

I have been following current school system issues and have great concern about the new Student Assignment Plan and implore that our Board slow down and study the plan and its ramifications in depth before moving forward. I appreciate that much time and effort went into the plan with a specially qualified team under Superintendent Tata; however, many parents are frustrated at major specific changes being made. We have had limited time as a community to react to this new plan and voice specific concerns.

This plan is extremely complicated. I have been studying info available and want to share with you some specific concerns I see in this current plan.

Some schools will be under-chosen and some over-chosen meaning fewer families will get their school of choice.

The deciding force in deciding where a child gets accepted is school capacity, (not proximity).

It could take as long as 12 years to completely wipe out overcrowding.

Assignment is based on a random lottery number in addition to the priority process, and the order of this 8-step priority process is questionable.

As of 2010-11, Wake Co had 36 schools (22%) with more than 50% of students receiving F&R lunches (high-poverty schools). The plan states that the percentages of these high-poverty schools "should remain fairly stable over time." In other words, we are already starting with certain undesirable schools. The plan in its current form does not attempt to reduce the current 22% of schools where more than 50% of students receive F&R lunch.

Once a school is perceived as being undesirable it is very difficult to change that image. Making it hard to retain the best teachers.

Parents who don't make choices on behalf of their children will end up with children being put in school where there is space. Capacity is the final deciding factor, not proximity. Furthermore, schools with remaining capacity will be the under-chosen, undesirable.

With the multiple choices means multiple buses providing transportation within the same neighborhood. If we are trying to avoid busing, let's consider cost of transportation with multiple choices.

Neighborhoods are being split up when the plan was sold based on "neighborhood schools." In some cases, the closest school is not an option when the plan emphasizes "proximity."

What about concern for achievement? Should we not aim to have all or our school achieving? However, this plan greets a dynamic of overachieving and underachieving.

I am not asking for a return to the old, and I can accept changes if these changes are well thought-out, studied, and moving us in a positive direction. Please slow down and come together as a Board to look at specifics for how this plan will affect our school system as a whole.