

Dear Dr. Townsend-Smith:

The Office of Charter Schools has requested a statement of impact on Durham Public Schools of the proposed charter schools Ascend Leadership Academy: Durham and Eldred Montessori Secondary School for consideration by the Charter Schools Advisory Board and State Board of Education.

In addition to the inconsistent academic outcomes, reduced oversight, reduced diversity and reduced public and parental accountability brought by the expansion of charter schools in North Carolina, Durham County is especially affected. Durham County citizens are penalized for their significant local investments in public education, because that investment has drawn disproportionate interest from charter school operators seeking their cut. Durham Public Schools redirects per-pupil funding to 13 charter schools in Durham County, two virtual schools, and 28 charter schools located outside of Durham County. This is inefficient to the taxpayer and contributes to the inequities in Durham.

In addition, Durham Public Schools operates a successful Montessori program consisting of two elementary schools and a middle school. The opening of a secondary Montessori charter school may have ripple effects on enrollment at the earlier grades making it more difficult to equitably sustain Montessori programming.

The rapid expansion of charter schools is continuing to exert pressure on traditional public schools to cut specialized services for students as enrollment shifts. Nowhere is this more true than in Durham County. We respectfully request that these applications be rejected.

Sincerely,  
Bert L'Homme

**Bert L'Homme, Ph.D.**  
*Superintendent*

919-560-2000 Ext. 21749

[Bert.LHomme@dpsnc.net](mailto:Bert.LHomme@dpsnc.net)



.....  
[Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#)