

I have been an educator for more than twenty-five years, and a Wake County resident and taxpayer for nearly twenty years. Both of my sons have attended Wake County Public Schools. As a citizen, taxpayer, parent, and educator, I urge this Board in the strongest terms possible not to proceed with its current rapid review and vote on the proposed student assignment plan.

Everyone here in this room knows that exactly one week from today there will be an election for a majority of seats on this Board. To plan an upcoming vote on a new assignment plan that affects nearly 150,000 students, in the midst of what portends to be the most important school board election in decades, smacks of political theatre rather than good governance and diligent decision-making.

This race to make a decision is also producing great anxiety among parents—and this angst is caused by a board majority that has made hollow promises of stability, choice, and community input. The proposed policy as it currently stands has many flaws and deserves a much more thorough review, revision, and refinement. Among the most glaring shortcomings is that this plan:

- lays out many ill-defined if not completely non-existent feeder patterns between schools (thereby increasing parental concerns about exactly where their children are supposed to go to school in the future)
- threatens the future success of the county's award-winning magnet programs (thereby jeopardizing millions of dollars in federal grants)
- describes only the vaguest scheme for filling new schools with "volunteer" families (thereby potentially creating both over-crowded and under-utilized schools in the same districts)

- provides no estimates for future transportation costs (this from a board majority that came into office complaining about past fiscal practices)
- has a strong probability of leading to an increasing number of schools with a high concentration of children from low wealth families (even in the face of nearly half a century of peer-reviewed research that demonstrates where such schools impose great burdens on students, parents, teachers, and staff—burdens which often cost literally millions of dollars to address—all this also coming from a board majority which promised to be good stewards of the school budget)

I urge you not to dismantle our nationally recognized, award winning school system. The harm you may do—in the name of political expediency—could reverberate for years to come in neighborhoods with declining schools and home values, and a growing gap between have and have-nots in our community. That is not the school system we have now and it is not the one we should want for our children in the future.