

Public Comments Received for the May 2, 2022
Regular Session Meeting
(The Deadline for Comments was Sunday, May 1st at 2pm)

Dear Chair Howerton, Vice Chair Jacobs, Commissioners Allam, Burns and Carter & County Manager Dr. Sowell:

Good Morning!

How much longer must boys and young men of color in Durham wait? I urge maintaining the My Brother's Keeper Manager position to collaboratively and strategically work with local agencies and community-based nonprofits to oversee policy and program implementation, pursue funding streams and develop a comprehensive sustainability model for MBK Durham.

I am reaching out to again advocate for the [creation of a My Brother's Keeper \(MBK\) Durham Advisory Board](#) to provide the leadership and accountability required for a robust collective impact strategy that can transform the quality of life of boys and young men of color. In addition, I ask commissioners to direct staff and Dr. Sowell to support a [revised](#) Boys & Young Men of Color (BYMOC) Local Action Plan for Durham County by a cross section of stakeholders to improve coordination, strengthen collaboration & shared responsibility, and systemic reforms with clear goals, measurable outcomes and timeframe to inform the collective impact strategy in partnership with the City of Durham and Durham Public Schools Board of Education. With the creation of the Board and revised Local Action Plan, we have the opportunity, when implemented, have an aligned and sustainable ecosystem that improves education, health, employment outcomes while reducing the likelihood of justice involvement.

We want BYMOC to define their futures and thrive not merely survive. We want them competent, engaged, prepared and empowered to compete for the career opportunities present and future that will define the workforce in Durham. According to data from Durham Police Department, over 95% of the city's gun violence victims and perpetrators are black boys and young men. According to academic achievement, proficiency and discipline data from Durham Public Schools, boys of color, specifically black boys, have the lowest percentage that met minimum grade level proficiency and college and career readiness while also having the highest short- and long-term suspensions and dropout since 2015. Unfortunately, the most juvenile petitions and confinements at the Youth Home have consistently been black boys. We have a systemic problem that requires a systemic strategy.

We are not doing enough to educate, equip and empower boys and young men in color (BYMOC) in Durham! The data shows we are failing them, and they deserve better!

Similar to the Durham Early Childhood Action Plan and Durham Master Aging Plan commissioned by the Durham Board of County Commissioners, we need the Durham Board of County Commissioners to actualize and operationalize it's commitment to boys and young men of color by directing the new County Manager to create the My Brother's Keeper Durham Advisory Board and a revised Boys & Young Men of Color Local Action Plan to build and sustain a transformative ecosystem to serve as a living, breathing document that guides work, is reported out on and is assessed and evolved as necessary.

While I understand the administration is engaging in an operational assessment of MBK Durham to conduct an analysis that evaluates operations and processes to identify opportunities for improvement, stakeholder engagement is essential if we are to ensure MBK Durham has the leadership, governance structure and community support to build and sustain an ecosystem that provides responsive services that

ensure boys of color enter school ready to learn, reading at level, graduating from high school ready for college and career, completing postsecondary education or training and successfully entering the workforce.

The Charles Hamilton Houston Foundation, Inc. will continue to work tirelessly to ensure boys and young men of color in our Young Men of Excellence Program and Career Pathway Program gain the skills, experiences, and support that will empower them to reach their potential through education and training to achieve career success and economic stability and mobility.

We welcome the opportunity to work with the administration to coordinate this effort for this critical and important work to begin without further delay.

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In Commitment of Service to Boys & Young Men of Color,

DeWarren K. Langley, JD, MPA, MHFA, YMHFA
Visionary & Executive Director

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