members to the Durham Board of Education. School Board Elections are non-partisan, meaning none of the candidates run in association with a political party. The School Board has 7 members who serve 4 year terms. The School Board holds monthly meetings of the full Board and meetings of its committees that are open to the public.

WHAT DO THE COUNTY & COUNTY COMMISSIONERS DO?

Durham has 5 County Commissioners who each serve a 4-year term. County Commissioner Candidates run in partisan races where they are associated with a political party. All 15 of the 2012 County Commissioner Candidates are running as Democrats. Because there are no Republicans running in this primary, the 5 candidates chosen in this primary will likely be the only 5 candidates on the November ballot and will become Durham's County Commissioners.

County Commissioners are responsible for making policy for the County Government, and they hire and supervise the County Manager who runs the day-to-day County operations.

Some areas of Durham County responsibilities and services include:

- **Public health** including providing medical and related services to eligible citizens, conducting health education, and studying health problems in Durham and developing programs and approaches to address them. The County also provides Emergency Medical Transportation (EMT) services.
- **Safety** including operating the Durham Sheriff's office and Juvenile Justice programs.
- **Environment** including forest protection outside the Durham City limit, soil and water conservation and providing animal control services.
- **Public libraries and library programs**
- **Social Services** including child and elderly support and protection, school social work, support of disabled individuals, food stamps and foster care and adoption.
- **Community Enrichment services through Cooperative Extension** which offers 4-H, gardening programs, Welcome Baby, nutrition and consumer education, and KIDS VOTING!



Durham School Board Candidate LEIGH BORDLEY

1. Why do you want to serve on the Durham Public School Board?

I want to continue serving on the Board of Education because I think I can make a positive contribution. I have learned a lot during my first term and think I could use a second term to accomplish some things I think are important, including: 1) finding the balance between assessments (testing) and learning; 2) finding new ways to evaluate our administrators and ourselves (the board), and 3) building our partnership with the Partnership for Children (which coordinates the education of our pre-kindergarten students in Durham) and expanding the preK opportunities within DPS.

2. Do you think it is better to have linkages between Magnet Schools or a straight lottery? Should there be an application process for arts schools.

I am keeping an open mind about student assignment and magnets right now because we are still in the process of listening to the community on this topic. At this point, I prefer a “straight lottery” for most of our schools. I support a linkage between our IB and Montessori schools because those are such unique programs. I do not want to expand the number of linkages we have now, because I think we run the risk of creating a two-tier system. I’d like for students to be able to move between magnet and traditional schools more easily.

I do not think there should be an application process for arts schools. I think there are students who may not realize they have a talent for art until they experience an arts school.

3. What current and additional programs would you support to help kids who are routinely failing? What non-college tracks would you support for students?

I think we’ve done a few things that have benefited our most struggling students, including: 1) continuing to partner with the Department of Social Services and the Durham County Health Department to have inter-disciplinary teams of social workers

and nurses in seven of our schools to help students with challenges that can interfere with their focus on school; 2) creating a School-based Support Program at eight of our schools. This program places a counselor in the schools and helps connect families to mental health services; 3) continuing our after-school program (Encore) and partnering with Citizens Schools to extend the learning day in our middle schools; 4) partnering with the East Durham Children's Initiative to provide "cradle to college" support for children who live in Northeast Central Durham. Families that geographic area (where many lower-performing children live) are getting comprehensive support and services. 5) Our Academic Readiness Center (ARC) program is working with 68 over-age 8th and 9th graders, providing them with intensive support and instruction; 6) the Performance Learning Center (PLC) is working with 110 juniors and seniors who are working towards graduation. 6) We have made it possible for certain over-age high school students to opt to receive a General Diploma (21 credits) that will allow them to graduate and go on to a technical college. 7) The Gateway to College program allows students who have dropped out to re-enroll and earn high school and college credits.

I do not believe every student has to go to college to be successful, but I do believe they must be prepared for post-secondary education. I think there are students who have been successful students in high school who will not decide to go to college. I am glad that we offer a number of certificate programs through our Career and Technical Education department that allows these students to get a head start in their area of interest. The Holton Career Center has been a great addition to our district and I support its mission. I have just joined a taskforce our Career and Technical Education Department has formed and will be learning more about what additional alternatives to college we can offer our students.

4. How would you improve the quality of food served to student and especially increase the availability of fresh foods? What is your opinion about having vending machines for students and teachers?

This is an area I wish I knew about. I am very interested in it and wish our meals were more attractive to our students. I think most board members agree with me; the problem is that it costs more to provide more fresh foods. I think we ought to be able to get grant funding to increase the amount of fresh foods we have available. (This question reminds me to ask our administration about that!)

I am encouraged that our schools all have Wellness Committees. Riverside High School recently received a commendation from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation for improving their snack options. Many of our schools have gardens that are exposing students to healthier options. We are creating a 70 acre farm near Eno Valley Elementary School, Carrington Middle School and Northern High School which the schools will all learn from. I know that some of the produce will be used by the Culinary Program at Northern and would hope some could be made available to the rest of the schools.

I have mixed feelings about vending machines. One of the reasons we don't have more resources to buy healthy food is that many of our high school students don't eat our lunches. I'm worried that vending machines encourage that tendency. That said, I'm not opposed to having some vending machines that offer healthy options. I

definitely think the teachers should have this option – and maybe it could be a privilege extended to students for good or improved grades, like off-campus lunch? I'll give this topic more thought.

5. How will you as an elected official get student and teacher input on policies and decisions?

I will continue to ask members of the public to write or call us to share their thoughts – and to come to our meetings! There is an opportunity for public comment before every committee meeting and every full board meeting. I wish more citizens took advantage of this. Our meeting times are posted on our website and are open to the public. I don't think having a separate group of just students would be ideal; I'd rather have students join the larger conversation.

I would like to create more opportunities for teachers to share their opinions through surveys, committees or other means. Given how little time they have, I think we could use short surveys more often to get their input.

6. Would you support giving teachers more independent funds for supplies for their classrooms to support learning? If yes, how?

I would love to do this. We have to balance this against many other things we also want to do for teachers – giving them a raise, up-grading our technology, providing more professional development. At this point, giving them a raise is my highest priority – and we don't know where we will get the funds to do that!

7. What activities did you do when you were young? What do you do in your free time now? When I was in high school (Chapel Hill High, class of 1979), I ran cross-county (on the boys team, because there was no girls team) and track. I was in a co-ed Explorer Scout group that went on an expedition once/month. I had a job off and on. Now, I enjoy working out (swimming, biking and tennis), spending time outdoors, reading, traveling and being with my family.

8. What was your favorite book when you were in school?

I have always loved to read. I can't honestly remember what my favorite book was, but I do remember reading The Catcher in the Rye in high school and thinking it was really profound.

9. Do you have any children of your own or other experience with children?

I have three children – Eliza (Durham School of the Arts, class of 2007), Travis (DSA, class of 2011) and Sam (DSA, class of 2013). I also ran a mentoring program called Partners for Youth for 13 years until last September.



Durham School Board Candidate HEIDI CARTER

1. **Why do you want to serve on the Durham Public School Board?**

I have been a school board member now for almost 8 years, and I think I have learned a lot about education policy, how our district works, the importance of stakeholder engagement, and the need to build trust in our schools. I hope this will help me be an effective and fair Board member. I also believe strong public schools are vital for a healthy, vibrant community, so this work has deep meaning for me. Additionally, I work on numerous community health committees and am a member of the Durham County Board of Health, because I think we need to address the physical and emotional health needs of our students in order for them to learn at their full potential. Being a school board member positions me for this public health work, too.

2. **Do you think it is better to have linkages between Magnet Schools or a straight lottery? Should there be an application process for arts schools?**

Policies related to student assignment and magnet schools are particularly challenging to develop, because there are often competing values in the different policy choices. I think that it may make sense for magnet schools to have links, or established feeder patterns, if these schools are new programs and we are trying to get them firmly established. But if the magnet schools are already working well to attract a diverse student population, offer high quality learning opportunities for students, and are in high demand with long waiting lists, then I believe an objective lottery makes more sense.

Yes, I think there should be an application process for arts schools like Durham School of the Arts. I currently do not favor having spots set aside for students to audition into the school. I think one element of DSA that has made it so successful is that it offers equal opportunities for all students to develop their talents, perhaps ones that are latent, and thrive in an artistic environment. If we set aside spots for an entry via audition, I worry that we will give an unfair advantage to students whose families could afford music, dance, or other art lessons.

3. **What current and additional programs would you support to help kids who are routinely failing? What non-college tracks would you support for students?**

We have a number of programs to help students who are failing in school. Some of these are academic programs, and others are programs that provide social support services to students. The Performance Learning Center (PLC) is designed to help students who may have dropped out of the traditional, comprehensive high school. This program offers a more flexible schedule and course recovery at the students' own

pace through on-line learning, supported by an in-class teacher. The Academic Recovery Center is also closely connected to the PLC and serves over-age 8th graders and helps them acquire the reading skills necessary to enter the PLC.

All of our schools offer English as a Second Language (ESL) services to students with limited English proficiency. Teachers work with students in small groups to build their English skills, or they work with students within the regular classroom. All schools also have the Student Assistance Process (SAP) where students are evaluated by a team from their school for behavioral, social, academic or other exceptional issue that may qualify them for extra services. Alternately, this review process may help identify another root cause of school failure, such as lack of dental or healthcare, violence in the home, depression, substance abuse or other issue that can be addressed by partnering with other community agencies. This process might help the student become part of a Child and Family Support Team where “wrap-around” services will be provided. Also, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is created for all students who are not proficient on End of Grade tests.

DPS has also extended the learning time for students at YE Smith Elementary School and Neal Middle School, two schools that have been low performing. We hope the extra time and tutoring will help students at these schools be more successful.

I support all of our current Career and Technical Education pathways for students that we have in our high schools. I think it is important that we strengthen these programs and highlight the technical skills students can receive that will position them for entry into the workforce. The DPS Career and Technical Education program is aligned with market demands and offers programs that will lead to industry certification, meaningful employment, or entry into post-secondary education. All CTE courses should be part of a pathway leading to a capstone course and/or internship experience.

4. How would you improve the quality of food served to student and especially increase the availability of fresh foods? What is your opinion about having vending machines for students and teachers?

This topic of school meals and healthy school environments is very important to me. I believe we should have policies and environments that support our students’ and teachers’ ability to make healthy choices. Unfortunately, the federal reimbursement that we receive for school meals does not cover all of the cost for food, equipment, preparation, labor, etc. This is why school districts sell food like pizza, fries, desserts and other junk food students like to purchase, in addition to the federal lunch.

One way we might be able to increase the availability of fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains is by returning to the Child Nutrition Program the money they pay the district to cover indirect costs (like electricity, equipment, space). This extra money could be used to add healthier, appealing food to the menu. Another possibility for increasing funds for healthier, appealing food in school meals is to have a tax on sodas where the revenue raised would be set aside for healthier whole food items.

I think student vending machines should only sell items that meet certain nutrition standards, as specified in the district’s Wellness Policy. This includes serving size, calorie, fat, sugar and sodium limits. I would be in favor of the elimination of all sugar

sweetened beverages, as these add extra calories with little, if any, nutritional benefit. For teacher vending, I also support including many options that meet the Wellness Policy nutrition standards. I think teachers should be consulted about what the vending machines for staff sell.

5. How will you as an elected official get student and teacher input on policies and decisions?

Input can be gathered by way of surveys (on-line or hard copy), public hearings, focus groups like Kitchen Table Conversations, visits to schools, attendance at PTSA and site-based meetings. I also am very receptive to being contacted by phone or email and will correspond to all who contact me and am happy to meet and talk with any constituent.

6. Would you support giving teachers more independent funds for supplies for their classrooms to support learning? If yes, how?

State funding for classroom supplies has been reduced, but we have known that classroom supplies have almost always been underfunded, and teachers often rely on their own out-of-pocket resources for supplies. This should not be the case, and I am very open to searching our budget for additional funding for school supplies. One way I have helped teachers receive more supplies is by helping to start and working with Crayons to Calculators. This is a local non-profit organization that provides school supplies to teachers for free. On designated days, teachers are invited to their store to “shop” with free vouchers.

7. What activities did you do when you were young? What do you do in your free time now?

When I was young, I liked to have fun with my friends, work in my school’s service club, read, jog, and spend time with my mother and sisters. In my free time now, I like to read and am in a book club. I also love to cook supper for my family. My children are ages 18, 20, 23, and 25, and don’t live at home now. But we like to get together for meals at my house or go out to our favorite neighborhood Italian restaurant on weekends when we all are free. I value time in my day for physical activity, and I like to run on the American Tobacco Trail and bike with my husband and friends. I also read and study a lot about education and public health policy.

8. What was your favorite book when you were in school?

East of Eden by John Steinbeck

9. Do you have any children of your own or other experience with children?

Yes, I have 4 children, and they all attended Durham Public Schools, K-12. My oldest daughter, Jamie, is a 3rd year medical student at UNC; my oldest son, Dusty, is in law school; my daughter, Haley, will graduate from UNC in May and is going to Physical Therapy School next year; and my son, Dylan, is studying Automotive Technology at the Nascar Technical Institute outside of Charlotte. I also have 3 younger sisters and a big extended family with lots of cousins, nieces and nephews.



Durham School Board Candidate MINNIE FORTE-BROWN

1. **Why do you want to serve on the Durham Public School Board?**

I truly believe that I can make a difference in providing access and opportunity for ALL children in Durham Public Schools. I want to empower students and teachers to deliver the BEST teaching and learning by providing excellence in governance.

2. **Do you think it is better to have linkages between Magnet Schools or a straight lottery?** Should there be an application process for arts schools?

I believe that linkages /alignment is necessary for Magnet programs to be most effective. Although DSA has worked well as an open lottery school, I have always thought that having an audition/application process for those students who have a true interest/talent in arts could truly enhance the programming. We saw such a program from a high school in Charlotte.

3. **What current and additional programs would you support to help kids who are routinely failing?** What non-college tracks would you support for students?

I would like to institute a Twilight school which would operate on a schedule after hours (perhaps like 5pm-10pm) so students who must work can still take complete high school. PLC, RIL, are both programs which work well for students who are failing. I also support extended day , Saturday school , and summer school.

Career and Technical education must continue to be strong in DPS. Students must be made aware of the programming that is available for them. We must provide students with internships, mentorships, and certifications which allow them to be workforce ready when they complete high school.

4. **How would you improve the quality of food served to student and especially increase the availability of fresh foods? What is your opinion about having vending machines for students and teachers?**

Our food service MUST be improved and the board is working to do just that. I want fresh fruits and salad bars in every school. I would love to see Subways in our high schools and more mouth watering options. We are trying to establish a DPS farm that could supply fresh local produce to our schools. YEA!!!

Vending machines must have healthy options in them....water, juice, Gatorade, etc.

5. How will you as an elected official get student and teacher input on policies and decisions?

Teacher and student input is as easy as using email, phone call or public comment during committee meetings or regular board meetings.

6. Would you support giving teachers more independent funds for supplies for their classrooms to support learning? If yes, how?

Crayons 2Calculators is an independent source for FREE supplies for teachers. I know supplies are extremely expensive and teachers often ask parents to help bear the burden. As we move to a more paperless society, I am hopeful that we can lessen the need for many supplies that would require independent funds. DPS should supply ample resources to every teacher. That is what I am advocating for.

7. What activities did you do when you were young? What do you do in your free time now?

I have always participated in the arts. I took piano lessons from age 8-16, tap and ballet as a youngster, then modern as a teen. In elementary school I was a part of my school newspaper staff and a safety patrol. I also did morning announcements on the PA system from the principal's office. In high school I was a class officer, layout editor for the yearbook, and columnist for the newspaper. I participated in the French Club, Pep Club, Special Chorus, Drama Club, and the ZODIACS (a dynamite social club). I TRULY enjoyed Hillside High School. In my free time I enjoy my family, friends, relaxing and travel. What free time????

8. What was your favorite book when you were in school?

My favorite book was Go Tell It On The Mountain by James Baldwin.

9. Do you have any children of your own or other experience with children?

I have one daughter and two grandsons. I have been a high school English, Speech and Drama teacher in Baltimore as soon as I graduated from college. I conducted workshops for students and teachers on multiethnic and multicultural awareness for Seattle Public Schools. And for 30 years I have taught college students public speaking and interpersonal communication in the department of English at North Carolina Central University. My entire life has centered around students and creating opportunities for their ultimate success.



**Durham School Board Candidate
JOHN TARANTINO**

Mr. Tarantino did not reply to the
2012 Kids Voting Youth Candidate Questionnaire.

CANDIDATES FOR COUNTY COMMISSIONER Primary Election



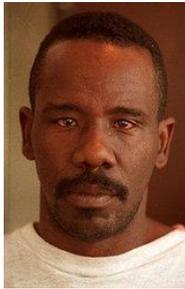
Anita Daniels



Larry W. Dixon



Fred Foster, Jr.



Stephen Hopkins



Brenda Howerton



Elaine C. Hyman



Wendy Jacobs



John Owens



Rickey Padgett

continued on next page

CANDIDATES FOR COUNTY COMMISSIONER Primary Election



Michael D. Page



Ellen Reckhow



Will Wilson



Joe W. Bowser



Dilcy Burton

2012 SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS AND PARTISAN PRIMARIES VOTING INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND ADULTS

Students

Youth Candidate Forum

Thursday, April 19, 6:30-8:30 pm
Holton Center, 401 N. Driver St.

Early Voting

Saturdays, April 21, April 28, and May 5
Main, South and North Libraries

Election Day

Cast a Kids Voting Ballot at a precinct near you
Check the Kids Voting Website for locations with KV polls

Adults

April 13: Deadline to register to vote on Election Day

April 19: Early voting and same-day registration begins

May 5: Early voting and same-day registration ends

May 8: ELECTION DAY
(polls open 6:30AM-7:30PM)

Useful Links

Durham County Board of Elections

<http://www.durhamcountync.gov/departments/elec/>

Center for Voter Education/WUNC Durham Election Guide

<http://www.ncvoterguide.org/durham/>

About Kids Voting Durham

Kids Voting Durham is a nonprofit, nonpartisan effort to help young people understand and believe in their power they can have as active, well-informed citizens and future voters. Students learn about and experience democracy through a combination of classroom and other hands-on educational activities, an authentic election and voting experience, and community and family dialogue.

Kids Voting Durham is a project of the Durham County Cooperative Extension and an affiliate of Kids Voting North Carolina and Kids Voting USA.

Kids Voting Durham
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www.kidsvotingdurham.org

www.facebook.com/kidsvotingdurham

About Octagon Club

The Octagon Club is a student service group at Durham School of the Arts. Throughout the year students choose service projects and volunteer with them. The Octagon Club has written youth Candidate Guides for Kids Voting and student voters for the past four years.