

## **Resource Assignment Plan** Jim Martin, to School Board June 7, 2011

It is concerning to me the extent to which school assignment plans are being discussed as though they will be either a **magic cure**, or the **death blow** for our schools.

Neither the old plan, nor either of the new sketches of plans will be either. No student assignment plan will be effective without careful administration and effective resourcing.

In this regard, it is good that we are having discussion about strengthening student achievement. Nevertheless, from an educator's perspective, I have trouble with language that selects some schools as "achievement choice"...implying what? That other schools will get the resources for, and have the expectations of being just good enough to get by?

It is stated that "achievement choice" schools will be selected largely based on students growth and performance on reading and math End-of-Grade tests, and the concentration of high performing teachers (apparently also measured by student performance on reading and math tests). Last I checked there is a lot more to education than just reading and math.

Such testing is one tool for assessment. But percentile rankings from standardized tests are an extremely incomplete measure of student achievement or teacher performance. In the classroom, effective educators know to capitalize on what is known as multiple intelligences to improve learning. Similarly in assessment, we must develop more comprehensive achievement assessments **before** student achievement is used as the basis for student assignment and resource distribution.

Once achievement is assessed, the goal to maintain "a healthy achievement balance" (Blue plan language) or to ensure that "no school has proficiency levels more than 10% below the system wide average" (Green plan language), are laudable. However I want to call your attention to language of the "old assignment plan" which targeted having "less than 25% of students at any school, averaged across a two-year period [scoring] below grade level on the Reading End-of-Grade test."

I can assure you bussing was not a primary factor preventing the system from meeting this target. So what were the factors that prevented us from meeting our previous achievement targets? And how will they be addressed in any new plan? Is it per chance that as North Carolina is apparently moving from 46<sup>th</sup> to 49<sup>th</sup> in the nation with respect to per pupil funding for public education we are not sufficiently resourcing our schools, teachers and students?

I do not expect any new or old student assignment plan to work magic. Instead, I implore you to focus your efforts on creating an effective **RESOURCE ASSIGNMENT PLAN** that will provide a high quality education at all our schools.