Citizen Comments for August 1, 2022 Work Session



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? Two years ago, an initial proposal was made to the Durham County Board of County Commissioners for the [creation of a My Brother’s Keeper (MBK) Durham Advisory Board](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dropbox.com%2Fs%2Fctnriz51zzbalzd%2FProposal%2520for%2520the%2520Creation%2520of%2520the%2520MBK%2520Durham%2520Advisory%2520Board%2520%252808-18-20%2529.pdf%3Fdl%3D0&data=05%7C01%7Cswardrick%40dconc.gov%7C14c45f03e2b64ab719fe08da7340dae6%7Cc16a00a3560947c0b2c272d8635e3423%7C0%7C0%7C637949019647726404%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=WuJHxfohQaueW3hIAYgmDMgUOkNCMkxjV%2BLRMKcdEK4%3D&reserved=0) to provide the leadership, coordination, collaboration and accountability required for a robust collective impact strategy that can transform the quality of life for boys and young men of color.  In addition, I am asking commissioners to direct staff and Dr. Sowell to support a [revised](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dcopublichealth.org%2FHome%2FShowDocument%3Fid%3D13974&data=05%7C01%7Cswardrick%40dconc.gov%7C14c45f03e2b64ab719fe08da7340dae6%7Cc16a00a3560947c0b2c272d8635e3423%7C0%7C0%7C637949019647726404%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=EOGKvVvgsn89%2FtjcygOata9Gp2nkyyNb7gm7%2FzmaQso%3D&reserved=0) 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, to 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.  These datapoints are representative of our collective failure to provide the educational, developmental and economic resources and opportunities that BYMOC need to contribute to society and build a future for themselves.

We have a systemic problem that requires a systemic strategy.  Durham can and should lead on achievement and positive life outcomes for boys and young men of color.

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 Transformative Change for 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.

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 lean, reading at level, graduating from high school ready for college and career, completing postsecondary education or training and successfully entering the workforce, we cannot continue to delay action.

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
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