

JOINT MEETING MINUTES  
DURHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION  
and  
DURHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
February 7, 2002

Durham Public Schools Board of Education hosted a joint meeting with the Durham County Board of Commissioners on Thursday, February 7, 2002 at 7:00 a.m. at the Durham Marriott at the Civic Center.

School Board Members in attendance:

Kathryn Meyers, Chair  
Gail Heath  
Regina George-Bowden  
Michael Page

Staff in attendance:

Ann T. Denlinger, Superintendent  
Bert L'Homme  
Calvin Dobbins  
Donna Smith  
Nancy Hester  
Hugh Osteen

County Commission Member in attendance:

MaryAnn Black, Chair  
Ellen Reckow, Vice-Chair  
Philip Cousin, Jr.  
Becky Heron

Staff in attendance:

Mike Ruffin, County Manager  
Chuck Kitchen, Attorney  
Pam Meyer  
Heidi Duer  
Wendell Davis  
Carolyn Titus  
Deborah Craig-Ray

Board of Education Chairman Kathryn Meyers called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone on behalf of the Board of Education. County Commission Chairman MaryAnn Black extended welcome from the Board of County Commissioners. Everyone introduced himself/herself. The revised agenda was reviewed. County Commission Chairman MaryAnn Black added a Report on Technology Program at Oxford Manor to the agenda. Also added to the agenda was an update on the budget crisis and a discussion of the vacated seat on the school board.

**Review: Memorandum of Understanding:** In an effort to define clear expectations regarding the document that governs how the Board of Education and County Commissioners work together, the entire document was reviewed in detail. There was concern about the process of approving the MOU. Plans will be made in the future to improve on the process and include everyone in the beginning phase. And, the process will begin earlier so that both bodies can work together in an effort to clearly define expectations. The goal is for everyone to receive information in a timely manner in the event they are called on to comment. County Commission Chairman suggested that the Board of Education develop a timeline for the MOU, including how and when everyone receives it. Work will begin in May with a goal of June 30 to July 1 to complete the MOU for next year. That will give everyone a full twelve months to work on the initiatives.

**Durham County's Support of Durham Public Schools:** A recent report on public schools indicated that schools will lose 2-3% funding from the State next year. The budget will be much more challenging this coming year. The county will need to have a discussion about how the deficit can be made up. The two groups discussed the budget crisis at length and agreed to write a joint letter to Governor Easley citing their serious concerns in cutting funding for the schools. County Manager Mike Ruffin's office will receive input and draft a letter to the Governor.

**Updates: DPS Long-Range Capital Plan:** Assistant Superintendent Hugh Osteen presented an update on Durham Public Schools Long-Range Facilities Plan and 2002 Bond Referendum. The main goals, background information, choices made for the 2001 referendum, project schedules, operational costs, and enrollment growth were shared. A 2003 bond referendum for remaining school capital needs is being planned. Guidelines and how the process works will be shared with County Commissioners at a later time.

**DPS Academic Progress Update:** Associate Superintendent Bert L'Homme reported on the progress of improving achievement levels for all groups of students. Student achievement goals and initiatives were shared. Promotions standards, as well as dropout prevention and strategies were discussed at length.

Board of Education Vice-chair Regina George-Bowden asked about the GED program. The GED is a shortened way for a motivated student to complete high school. There are many programs that offer youth 16-21 educational challenges whenever the student is not advancing toward graduation at a rate that would permit completion by age 21. There are programs available that support alternative learning. GED's are offered to students 18 or older at Durham Technical Community College and at area community colleges to students who are 16 and have dropped out of school. Durham Public Schools offers GED prep for these students. Programs included in the Dropout Prevention Plan are The Academy for Creative Education, Achievement through Involvement with Mentors, Center for Employment Training, Communities in Schools, C's the Future, Failure Free Reading Tutorial Program, Family Involvement Summit, Meaningful Other Person Program, Parents Assuring Student Success, Tarheel Challenge and Teen Outreach Program.

**Report on Technology Program at Oxford Manor:** Students who are in public housing are involved in a pilot program. A \$40,000 grant to include \$25,000 for computers had been received. The computers will assist students with homework and research. Also, two teachers had been provided by the school system to work with these students. Businesses and individuals are encouraged to promote funding for the program at Oxford Manor.

Chairman Kathryn Meyers provided information related to a vacancy on the school board for District 1 that was created by the resignation of Mozell Robinson Knight. The process and timeline will be approved by the Board of Education at their February 14, 2002 meeting.

Board of County Commissioners will chair the April Joint Meeting of the Board of Education and County Commissioners. At that meeting they will look at timelines,

projects and evaluation of students. They will also look at a draft of the Memorandum of Understanding for next year. A discussion regarding GED graduation will also be placed on the agenda. For input and questions, everyone was encouraged to get the information to Mike Ruffin in advance of the meeting so the two bodies would be prepared to answer specific questions. The Hillside High School Planning Committee report will also be discussed at the April meeting.

It was agreed that an August Joint Meeting would be planned to discuss facility plans, and the minority achievement plan. Also, one hour would be allowed for a Question and Answer period with the public.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Approved by Board of Education

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Chairman

Date

Approved by Board of County Commissioners

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Chairman

Date