

Peoples Alliance-PAC Questionnaire for Durham

Board of Education 2020

Please return completed form along with your resume describing education, work history, community service and prior political experience AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, but by **Dec. 27, 2019 at the latest**. We intend to interview candidates on Jan. 4, 2020. We will be in touch with details about place and time.

Email responses to page.mc@frontier.com and to tom-miller1@nc.rr.com

Please note that following above deadline, the 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: **Paula Januzzi-Godfrey**

Address: **5117 Starcross Lane, Durham 27713**

E-mail address: **paulafordurhampublicschools@gmail.com**

Phone: **919-724-5231**

Candidate for District: **At Large**

1. What do you think is the most pressing issue facing public K-12 education in Durham? How have you been involved in addressing that issue, and how will you continue to address that issue as a board member?

The most pressing overriding issue is inequity. There is a huge disparity between schools in DPS, meaning that thousands of students, families and educators are not receiving fair treatment. This affects not only teacher retention, but student/family retention as well. This includes instructional issues and facility issues. There are numerous examples of deteriorating buildings and grounds, lack of heating/air and general lack of cleanliness in DPS schools.

As a DPS employee, I have addressed equity issues by advocating for and empowering teachers and families. I secured funding from donors for 12 beginning teachers in 4 schools who graduated from

out-of-state colleges, to retake a required Pearson test in order to be eligible for NC licensing. I informed state level advocates about this issue, which resulted in a change at the state level to discontinue that requirement. For the past 12 years, on a daily basis, I have advocated for equity for teachers regarding lack of funding for supplies, professional development and curriculum. In 2016-2019, I raised \$6,000 in donations to ensure that 300 students per year could purchase books at our school bookfair. I will always continue to advocate for policies and funding that create equitable schools across the district.

2. Pre-K: What is your vision for Universal Pre-K in Durham? Please include measurable goals and a timeline for expansion. Describe your understanding of DPS's role as a partner in this process.

My vision is that all 3-4 year olds in Durham have equitable access to high quality early childhood education. In 1994, I was elected to be the vice chair for Durham's Partnership for Children founding board. In a short speech to be elected as one of seven parent representatives on the board, I distinctly remember saying, "My son has been born into a family where he will not have to worry about receiving a quality early childhood education. I want ... all of his peers in Durham to have an equal opportunity to do the same." Twenty-five years later, I am still advocating for equity for all families.

The goals should be measured frequently, with psychometrically sound assessments. Evaluating and tracking children in Pre-K – grade 3 will reveal important data. Having worked in several DPS Schools, I continue to see the critical need for high-quality pre-K, as our students are not ready for kindergarten, academically, socially or emotionally. I would like to see all 3-4 year olds in Durham in high quality pre-K by 2023, with children in low-income families receiving priority. My understanding is that DPS supports the Pre-K classes at the Whitted School, Watts and Morehead Schools.

3. As a school board member, would you vote for a board resolution and lobby state legislators for a moratorium on approving more charters in NC and for allowing a pilot program for charters to become part DPS? Why or why not?

I would vote for a board resolution for a moratorium on approving more charter schools in NC because Durham is saturated with charter schools. I would advocate for more accountability measures from charter schools and

a comprehensive, sustainable, evidence-based evaluation process to better understand individual charter schools. Currently, charter schools are contributing greatly to resegregating our schools and communities. As DPS approaches redistricting and creating new schools, the notion of integrating charter schools as part of DPS, would need to be taken into serious consideration. My experiences from working in administration at one of Durham's more successful charter schools would bring a unique and much needed perspective to the board as these decisions are being made. We need to keep lines of communication open between DPS and charter schools if we are considering having charters become part of DPS and keep in mind that having charters as part of DPS would bring back funding. Working together could be an opportunity to improve some of our schools and attract families back to DPS, although it would require collaboration skills from all involved. All students in Durham deserve a quality, equitable education.

4. DPS now has four schools operating under a community schools model. Describe what "community schools model" means? Do you think DPS should fund community schools expansion? Why or why not?

DPS should fund community schools expansion, assuming there is accurate, adequate information to show that the current four schools are having success and that all stakeholders are providing feedback in a program evaluation process.

"The community schools model is a bottom-up, strengths-based approach to school improvement. The six pillars of the community school model include authentic parent and community engagement, inclusive leadership, and high quality teaching." All of these components, combined with collaborative leadership and a "problem solving" mind set are key to the success of any school. These components are sorely missing in most of schools. Most of our leaders and teachers are deeply committed and working incredibly hard; however, they are not being supported to do the work that is needed in order to meet families where they are.

The philosophical premise of community schools is the way that I served families and students for 35 years. They address economic and social equality in a respectful manner, and they support and provide the needed professional development for educators to play the critical role of connecting with students and families.

5. What percentage of DPS students are Latinx (described in NC public school data as “Hispanic”)? Describe ways that DPS can better recruit and retain Latinx principals, teachers and other school staff. What other supports do our Latinx students need and how can we fund those needs?

Currently, 33% of the students in DPS are identified as Latinx, a 3% increase from 2016-17.

DPS can better recruit and retain Latinx staff by partnering with local and state colleges, giving potential teachers time to visit and work in classrooms and hosting educational/informational events to specifically attract and empower Latinx educators. Hosting an EdCamp/Unconference geared towards Latinx teachers, and offering early career coaching /mentoring would be beneficial. Working with the DPS Foundation and other foundations to try to secure funding for graduate school scholarships for Latinx college students could be valuable.

Retention of our current Latinx staff could be improved by increasing the number of district translators, so that on-site school staff would be treated as professionals for the jobs they are hired to do and not used as on-the-spot translators.

Our Latinx students need to be surrounded by teachers and school staff who understand, implement and respect culturally responsive teaching. We need an increase in staff from the Equity Affairs office to better serve our Latinx students and families. Funding more translators, providing and monitoring high quality ESL services, ELL services, and co-located mental health services in Spanish would lead to more equitable education for Latinx students.

6. What is restorative justice as practiced in Durham public schools? What is your assessment of how DPS is doing in rolling out restorative justice practice in our schools?

Restorative practices in DPS are based on using restorative principles instead of punishment. RJ acknowledges that when students behave in troublesome ways they create opportunities to learn social and emotional skills. One of the goals for using RJ is to decrease punishment models and suspensions. It is being rolled out in tiers. The first tier focuses on building classroom communities. Elementary schools implementing RJ have begun by using morning circles in classrooms and also by having circles with their staff to model and build community with the adults in the school.

RJ should look very different in secondary schools. The roll out for RJ has been slow and the end goal is not clear. As with any large program implementation, it is a challenge to keep all staff in schools on the same page. In year two of RJ, there seems to be less enthusiasm for implementation. That is due in part to teacher/staff turnover and lack of district supports. Any program of this magnitude needs to be understood by all staff. In order for equity in all schools, there needs to be a structure in place to keep all new staff up to speed on district-wide mandated programs.

7. Do you think Durham should have School Resource Officers (SROs) in schools? If not, please explain why not. If so, what do you think their role should be? What is your assessment of the MOU between the sheriff and DPS?

IF there are SROs in schools, then they must be required to have Trauma Informed training, ACES & Resiliency training, Race Equity training, and Restorative Justice training and they should be considered a part of the school staff (attending staff meetings and trainings). Being part of a school community is very different than being a law enforcement officer in a community, and understanding what typical adolescent behavior looks and sounds like is critical. An SRO should not be in the schools as an outsider or law enforcement, but as a support. Students should be able to rely on SROs as a safety net, as they do teachers, counselors and social workers. If done well, having SROs in a school building can be an opportunity for students to build trust with officers and also for officers to have a better understanding of youth; however, without training and consistent supervision, SROs could be more harmful than helpful. DPS needs clear policies regarding what constitutes the involvement of an SRO, suspension or an arrest. Parents should be involved in all actions between an SRO and a student. Clear policies and MOU should better ensure equitable treatment for all students in all schools.

8. What is your plan for reducing racial disparities in suspensions in DPS?

In order to reduce racial disparities in suspensions in DPS more work needs to be done to build awareness within school staffs about racial bias. This will require more staffing in the DPS Office of Equity Affairs to allow them to reach more teachers/staff in more schools, and to increase their capacity to follow-up with teachers for on-site coaching. It is also time to address segregation in DPS.

We need to look closely at the type of data we are collecting and using to make decisions about restorative practices and suspensions. There are disparities between our middle and high schools as to when, why and who they suspend. Clear policies, culturally responsive training, and equitable restorative practice could decrease suspensions. In general, DPS staff need more thorough training in Restorative Justice practice throughout the district. It is necessary to teach students how to resolve conflicts without physical aggression and teach staff to know when to intervene. Schools need alternative methods of responding to students who break the rules. Students need adults in their school who they have built relationships with and who they can trust as allies. Increasing the number of black and brown staff can increase equity for all.

9. Do you support the Board of County Commissioners providing a recurring building maintenance fund for DPS properties? If not, why not. If so, what kind of formula would you use to calculate the yearly amount?

I support the Board of County Commissioners providing a recurring maintenance fund for DPS properties because they are public property. The funding needs to be equitable and forward thinking, taking into consideration the big picture and future housing trends and other planning in place. There are long-standing previous inequities in school facilities that need to be addressed. DPS building maintenance has been routinely underfunded and continues to fall behind schedule. When families are seeking out school choices, building appearance and maintenance do not go unnoticed. Calculating formulas for this type of und is not my forte, but I would advocate for a formula that is practical and sustainable.

10. If you are a current board member, describe the process you used this past year to evaluate the Superintendent and comment on whether you think it is effective in getting honest feedback from parents, teachers and principals. If you are a new candidate, what kind of evaluation of the superintendent would you like to use? How would you ensure that you got honest feedback from principals, teachers and parents?

I would recommend using a standards-based framework with the seven NC Standards for Superintendents for both formative and summative evaluations. The superintendent's reports should be organized by standards aligned to evaluation framework, which can then be added as evidence for the evaluation. Multiple measures and data collection types can be developed to be aligned to the evaluation as well, and should include not only test scores, but school and district climate, graduation

rates, etc. The evaluation should include a self-assessment from the superintendent and an assessment from every board member. When the process of evaluation is completed, it should provide potential for improving the system-wide operations of the district and provide the board with a system of accountability along with the needs of the superintendent. Feedback should promote professional growth.

A variety of stakeholder input should be non-negotiable and gathered in a valid and systematic manner. A planned deliberate effort should be made to solicit stakeholder input. Anonymous surveys could be used and some small confidential focus groups could be conducted as well. All schools should have an opportunity to provide input, perhaps through SIT. Equity of voices should be sought out from all stakeholders.

11. What is your current involvement in and personal work regarding using a race equity lens in making decisions? If you are a current board member, please offer an example from board decision-making. If new candidate, please offer an example from a personal or professional experience.

I have been the Literacy Coach at Merrick-Moore for the past 2-½ years. This has given me the opportunity to teach all of the 80 staff/teachers in our school about the importance of the daily curriculum decisions they make as educators and the critical need for diverse books, diverse authors, diverse resources and representation of diverse book characters that reflect the children in their classes. In August, I planned and led a three day Teacher Institute for our entire staff. Windows and Mirrors (reflection of lives/experiences where students can see themselves) in literature was the theme of the Institute. I shared hundreds of books and on-line resources that could be used to teach equality, model equity and assure that our students would see themselves in a print-rich school. I also planned a staff field trip that included a tour of Black Wall Street, NCCU/The Secret Game, Durham History Museum, the Civil Rights mural outside Durham Arts Council and a visit to Hayti Heritage Center, where NCCU historian and professor, Dr. Henry McKoy, presented a history of Black Entrepreneurship in Durham. I intentionally planned the Institute to elicit self-reflection about equity and instructional decisions made by our teachers daily.

12. What is your knowledge about the current issues regarding school under-enrollment and overcrowding and your perspective on what principles should guide redistricting?

I attended one of the public sessions explaining the proposed "boundary changes" this past fall. I'm not convinced that families were actually heard. We have too much at stake losing families to charters to not be aware of the importance of making sure that families are heard.

The guiding principles should focus on equity. This is a natural opportunity to think out of the box and make redistricting changes to create much needed desegregation in DPS. I moved to Durham in 1992 when the city-county school merger was about to take place, and magnet schools were proposed to prevent white flight. Families figured out how to avoid going to certain schools, and that still continues. If equity truly matters to DPS and the Durham community, this is the time to prove it. Parents should not have to try to find the best school in town. Every DPS school should be diverse and offer excellence.

I see overcrowding and under-enrollment as a gift. I was inspired after attending a session at the Color of Education conference, "School Resegregation: Trends and Possible Solutions" in October. There are solutions. I am ready to lead the way to equity for DPS.

13. Is local operational funding of our schools too high, about right, or too low? Please explain your response.

I support funding that is at least at the national average of per pupil spending. Unfortunately, we must also contend with the General Assembly in North Carolina. Working in DPS schools, I have always felt that there could be a better balance of how we use our funding and resources. I will ask hard questions of our administration and insist on detailed information and rationale for spending until I understand what is being proposed and how it will be measured. Teachers and principals frequently question decisions and purchases made by the district. Working directly in schools, I have seen resources being wasted, while spending my own money on resources that are practical and necessary. Huge amounts of money are spent on programmatic initiatives and trainings that are either poor quality, not adequately supported or lack follow-through. I have seen this repeated over and over again during my 17 years in DPS. Our funds need to be spent where we know they will provide positive outcomes. Professional development, when done well, will always give us a return on our investment. More mental health specialists are desperately needed, and

there is a strong need for safe and clean facilities. Again, equity across the district should be our goal.

Personal Information:

1. Please describe your educational background, noting any degrees and honors you have earned. (Skip if resume included)

Resume included

2. Do you have children? If so, where do they, or did they, attend school?
I have two grown children, ages 23 and 27. Both of my children attended RN Harris and Forest View Elementary Schools. My son attended RN Harris K-4, and my daughter was there for only for kindergarten. I was offered a job at Forest View and moved both of my children with me at that time. For Middle School, my son chose to attend Rogers Herr and my daughter chose to attend Githens. They both thrived within their respective middle schools. They both attended and graduated from Jordan High School. My son has since, graduated from University of Wisconsin, and is employed as Assistant General Manager for the Daytona Tortuga Baseball Organization in FL. My daughter graduated from Appalachian State University, participated for one year with Americorps City Year in public schools in Chicago, and is currently in graduate school at the University of Chicago, pursuing her Masters in Social Service Administration.
3. Please describe your adult employment history (skip if resume included)
Resume is included.