

PA-PAC Questionnaire for Durham Public School

Board of Education 2018

1. Why do you want to serve on the Durham Public School Board of Education?  
What is the role of the board member?

***My name is Pebble Lindsay-Lucas. I am pleased to announce my candidacy for District 1 Board of Education. I am a lifelong resident of Durham, a 1982 graduate of Hillside High School, a graduate from Duke University Divinity School Divinity (Master of Divinity), and I earned a Master of Education from the University of Wilmington in Early Childhood Leadership, Advocacy and Policy. I want to serve on the Board of Education because I want our children to achieve the highest quality education possible. I believe education produces productive citizens. According to [fivethirtyeight.com](http://fivethirtyeight.com) it states, "American Kids Will Spend An Average of 943 Hours in Elementary School this Year." I am running for the school board because children spend hundreds of hours in school and we still have to many graduating from high school reading on a third grade and fourth grade level. I believe that we can do better. As a matter of fact, I know we can do better because I attended these same schools as a child and we did do better. The entire community was involved in the child's educational experience. If I did something in school before I got home my parents knew what I had done earlier that day in school. The teachers, parents, principals and community police officers all communicated with each other. In fact, the entire community were all a part of my educational experience. If I am elected to serve on the Board of Education, I will work with the board members to bring the community back into our schools.***

*What is the role of the board member?*

***The board member is responsible for working together as a team member with his/her fellow board members, collaborating about district policies, approving the budget, setting high expectations for Durham Public Schools, monitoring growth, collaborating about new and old projects, reviewing contracts, and supervising the superintendent. Most importantly, I believe the members of the Board of Education serves as a bridge to the Durham Public School to ensure that DPS offers our students the highest quality education.***

2. In what ways do you see yourself and the school board interacting with the superintendent? What do you think the most important issues are to hold the superintendent accountable around? If a as a board member, problems in a school come to your attention, what steps have you taken, or would you take to resolve them?

***There are several ways I see myself and other school board members interacting with the superintendent. The first way I see myself and the school board interacting with the superintendent is by spending time listening and learning about the superintendent's vision for our school district. Second, I see myself and the other school board members meeting with the superintendent monthly to discuss successes and challenges related to DPS. Third, I see myself and the other school board members meeting with the superintendent to evaluate the superintendent's goals. Fourth, I see myself and the school board members interacting with the superintendent discussing the low performing schools in our districts, and support for our teachers. Finally, I see myself and the other school board members holding the superintendent accountable for school growth in the Durham public schools district.***

***The most important issues to hold the superintendent accountable around is student success, mental health issues, safety, community engagement within the schools, support for a teachers/staff, and suspensions within the DPS system.***

***If I was a board member and problems came to my attention concerning DPS, I would schedule a meeting with the superintendent to discuss the situation. If I am given the opportunity to serve, I will collaborate with other board members, superintendent, and community leaders to develop a strategic plan to improve students' performance and abrogate the school's suspension rate and violence in our school.***

3. How should teachers and administrators be evaluated? *Are the current state standards effective?*

***I believe teachers and administrators should be evaluated on the performance of test scores of their students, customer service satisfaction surveys, and the state evaluation plan that DPS has in place.***

***I do not believe that the current state standards are effective.***

4. How should students be assessed? What role should standardized test play in evaluating students? How do you feel about the new superintendent's approach to testing?

***I believe that students should be assessed by paper/pencil, individual conversations, performance grades, and by our standardized exams. There is a lot of debate concerning how students should be evaluated. I believe we can use standardize test scores as one factor to determine how well our students have or have not mastered minimum competencies required by the state. I believe we can use school performance grades as one factor to determine grades as one factor to determine how well our schools have or have not mastered many competencies required by the state. Also, standardize test scores and school performance grades can be used for strategic planning by using the strengths and weaknesses identified in these tests to improve students and school performance for the following year. However, there are many factors of factors other than standardize test and school performance that should be considered in determining success other than standardized test and school performance grades. I am a product of DPS and I remember how challenging it was for me when the teachers informed the class that we had one week before the competency test. I believe that the standardized test is one method of evaluating students, However, I believe we need to look at the balance approach. When children have more options for evaluating it shows more learning gains about the student.***

***I support the superintendent's new approach to testing. This method will help identify and provide additional support for at risk students who are having challenges and not meeting proficiency.***

5. Durham Public School have become increasingly segregated by socioeconomic status and race. What are your thoughts on this situation?

***I was born and raised in Durham North Carolina. The DPS has always been separated by socioeconomic status and race since I was in kindergarten. I attended R. N. Harris Elementary School, and I did not have any other friendships except from African American students. My elementary school was segregated. I recall having one Caucasian friend as a teenager. We are still experiencing White Flight, and some black families are moving out into the county to the best schools. However, we are still faced with children and parents who are unable to move, and left behind to deal with multiple issues because of the economic status of the families. Many of the families who are left behind live in poverty and fall below the 200% poverty level.***

6. Recent data has suggested that, despite the programming implemented to decrease suspensions in DPS, the numbers of suspension in some of our schools continues to rise at concerning rates. It is also

clear that suspensions disproportional affect black and brown male students. What do you think the district should do to address this issue?

**The suspension rate in Durham County is very alarming. I am the mother of an African American male. I am concerned about the issues many students face that causes them to be suspended. I believe that in order for us to identify the real issue we must get to the root of the problem. According to the Herald Sun, "last year DPS elementary schools saw an increase in suspensions. In all, 34 of 53 schools saw more suspensions. At Northern High School, for example, there were 621 short-term suspensions last school year which was 419 more than 202 suspension the previous year." This should never happen in Durham, North Carolina. We have to many great people in our community, a wealth of education, and community leaders who are capable of helping us to address these issues. I believe parents should be held accountable for their students. Also, we need a stronger collaboration between the principals, teachers and parents concerning students who are more likely to fall in the pathway of suspension. I would to see our community, pastors, ministers, non-profits, mental health agencies, parents, student's courts, schools, DSS, DPS come together to work on strategies for community programs to help our school system. If I am elected, I will work with other board members to bring the community back into our schools.**

7. What is your opinion about the Character School movement in NC, especially in Durham? I really do not enough about character schools.

*I support all children and I have spent my adult life helping children regardless of their choice for schools. Parents have the right to make choices for their children. However, I strongly believe in public education and I support public schools teachers and children 100 percent. I am a proud product of Durham Public Schools. I have attended many of the schools in this district, and I have received a quality education within the public schools.*

8. As a board member how would you address the needs of the students who are at risk for low achievement and leaving high school before graduation? How do you see yourself working on this as a district-wide issue?

**I have served 30 years in the Durham Community. When I was younger growing up with my mother I could have easily been one of the students who is being described as a student who is at risk for low achievement and leaving high school before graduation. I was this student in 1979. I am running for the children who are currently falling between the cracks in our school systems. I know firsthand that children need more than a pencil, a piece of paper, and a lecturer. At risk children need mentors, counselors, people they can trust, and they need support from our community. The parents and students need the village and the community to help strengthen and embrace them. Yes, I agree with our new superintendent Dr. Meubanga. He stated in his presentation to the ministers at the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance that he needed help from the community. I have 30 years of grassroots experience in the community. I have worked with the interfaith communities, the Duke community, Durham Congregations in Action, Durham CAN, Hayti Community Ministers & Friends, Committee on the Affairs of Black People, Department of Social Services, Welfare to Work, Interfaith Hospitality Network, Child Care Services Association, End Poverty Durham, Crop Walk, Public Housing communities, and formed partnerships with over 100 churches in the Durham community. I believe that if we bring back the pastors, ministers, non-profits, community agencies, teachers, administrators, mental health, DPS, DSS, and Child Care Services. We can make a difference! I would like to implement a county wide parent advocacy support group. This group of parents would come together to assist with parenting skills, advocacy support, student support, recruiting mentors, and providing teacher support. I believe DPS can do a better job working with our parents and community partners. This**

**type of leadership will help to reduce the number of at risk students who are at risk for low achievement and leaving school before graduation.**

9. Why do you think that parents choose to take their children out of the public school in Durham or don't choose them at all? How would you address this issue?

**There is a lot of research about why parents choose to take their children out of the public school in Durham or don't choose them at all? During this campaign season I have spoken to several parents who took their children out of the DPS and enrolled them in a charter school. The parents indicated that they took their children out of the public schools because of violence, bullying, lack of support, and frustration with the administration.**

10. If you could do three things to improve Durham Public Schools, what would they be?

**If given the opportunity to serve I will use my 30 years of grassroots experience in the Durham Community to help bring the community back into our schools. I have worked with many faith organizations in Durham to assist families making the Also, I wol transition from welfare to work. Also, I would like to implement a county wide parent advocacy support group. This group will help parents navigate through our educational system. This model will provide support, resource information, and trainings for our parents. Last, I will offer 100% support for our teachers. We are losing to many great teachers, and I will work to find ways to support teachers with professional development, support in the classrooms, pay increases, and a great learning environment.**

11. What is your position about the state class size mandate for grades k-3? If it passes, should DPS adopt the legislation financially and logistically?

**I like the ideal about the smaller classroom sizes, but I am not sure DPS can support this initiative financially. I would like to work with the board members to collaborate more concerning this matter.**

If you are an incumbent, what are the three things that have happened during your term that you that you are the most proud of? If you are a new candidate, what are three positive things that you have observed happening in DPS?

**I am a new candidate for the Board of Education District 1. I am excited about the following positive things that I am most proud of happenings at Durham Public Schools. Durham Public school's graduation rates increase, DPS has established a policy for universal free breakfast, increased its capacity for Pre-K (Whitted School Project), and DPS completed the comprehensive code of conduct. These are some remarkable goals.**

What do you think is a reasonable and realistic pathway and timeline for achieving universal pre-k for four-year-old children in Durham?

**Universal Pre-k is a very important topic for me. I am a Pre-K director at the First Chronicles Daycare Center in Durham, North Carolina. Also, I have earned a Master of Education in Early Childhood Education Leadership, Advocacy and Policy from the University of Wilmington. I would like to see a 3 to7 year plan in place for Universal Pre-k for all four year old children.**

The School Board will be asking our board of county commissioners for local funds for DPS this spring. What is your top priority for increased funding? Do you see places for realizing savings in the current budget?

My top priority for increased funding would be for teacher incentives, mental health services for students, and universal pre-k for 4 year-olds.

12. Please describe your educational background

1982 Graduate of Hillside High School

1991 Graduate of Durham Technical Community College -PN Program

2004 Graduate of North Carolina Central University- BSW

1998 Graduate of Duke University Divinity School- M.Div.

2013 Graduate of Durham Technical Community College- Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education

2016 Graduate of University of North Carolina Wilmington- M.Ed

13. Do you have children? If so, where do they, or did they attend school?

**My husband and I have two children. Our son attended Hillside High School, and our daughter attends Middle College at Durham Technical Community College.**

14. Please describe your adult employment history

I am the Director of the First Chronicles Daycare Center in Durham, North Carolina. I am responsible for hiring, training, and recruiting teachers, and the day to day operations of the center. I have been employed with by the First Chronicles Daycare Center for 10 years. Also, I am the Co-pastor and one of the founders of the First Chronicles Community Church in Durham, North Carolina. I have been working with the First Chronicles Community Church for 19 years. I am a part-time instructor at Durham Technical Community College in Durham, North Carolina.

**Mrs. Pebbles Lucas, BSW, M.Ed., M.Div.**