



## Legislation Text

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**Item:**

**Budget Amendment Ordinance No. 21BCC000036 Transferring \$405,000 Across Functional Areas and Approving a Contract with the Durham Public Schools Foundation for Support of Community-Based Hope Learning Centers (20min)**

**Date of BOCC Meeting: October 12, 2020**

**Request for Board Action:**

The Board is requested to review and approve a contract with the Durham Public Schools Foundation for Support of Community-Based Hope Learning Centers and approve Budget Amendment Ordinance No. 21BCC000036 transferring \$405,000 across functional areas to fund this contract.

With the rapid spread of the COVID pandemic, Durham Public Schools had to quickly pivot to deliver remote digital instruction to all 33,000 DPS students. This was and is an enormous undertaking. There are several critical pieces that must be in place to ensure digital equity for all students: (1) devices and internet access, (2) tech support, (3) well trained and supported teachers, and (4) a physical environment conducive to learning. If students are missing any one of these components, they won't be able to access learning this fall and the consequences on their lives and our broader community will be felt for decades.

Durham Public Schools initially offered six sites for a mix of paying and free students, with only those who meet the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness and those qualifying for free and reduced lunch getting free seats. In the first several weeks the DPS sites were open, enrollment only reached about 25% of capacity. Last week the Board of Education opted to reduce the number of DPS remote learning centers to three, though if demand grows beyond the 450 seats at these remaining sites, the other sites may be re-opened.

The HOPE Learning Centers that the Commissioners committed to funding are a community response to ensuring that the most vulnerable K-12 students have safe, welcoming and supportive space to access their online learning. These learning centers respond to a need seen across the state and country to provide a supervised, supportive environment for students who do not have access to a space conducive to remote learning during the day. These centers will not only provide an environment and adult support to access their online learning but will also provide support for meeting our most vulnerable students' social-emotional and nutrition needs.

The Hope Learning Centers are free for all qualifying students and are prioritizing placement for students experiencing homelessness or transitional housing, those who qualify for free or reduced lunch, those whose parents who work in essential jobs and aren't able to have childcare at home during the day (food industry, custodial staff, healthcare), those with parents who have become unemployed due to COVID, those who are part of the foster care system, and those who live in Durham Housing Authority Housing.

The Durham Public Schools Foundation is acting as the fiscal agent and organizing agency for Hope Learning Center classrooms located at the YMCA, Student U, Kate's Korner. Maximum current capacity is 338 students and enrollment after 3 weeks is a little over 50% of that number. Additional capacity is available if enrollment

demand exceeds capacity. Durham County will reimburse the DPS Foundation for a small amount of administrative cost and then, through the foundation, reimburse each of the host sites at a rate of \$200 per student per week. The County will only pay for students served.

The funding source for this contract and the \$405,000 is the funds that were set aside as part of the FY 2020-21 Budget Process to be used for COVID related expenses. They are being moved from the General Government functional area to the Education functional area to most accurately capture education related expenses.

**Alignment with Strategic Plan:** The Hope Learning Centers provide a supportive environment that is strongly aligned with Goal 1 of the Durham County Strategic Plan (Community and Family Enrichment), but also ties to community health (Goal 2) and community safety (Goal 3).

**Resource Persons:** Drew Cummings, Chief of Staff; Jodi Miller, General Manager; Claudia Hager, General Manager; Magan Gonzales-Smith, Executive Director (Durham Public Schools Foundation); Alexandra Zagbayou, Executive Director (Student U); Willie Darby, Senior Asst. County Attorney

**County Manager's Recommendation:** The County Manager recommends review and approve a contract with the Durham Public Schools Foundation for Support of Community-Based Hope Learning Centers and approve Budget Amendment Ordinance No. 21BCC000036 transferring \$405,000 across functional areas to fund this contract.

County Manager: \_\_\_\_\_