

PA-PAC Questionnaire for Durham Public School Board of Education 2018

When answering this questionnaire, please repeat the questions in your response document with their numbers as they are organized here. Type your responses in italics or a different font to distinguish your responses from the questions. Thank you for your participation! Total number of pages should be limited to 10, including the questions. Please use at least 11 point font. Please return completed form along with your resume describing education, work history, community service and prior political experience AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, but by March 09, 2018 at the latest Email responses to [chrismbriggs@gmail.com](mailto:chrismbriggs@gmail.com)

Please note that following above deadline, the Durham People's Alliance PAC may publish your responses to this questionnaire and your resume. Thank you for completing this questionnaire and your willingness to serve the people of Durham. Candidate

Name: Antonio Jones

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I am running for District Seat 1 2 3 **4** School Board

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

**I want to serve on the Board of Education because Durham Public Schools is in need of a change of perspective and I have the experience, education and courage to do what is right for our students, teachers and parents. As a former Durham Public School employee and advocate for public schools, I will bring a unique perspective to the board. As a school treasurer, I had the task of managing a school budget to include federal, state, local and grant funds. In this role, as I navigated the ever changing educational landscape of dueling priorities, I witnessed our students and educators receiving the short end of the stick which led to decreased student enrollment, high teacher turnover and persistent low test scores. For the past few years DPS has lost a significant amount of talented educators and operated without a clear strategic plan to address the many issues facing our schools.**

**Most importantly, we need a new perspective on the school board. I am the only candidate running for District 4 who has actually worked in our schools, in the trenches and understands the day to day battles teachers and students are facing. I will always fight for our teachers, students and parents even if the position is politically unpopular. More specifically, I have clear record on supporting student achievement opportunities, professional development and providing solutions to issues our schools are facing while I was employed by DPS. My campaign's theme is "Students First." Safe Schools, Equity, Accountability**

**and Transparency (S.E.A.T.) will be the lenses through which my decisions will be made as a member of the school board. My vision is for DPS to intentionally invest in every child's education in a holistic manner (academically, socially, emotionally, and mentally) from Pre-K so that all students become productive members of our community upon graduation while effectively addressing the needs of all our employees. I believe we have an obligation to ensure all students are college or workforce ready when they leave our schools. We can no longer afford to accept status quo and persistently low performing schools while Durham County is rich in resources. As a member of the Board of Education, I will advocate for unleashing the potential of our students and educators.**

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 as a school board member, problems in a school come to your attention, what steps have you taken or would you take to resolve them?

**As a board member, I see myself interacting with the superintendent as team builder and collaborator to form strong working relationships while holding him accountable through oversight and governance. I do not believe in micromanaging as an effective form of achieving results. Academic improvements, turn over reduction and increased student enrollment are the most important issues to hold the superintendent accountable for during his tenure. If problems come to my attention, I will direct the individual to the proper place and follow up accordingly. In my years of working in schools, I have seen board members come into schools and completely change the atmosphere when they address issues with administrators directly and superintendents know nothing about the conversations. That is not an effective way to govern and it creates trust and accountability issues.**

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

**I think the pre-established evaluation criteria instrument developed by the State Board of Education for all teachers and administrators is a great tool for evaluation when used effectively. There should be a pre and post conference with teachers to ensure authentic dialogue takes place and it should be used as a growth model accompanied with professional development opportunities for continued growth. Post conferences should in fact take place in the classroom to avoid intimidation and provide teachers with the opportunity to have constructive feedback with administrators when needed. The same should occur for administrators.**

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

**Students should be assessed in a way that will provide effective feedback to students, parents and educators so that academic performance will improve through differentiated instruction. Standardized testing is a way to determine if students are learning to a certain**

**extent. Unfortunately, these test do not account for social, emotional, mental nor physical improvements of students.**

**Equally important, students will face some sort of test as they continue their education so we cannot avoid testing. However, I am concerned by the misuse of the data to label schools and children. I prefer effective benchmark assessments (through-grade assessment model) that are formative and allow educators more time provide effective instruction. I will work to reduce and/or eliminate unnecessary testing. Furthermore, using a single letter grade to determine the success of a school is only useful if the grade is based on comprehensive data points that will take into account the whole child and emphasizes growth. The market is saturated is with testing options, materials and strategies. As the new superintendent continues to build his academic team and framework for testing, if elected, I will heavily monitor the use of testing and push for streamlining our testing options and avoid over testing our students. How is the testing data going to be used is more of a concern. In my opinion, testing our students without providing additional resources to improve outcomes is pointless.**

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

**My thoughts on DPS becoming increasingly segregated by socioeconomic status and race are yes, it is a problem. The racial demographics of DPS are not in line with county figures with 50.3% of the county being White and 37.5% African-American juxtapose to DPS demographics of 44.7% African-American and 18.8% White. Many will conclude some white families have made the conscience decision to leave DPS with no intent to return. Equally disappointing, middle and upper middle class African-Americans and Latinx families are leaving DPS as well and it will continue to do so until we address disparities and deficiencies within DPS in a meaningful manner so that real solutions can be implemented. When our families leave DPS, we never ask why nor do we ask them to return to our schools. One of the biggest issues I have heard from parents on why they decide to leave DPS is they feel as if their child is not being challenged academically or classroom discipline is not up to par. DPS must fight to keep our students.**

6. Recent data has suggested that, despite the programming implemented to decrease suspensions in DPS, the numbers of suspensions in some of our schools continues to rise at concerning rates. It is also clear that suspensions disproportionately affect black and brown male students. What do you think the district should do to address this issue?

**One of the keys to addressing the concerns of stakeholders with regard to high suspensions is the importance of being transparent in the reporting of the actual suspensions to ensure adequate steps are taken to address those concerns. Had I not requested the disaggregated data to be released to the public regarding the suspension the community would not have known our current conditions in our schools. I found it very troubling to know members of the current board attempted not to release that information to the public. As part of my safe schools initiative, I support using restorative justice practices, increasing mental health**

**and trauma services for students, revamping our school resource officer program and polices and elimination of hostile work environments for employees. Equally important, I have zero tolerance for bullying, intimidation and/or harassment of students and employees. In my experience working in the schools, we cannot handcuff our teachers and administrators when it comes to discipline. My position is when we allow a small fraction of our students interrupt the education of the majority of students it creates a domino effect which exacerbate discipline problems. When we unleash the potential of administrators to lead their schools and educators to lead their class we will see a reduction in suspensions. I firmly believe when we recognize where our students start on the educational ladder, provide equitable resources to address short comings and invest in our students' academic future we will see improvement in student performance.**

**1) DPS needs to unleash the potential of our educators and students by eliminating arbitrary obstacles and red tape.**

**2) Embrace our families and communities in a constructive positive manner. Our students and parents have to feel connect to our schools in order to increase learning.**

**3) Implement culturally responsive curriculum for all grade levels and provide professional development and teaching strategies that honor cultural customs and traditions which was raise the intellectual climate in our schools.**

**4) Elimination of the "Gatekeepers of information" mentality so that all students and parents are given clear information on all programs to include: AIG, AP, IB and Honors courses that could provide opportunities, benefits and raise the level of academic expectations of all our students.**

7. What is your opinion about the Charter School movement in NC, especially in Durham?

**I am not a fan of the negative financial impact charter schools are having on counties across the state. NC Senate Bill 8 in the 2011 session which removed the charter school cap in NC changed the dynamics of public education. This legislation was the linchpin to the privatization and charter school movement in Durham. Unfortunately, for the foreseeable future charter schools will be part of the educational options in Durham.**

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?

**As a board member, I would use my experience and knowledge of working in DPS to ensure programs are metrics-based and are working effectively and efficiently to address low achievement and identifying students before they drop out. Schools such as Performance Learning Center (PLC) and Lakeview School will be top on my agenda to revamp along with:**

- 1) **Recognizing where our students start on the educational ladder, provide equitable resources to address short comings and invest in our students' academic future we will see improvement in student performance.**
- 2) **Advocate to unleash the potential of our educators and students by eliminating arbitrary obstacles and red tape.**
- 3) **Embracing families and communities in a constructive positive manner. Our students and parents have to feel connect to our schools in order to increase learning.**
- 3) **Implement culturally responsive curriculum for all grade levels and provide professional development and teaching strategies that honor cultural customs and traditions which was raise the intellectual climate in our schools.**
- 4) **Elimination of the "Gatekeepers of information" mentality so that all students and parents are given clear information on all programs to include: AIG, AP, IB and Honors courses that could provide opportunities, benefits and raise the level of academic expectations of all our students.**

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

**One of the biggest issues I have heard from parents on why they decide to leave DPS is they feel as if their child is not being challenged academically and/or classroom discipline is not up to par. DPS must implement an AGGRESSIVE marketing and recruitment plan for our schools and educators to ensure families will return. DPS must also fight for our students as opposed to the current nonchalant or tone deaf approach. Case in point, KIPP Academy opened a charter school, went door to door recruiting our students and the non-response by DPS was heard loud and clear by those families DPS did not fight to keep. At last count, approximately 3,000 students are on charter schools waiting list across the county. We cannot afford 3,000 more students leaving our schools. We can no longer afford to accept status quo. We need a new perspective on the school board. I will fight to keep our students in DPS.**

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

**The three things DPS can improve are:**

- 1) **DPS needs to aggressive recruit and retain our students and educators by addressing disparities and deficiencies in a meaningful manner so that real solutions can be implemented to increase student enrollment, decrease teacher turnover and increase the overall value of a DPS education.**
- 2) **DPS should implement a culturally responsive curriculum for all grade levels, provide more professional development and teaching strategies that honor cultural customs and traditions of our students.**

- 3) **Provide equitable distribution of money and resources to meet the needs of our students and educators and effectively utilize the overwhelming resources in Durham County to collectively make our schools better.**

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 support reduced class sizes when properly funded and implemented. The General Assembly has agreed to phase in the class size mandate during the 2021-2022 school year. Unfortunately, the funding will still not be adequate to address the capital needs of districts across the state which will continue to impact local governments. In the event the General Assembly adds significant funding over the next few years and DPS begins planning now, we should be able to handle the change. Some of our schools are in bad shape so we will need to address a major school bond issue soon.**

12. If you are an incumbent, what are the three things that have happened during your term 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?

**The three positive things I have seen in DPS are:**

- 1) **DPS has a great assortment of schooling options from traditional, year-round, magnet, and specialty schools.**
- 2) **DPS has great educators who are passionate about working and fighting for our schools and community.**
- 3) **DPS has amazing students who overcome obstacles to achieve their dreams.**

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

**Based on the 2017 Pre-K Task Force report released by the county and prepared by a host of community members and experts, I agree with their target date of 2023. There are a significant amount of moving parts to Pre-K and that needs to be streamlined to ensure a smooth transition. Eliminating multi-agency turf battles and fostering collaborative efforts could accelerate the process.**

14. 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 will be:**

- 1) **Teacher recruitment**
- 2) **Funding for Community Schools as a line item in the county budget and DPS**
- 3) **Increased funds for the Office of Equity Affairs**

**As the only candidate who has actually managed a DPS school budget and manages multi-million budgets as a professional, yes there are many places for cost savings such as contracted services for starters. The real question is which cuts are the most politically sensitive. DPS has a \$429 million dollar budget and as a trained and experienced public administration I am aware of cost cutting strategies.**

Personal Information

15. Please describe your educational background (skip if resume included)

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

**I have one child. He is almost 4 years old and is enrolled in a local child care center.**

17. Please describe your adult employment history (skip if resume included)

# ANTONIO JONES, MPA

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## EDUCATION

### North Carolina Central University; Durham, NC

Master of Public Administration, December

*Emphases: Organizational Leadership & Management*

### North Carolina Central University; Durham, NC

Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration,

Cum Laude

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### DUKE UNIVERSITY-DUKE LEARNING & ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

Management for Successful Leaders, 2018

Project Management, 2017

Leading Across Generations, 2017

SAP Advanced Reporting, 2015

Leading with Emotional Intelligence, 2018

Conducting Effective Meetings, 2017

Extraordinary Productivity, 2017

SAP Reconciliation and Documents, 2015

## SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

Accounting

Project Management

Procurement

Fiscal Management

Budget Management

Human Resources

Database Management

Contracts Management

Accounts Payable & Receivable

Fleet Management

Auditing

Grant Management

## PROFESSIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE

### Duke University

August 2015- Current

### Duke Clinical Research Institute (DCRI)

### Financial Management Analyst II

- Manage and prepare complex financial reporting and interpret cost analysis for multi-million dollar commercial clinical research projects. Compute and analyze revenue projections, cost and margin variance analysis and communicate operational recommendations to senior leadership.
- Compile cost and revenue projections and advise project team and as needed senior leadership on significant changes. Identify and report potential change in scopes to project team and Business Development. Coordinate sponsor invoicing with Accounts Receivable and, as needed, act as liaison for sponsor accounting and past due invoices. Review and analyze unbilled/unearned fund accounts. Maintain project cost plans, post monthly reports for project team to review.
- Examine and approve internal approval forms for contractual agreements, cash flows, payment schedules, and budgets. Perform ad hoc analysis for projects as needed.
- Routinely meets with project team to ensure the cost plans reflects the latest information regarding forecast, budgets, timelines, and operational issues.
- Utilize SAP, EPM, pricing tools, tracking tools, and other informational databases to maintain fiscal accountability and integrity of projects to include but not limited to Microsoft Excel to development internal budgets, tables, graphs, resource spreadsheets, and customer pricing spreadsheets
- Routinely promotes and cultivates positive working relationships with business development, project leadership, faculty, sponsors and project team.

**Durham Public Schools  
School Treasurer**

**January 2011-July 2015**

- Assisted in the preparation and allocation of a multi-million dollar annual school budget which includes, federal, state, local and grant funding from various organizations including the United States Department of Education School Improvement Grant and Title I funds.
- Analyzed and managed federal, state and local budget allocations to ensure compliance; assign proper budget codes using North Carolina Department of Public Instruction chart of accounts. Reconcile monthly financial reports from finance department. Prepare statistics and fiscal highlights for presentations and reports by providing budgetary support and consultation.
- Maintained a large, multi-fund computerized accounting system; received checks and cash from teachers, student groups and other school personnel; made daily deposit in the bank.
- Recorded accounting transactions and monthly standard journal entries into computer database; Compiled, monitored, analyzed, and audited moderately complex financial statements, reports, accounts and/or budget codes for accuracy, integrity, and compliance to accounting and program guidelines. Analyzed and solved problems related to incorrect accounts
- Reconciled and generated monthly organizational financial statements for over 100 various student groups, co-curricular programs, staff accounts, field trips, employee travel and/or student-athletic teams.
- Compiled fiscal documentation, draft policies and procedures, standard operating procedures, and performance measurement reports. Serve as technical advisor on fiscal management and reporting issues for student organizations and school based personnel. Prepared monthly reports of school funds as required and submit to Internal Auditor.
- Ensured all Sales and Use taxes are paid and reported on time to the North Carolina Department of Revenue.
- Paid all school accounts receivables; maintained all financial documents for checks written from school accounts. Signed request for checks along with principal for reimbursements and vendor payments; Insured proper general ledger codes are used according to established chart of accounts.
- Procurement of supplies and equipment via purchasing systems. Maintained Purchase Orders, accounts receivable and accounts payable files.
- Served as onsite administrator of Durham Public Schools payroll systems which processes employee leave, and attendance records for over 150 fulltime employees, substitute teachers, off duty police officers, athletic officials and contractors; Responded to payroll inquiries from school personnel and/or central administration.
- Knowledgeable in Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), federal, state and local policies, procedures and statutes.

**Best Buy**

**May 1999- June 2009**

**Inventory Supervisor Senior**

- Managed and maintained computerized database of approximately \$3.5 million dollars of on-hand product inventory to ensure maximum profitability and accuracy which lead to reduced product loss. Developed comprehensive actions plans that optimize inventory investments and developed weekly and monthly inventory strategies to support sales advertisements in order to attain financial and sales goals.
- Managed and maintained records, reports and correspondence, recording, classifying, verifying, processing, researching, and reconciling accounts payable, commercial sales contracts, Internet orders, vendor purchase orders and financial discrepancies using complex accounting and computing databases. Performed extensive data entry into multiple database systems. Examined and approved all incoming product and supply request by ensuring all required information is submitted in a timely

manner.

- Regularly and independently generated letters, reports, and documents required to support the needs of the business which included system documentations, best practices, training materials, inventory procedures, weekly management reports, vacancy announcements, daily status reports, professional correspondence, multi-page memos, employee evaluation reports and product fact sheets.
- Supervised 10 people directly and 95 in-directly. Assisted in the recruitment, selection, retention process of employees. Served as benefits, compensation, employee relations, training & development liaison for department. Promoted teamwork through coaching, training, performance management and performance development to maintain an effective and efficient working environment.
- Managed and maintained fleet management and maintenance reports for home delivery and other service vehicles. Coordinated fleet rentals, repairs and preventative maintenance with third party service providers.
- Coordinated and managed facility maintenance request for general repairs, HVAC system, fire & security system and network systems.

### **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

American Society for Public Administration (ASPA)

### **ACADEMIC MEMBERSHIPS**

Pi Alpha Alpha Honor Society for Public Affairs and Administration

Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Honor Society

Golden Key International Honour Society

### **OTHER MEMBERSHIPS & COMMUNITY AFFILIATIONS**

Larry Thomas Leadership Academy, Community Advisor, (2018-Current)

2017 Omega Man of Year, Beta Phi Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.

Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Incorporated, Keeper of Finance Beta Phi Chapter (2015-Current)

Sixth District of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Incorporated, Co-Chair Budget and Audit Committee (2016-Current)

Uplift Project Inc., Board of Directors

Durham City/County Planning Commission, (Chair & Member 2010-2014)

Urban Ministries of Durham, Volunteer

Habitat for Humanity, Volunteer

Kyles Temple AME Zion Church, Board of Trustees, Former Chairman (Chair & Member 2007-2014)

North Carolina Central University Alumni Association, General Member