

June 8, 2018

Dear Members of the Durham Board of County Commissioners:

We are writing today on behalf of the Education Team of The People's Alliance regarding the budget decisions you will be making this coming Monday, June 11th. One of our longstanding education principles is to advocate for fully funding our public schools in Durham. This principle exists because we know that without adequate resources, our school children will not thrive as they should, and in turn, neither will our community. **We write to you today in support of the Board of Education's budgetary request of \$5 million in new money to meet the needs of our public schools for the 2018-19 budget cycle.**

As we all recognize, this year's budget proposal by the Board Of Education is significantly less than in past cycles. We view this conservative ask as a result of careful and diligent work from the Budget Preparation Advising Committee, and a commitment by our new leadership to more transparent and efficient use of money in our schools. As we know this increase in efficiency has been something the Board of County Commissioners has requested, we anticipate that you also see this effort, and will strongly consider the full funding of this request.

We would also like to acknowledge and commend the County Commission's support of both the expansion of Pre-k through your commitment to the 'penny for pre-k' initiative and your ongoing advocacy and vocal support for expanding Durham's pre kindergarten program. We would also like to acknowledge your support for bringing janitorial staff back under employment within DPS, and supporting the funding to provide a living wage and benefits to these employees. Both of these initiatives are vital to the betterment of our community, and represent central progressive values of The People's Alliance.

While we commend the conservative nature of this years Board of Education budget proposal and what it represents as far as efficiency in our system, we continue to keep in mind that NC is 43rd in pp funding, and that our state continues to provide completely inadequate funding to keep our system viable and thriving. There is a tremendous amount of need in our system that we must continue to support as a central priority, and there are important next steps to take and hurdles that need to be crossed.

In the coming years we will be facing the financial consequences of the K-3 Class Size Cap. There is a serious need to increase teacher supplements to match those of surrounding districts. There are important programs, like the Community Schools Model, that will need increased funding if we want them to succeed. And we must do all of this with poor support from our state. Because of these factors, we know that in coming years our school budget will need to expand again. While we will continue to advocate for the efficient and transparent use of money by DPS, we will also support increased funding requests, and The People's Alliance will look to the county commissioners to do the same. We must keep fully funding our public schools at the top of our ethical and practical priorities, especially when we are in a state actively working against this goal.

Thank you for your commitment to our schools and youth in Durham. We continue to appreciate your support for our schools.

Respectfully,

Molly Parks & Christopher Briggs

Education Team Co-Chairs, The People's Alliance