

Joala Downey

14 years old

Durham County

Youth Voice 2015 Pre-Summit Assignment

My name is Joala Downey and I am representing Durham County. My mother works with the County so I was able to speak to some of her coworkers about what they do and about what County Managers and County Commissioners do.

Durham County's Board of Commissioners is made up of five members who are elected according to a countywide vote. Commissioners serve four year terms, following the election each member of the Board votes for a Chairman and a Vice Chairman. Local priorities of the Board of Commissioners consist of coming up with county policy, creating an annual budget, set the annual property tax rate, electing certain officials, planning for county needs and enacting on local ordinances. The Board of Commissioners is able to call bond referendums, allow the county manager to enter contracts and establish new programs and departments.

Durham's County Manager is voted in by the Board of Commissioners to assume the role of "President" over Durham County Government. As County Manager, Mr. Davis supervises and plans the daily activities of the departments for the Board of Commissioners. He does this by making sure that all orders, policies, state laws and guidelines are followed. Mr. Davis can also make suggestions for an annual budget and other specific matters of business. Finally, it is Mr. Davis job to represent Durham County when doing business and making deals with other counties and agencies.

Although I didn't get a chance to speak with any members of the Board of Commissioners nor Mr. Davis I was so fortunate as to speak with Durham County's Deputy Manager. Mrs. Welton's role as Deputy County Manager is to supervise Health and Human Services, Public Health, General Government Tax Administration, Economic Development, Social Services and many more. Along with being responsible for so many County Departments if Mr. Davis is out of town, handling business or is unavailable Mrs. Welton would assume his responsibilities until he returned. If Mr. Davis is the "President" of Durham County Government Mrs. Welton would be considered the "Vice President" and therefore would need to be able to do both her job and his job if it came down to it.