

Durham Public Schools Board of Education Work Session PRECIS

Agenda Item: The Durham Advocates for Exceptional Children (DAEC), Disability Awareness Month Proclamation

Building Our Future Strategic Plan Priority: 1 ☒ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

Staff Liaison Present: Dr. Kristin Bell

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Main Points:

- The administration is requesting the re-reading and review of the proclamation from The Durham Advocates for Exceptional Children (DAEC), Disability Awareness Month by the DPS Board of Education.
- Once re-read and any needed updates or revisions needed, the proclamation will be reposted on the Durham Public Schools' website to promote the awareness of Disability Month.

Fiscal Implications:

- N/A

Purpose

Information/Discussion ☐

Action ☒

Consent ☐

Reviewed by:

☐ Finance _____ ☐ Attorney _____



The Durham Advocates for Exceptional Children (DAEC)

Disability History & Awareness Month

Whereas, the General Assembly of North Carolina ratified Senate Bill 753 designating the month of October as Disability History and Awareness Month and requiring local boards of education to provide instruction on disability history and awareness; and

Whereas, Durham Public Schools and our community partners believe in the importance of highlighting the achievements and contributions of individuals with disabilities and acknowledge that unjust societal barriers and attitudes keep some individuals from realizing their full potential at school, work, home, and/or in their communities; and

Whereas, over 15% of Durham Public School students in preschool through high school are identified as having a disability as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); and

Whereas, antiquated attitudes and beliefs of disability as a weakness or as a categorization that systematically defines and confines a person as less capable, less deserving, or simply less than must be eliminated; and

Whereas, progress has been made over the decades to advance Disability Rights, there is a recognized shift to also embrace Disability Justice which provides a framework that articulates an expectation of difference in disability, identity, and culture—embracing the impact of intersectionality and the collective's need for interdependence; and

Whereas, disability history education must include the events and stories of injustice, segregation, and oppression, as well as the advancements made over time, and disability awareness must also include acceptance and authentic inclusion, not mere tolerance; and



Whereas, prioritizing an open, inclusive district and school environment is critical to adopting and implementing equitable best practices to acknowledge and support the strengths and talents of students with disabilities, as well as to meet their educational needs; and

Whereas, inclusive classroom settings, equitable access to resources, and the recruitment and retention of high-quality staff benefit all students with disabilities; and

Whereas, instructing all students in disability history and awareness promotes an inclusive and welcoming school community and can improve the lives of all students by deconstructing barriers created and sustained by ableism, discrimination, and ignorance while building connection, communication, and collaboration between students regardless, or perhaps because of, their differences; and

Whereas, Durham Public Schools recognizes and celebrates the value and talents that people with disabilities add to our workplaces and communities;

Now, therefore be it resolved that the Durham Public Schools' Board of Education does hereby proclaim October 2025 "Disability History and Awareness Month" for Durham Public Schools and recommends that all schools implement programs and special activities to instruct all students on disability history and awareness; and

Be it further resolved that the Board of Education encourages administrators to support educators across grade levels and content areas to acknowledge Disability Awareness Month and use resources that are inclusive of all our diverse learners; and

Be it further resolved that the Board of Education calls on all students, educators, and community members to observe Disability History and Awareness Month and advance efforts to support and advocate for individuals with disabilities.



Special acknowledgement is extended to Emerge Pediatric Therapy, Exceptional Children's Assistance Center (ECAC), Autism Society of NC, Durham County Library, and Durham County Cooperative Extension for serving as initial cocreators of this proclamation in October 2021.

This ____ day of October 2025.

Bettina Umstead, DPS Board Chair

Millicent Rogers, DPS Board Vice Chair

Natalie Beyer

Emily Chavez

Joy Harrell Goff

Wendell Tabb

Jessica Carda-Auten