



Contacts: Yevonne Brannon/Patty Williams  
Tel: 919-244-6243/919-696-8059  
Email: [info@greatschoolsinline.org](mailto:info@greatschoolsinline.org)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **GREAT SCHOOLS IN WAKE CALLS FOR DELAY IN IMPLEMENTATION OF STUDENT ASSIGNMENT PLAN**

### **New Board Must Take Immediate Action to Stop Largest “Un-assignment” In Wake County History**

Raleigh, NC—January 9, 2012—Great Schools in Wake (GSIW) is calling for a halt to the rapid and reckless implementation of a new WCPSS assignment plan. The current version of the plan effectively “un-assigns” 600,000+ addresses from a base assignment model that offered residents the assurance of knowing where their children would go to school based on where they lived.

While GSIW *fully supports* the long-overdue guarantee that once a child begins a school, they can finish there, as well as the family-friendly policy of giving siblings priority in assignment, there are glaring omissions in the plan that demand further analysis. Of particular concern are the increased busing costs that threaten to take even more funding away from the classroom at a time when we have cut teaching assistants and custodians and have not given teachers a raise in three years.

In March, 2011, Great Schools in Wake co-authored a white paper, “Can Controlled Choice Solve Wake County's School Assignment Problems?” Among the questions raised regarding what a new student assignment plan should address included:

- Would the plan provide a balance between individual family needs and the needs of the community as a whole, while also remaining *academically sound* and *cost effective*?
- Would the plan truly provide *stability, choice, and proximity* while improving student achievement?
- Is it realistic to expect the plan to accomplish all of its goals while also accommodating the *future growth* predicted for Wake County?
- Will this plan increase the overall *costs* of educating students in Wake County by creating more high poverty, racially identifiable, low performing schools?

The assignment plan currently being driven through at breakneck speed fails to address any of these critical questions substantively.

“The public has been offered what is essentially a glorified PR and marketing plan,” said Yevonne Brannon, Chair, GSIW. “Parents remain thoroughly confused; many are lulled by the prospect of grandfathering and keeping their current school assignment and are unaware of the significant costs and considerable upheaval that awaits our community. There is little guarantee that the purported priorities of the plan—proximity, stability, and choice—are, in fact, actually realized if the plan is implemented in its current state. Glossy brochures and presentations are no substitute for cold, hard facts and meaningful public engagement.”

In its new position paper, GSIW highlights the top 10 reasons why the “choice” student assignment plan must be delayed and calls for the following steps to be taken before implementing a new plan:

- Complete, detailed cost analysis
- Reevaluation of feeder patterns
- Magnet program assessment
- Analysis to ensure balanced school environments that increase academic success for all children

“The most reliable and consistent statistic comes from the thousands of families—94 percent of respondents—who have weighed in with their preference not to change student assignment,” noted Brannon. “That families are content with current assignments affords us the luxury to slow down the rapid pace of implementation and to get solid answers to key questions. We need to move forward with a new plan, but without a clear and thorough understanding of the long term costs and consequences of such a plan, proceeding on the current course and speed is simply irresponsible.”

###

**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. For more information on the Coalition or to join, please visit: [greatschoolsinline.org](http://greatschoolsinline.org).