



Agenda Action Form Overview

The Board is requested to continue discussing the possibility of additional support for the three Hope Learning Centers, which are privately-run remote learning centers serving over 300 Durham K-12 students. The providers have requested an additional \$491,000 to support the rest of the cost of the 3rd quarter.

Background/Justification

Nearly Durham Public Schools students will have spent the final quarter of SY19-20 and all of SY20-21 engaging in remote learning. Durham Public Schools achieved 1:1 technology (including computers and hotspots for those who needed them) early in SY20-21, but it is still the case that many students do not have safe and/or productive home learning environments. The reasons for this are numerous, but include having working parents, inadequate daycare provisions, lack of supervision, inadequate internet connectivity or support, or a combination of the above and other factors. As such, both Durham Public Schools and the three Hope Learning Center providers (Student U, YMCA, and Kate's Korner, using the DPS Foundation as a fiscal agent) provided remote learning environments throughout the first semester of SY20-21 and plan to continue providing them in the 2nd semester. In the case of the private centers, service provision beyond the end of January is contingent on additional funding. The providers are asking Durham County to support the remaining cost of the 3rd quarter and have asked the DPS Foundation to fund the fourth quarter.

Policy Impact

Committing to support remote learning centers for Durham students is not out of line with Durham County's overall role supporting local K-12 education. The County has a history of funding both the public schools as well as non-profit organizations that work with the schools to support students.

Procurement Background

There are procurement decisions associated with this item. The County did not solicit proposals for remote learning centers, but rather was engaged by the DPS Foundation and prospective Hope Learning Center providers during the summer of 2020 about helping to support the operation of these centers. There were discussions about partnering with other public and private sector organizations to help provide additional remote learning classrooms, which may still be a possibility if necessary or desired.

Fiscal Impact

The County's initial commitment of \$405,000 was only anticipated to cover six weeks of the first semester, but given additional fundraising and a slower-than-anticipated ramp-up of enrollment, this level of County funding was a sufficient contribution to help cover the entire first semester. *Beyond the \$124,000 committed by the BOCC on Dec. 14th, the remaining cost for the 3rd quarter is \$491,000 and for the entire 2nd semester are \$1,019,800.* The significantly higher cost to support second semester is the result of several factors, including starting at full enrollment, no ongoing support from the City, and a reduced ability to raise private funds for what are increasingly view as ongoing public school support functions. While it may be easy to imagine that the County would pay less if all or more of the remote learning centers were run by DPS, it



seems broadly true that ongoing remote learning centers would ultimately rely on County support regardless of who runs them.

Recommendation

County staff have no recommendation at this time.