

Equitable Investment in Schools

OBJECTIVE: We need equitable and substantial investment in the quality of our schools throughout Durham. We need to invest in the physical facilities, and in the resources made available to students, their families, and teachers, to ensure we are investing in the future of Durham. We need to coordinate land use and school planning to ensure school funding and facilities can accommodate new students with reasonable capacity. We need to prioritize funding and resources that serve English Language Learners, students with disabilities, students of color, LGBTQIA+ students, low-income students, and neighborhoods with historical disinvestment. We need to hear directly from these communities in making decisions in our schools.

BACKGROUND: Durham’s legacy of racially segregated neighborhoods and method of funding and assigning schools, along with the increase in charter schools, means that our schools are once again highly segregated. Residents experience barriers to accessing and providing quality education because of the historic disinvestment in school facilities, teachers, and students in Black and lower-income communities. As families with privilege change neighborhoods to access higher-performing public schools or choose private schooling, many schools are left with limited funding sources and a higher concentration of students of color and families with lower incomes. This has led to less funding for up-to-date text books, multilingual student and teacher support, technology, extracurricular opportunities, mental health services, and employment or internship connections in these schools. This lack of investment reduces these students’ chances of success.

We want the quality of schools in Durham to reflect our focus on the future of this community, through our students. We want students, regardless of where they live in Durham, to have access to highly-resourced schools where they can thrive in their learning environment. We want the allocation of funding and resources for our schools to be done with a focus on racial equity.

Quotes from Durham Residents

“all schools should have access to same resources (healthy food, technology, school nurses, etc.)”

“ESL Teacher that can understand the language of the kids coming from all over the world”

“Education should be accessible for everyone.”

“A thriving public school system: resources placed to attract better teachers, great schools in the area but they're not equitable, the same resources per person, charter schools have become much more expansive in Durham, People tend to live in other counties, based on school system and neighboring counties aren't playing well, more walkable schools, Diversity and inclusion in the system, consistency across the schools”

“Funding for public schools; State legislature; Durham Public Schools underfunded. Wealthy people sending kids to private schools which increases segregation. Want to send my kid to public school but also want them to have a good education and opportunities”

“Segregation in schools is a big problem. Busing. Charter schools. Redlining connection.

“School are "uneven". Uniform high quality schools.”

“Public educations going from my neighborhoods middle schools to non-neighborhood high schools. Drains high achieving students to other places.”