

Community Letter From
Durham's Partnership for Children, *a Smart Start Initiative*

October 4, 2007

Dear Friend of Young Children:

As an early childhood educator, business person or parent who is working to prepare young children for success in school and life, you know just how important a good education system is to the overall health of a community and its economy. Without good schools, the strength and knowledge of our future workforce is in jeopardy as more industries are competing for employees globally.

A critical element of good schools is the facilities in which our students learn and our teachers teach. That is why Durham 's Partnership for Children Board of Directors recently endorsed the county bond issues for better public school facilities and improvements at Durham Technical Community College and the Museum of Life and Science.

Durham Public Schools (DPS) is grappling with critical growth issues that could undermine its progress in meeting education benchmarks for our children. More than half of our schools are at or above capacity, and we are growing at a steady rate. In fact, over the past year, student enrollment has increased more than any other single year in the past decade!

DPS must start building now to have room for more students rather than playing catch-up after even more schools become overcrowded. A \$194.2 million bond would provide three new schools and additions and renovations to many more existing schools.

A successful bond vote would also provide \$8.7 million to support expansions and facility improvements at Durham Technical Community College . You know how important Durham Tech is in supporting the professional development of the child care community. The college, considered one of the best community colleges in the nation, must keep up pace with growth by continuing to offer more courses that support our local industries, including early childhood.

There also is a bond issue on the ballot that would provide \$4.2 million to enhance exhibits, provide classrooms, and improve facilities at the Museum of Life and Science. The Museum is an important asset for Durham residents of all ages. It is a place where young children and their families can experience a unique learning environment that nurtures their sense of wonder and healthy development.

The future of our community's economic viability greatly depends on our children receiving the best possible education beginning at birth. We ask you support a comprehensive educational system and help support Durham's future workforce when casting your vote on November 6.

Sincerely,

Michael Palmer
Board Chair
Durham's Partnership for Children

