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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**GREAT SCHOOLS IN WAKE COALITION TO HOST EDUCATION FORUM
March 20th Event to Feature National Experts and Foster Community Engagement**

Raleigh, NC, March 11, 2010—On Saturday, March 20th, the Great Schools in Wake Coalition (GSIW) will host an important fact-sharing forum that celebrates the strengths of our public schools and addresses the challenges to maintaining national leadership and high student achievement in Wake County. The forum, to be held at the McKimmon Center at NC State University, will run from 8:30am – 12:30pm and is free and open to the public.

GSIW is a growing coalition representing more than 10,000 parents, students, business leaders, taxpayers and civic organizations that advocate for all students in public schools. The coalition is offering this Forum to allow citizens to hear nationally recognized experts share their insights on the key issues affecting the Wake County debate over community versus neighborhood schools, to have the opportunity to ask questions, and to join small group discussions.

“Many people are taking a stand in the current school debate based on emotions, not facts,” said GSIW Chair Yevonne Brannon. “We feel it is Great Schools’ responsibility to share this important research so that the public can make informed decisions in the interest of all students in Wake County. Some of our newly elected School Board members have indicated that they are unfamiliar with national research on the challenges of high poverty schools. The Forum is a great opportunity for everyone in our community to become well informed and to engage in constructive dialog.”

GSIW Forum speakers will include:

- Gerald Grant, Professor Emeritus, Syracuse University and Author, [Hope & Despair in the American City: Why There Are No Bad Schools in Raleigh](#)
- Richard Kahlenberg, Senior Fellow, Century Foundation
- Bill McNeal, Former Superintendent, Wake County Public Schools
- Caroline Massengill, Past President, Magnet Schools of America; Former Director of WCPSS Magnet Schools

- Benita Jones, UNC School of Law
- Amy Hawn Nelson, UNCC, Dept. of Sociology

Local developer Greg Hatem noted: “Wake County is a rich and vibrant community. Our top-ranked public schools have been a key draw for businesses and individuals relocating to our area. To consider passing a resolution that promises to send an award-winning system into turmoil—without looking at all of the available data—is irresponsible. I urge the public to come to the Great Schools in Wake Forum to learn from true experts.”

People wishing to register for the March 20th Forum can visit:
<http://www.greatschoolsinline.org>

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About Great Schools in Wake Coalition:

A project of WakeUP Wake County, Great Schools in Wake Coalition (GSIW) is a community coalition of organizations, business leaders, parents and citizen advocates who are working to ensure educational excellence in the Wake County Public School System. GSIW’s mission is to provide accurate information to educate the public about policy initiatives that would impact the quality of education, foster well-informed discussions about critical education issues, and advocate for policies that improve public education in Wake County. GSIW is a project of WakeUP Wake County. For more information on the Coalition or to join, please visit: greatschoolsinline.org.