

Wake County Board of Education
Public Comments
February 7, 2012
Lois Nixon

One of the eight Character Education traits that we model and teach is:

Integrity - Having the inner strength to be truthful, trustworthy, and honest in all things.

1. As parents and students are making their assignment choices, they are finding that the **number of choices** are about half what was available previously, and those are strictly limited by capacity at many schools. Is it honest to promise Choice, when most of the choices have almost no available seats? The website states that the new Choice plan “puts parents, not the school system, in charge of choosing the school their child will attend.” Is that an honest statement?

2. Wouldn't it be more honest and truthful to label this the **Stability Plan** due to the laudable goal to ensure that students attend only one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school? Promoting this as the Stability Plan would model more integrity.

3. And what about the promise of **feeder patterns** that guarantee a 5 year old a certain high school for graduation? Yes, feeder patterns are the new mandatory assignment, but there are too many uncontrollable variables for this Board and this administration to make such a promise. Do each of you still plan to be on this Board of Education in 13 years? (At least 3 of you are hoping not to be on this Board next year!) And will the Superintendent and all of the staff be exactly the same in 13 years, to carry out this promise? And will the county stop growing by thousands of new students each year, so that there will be no need to fill new schools with different feeder patterns and mandatory assignments? And will neighborhoods not “age out” so that they no longer have enough young children to fill the neighborhood elementary school? It appears that **guaranteeing a feeder pattern and certain schools** to a 5 year old is a promise that cannot be kept.

It's time to show integrity and tell the truth as the new assignment plan is implemented. Rather than state that we will let the choice process “play

out”, insist on immediately making changes that are needed, as in the middle school glitch reported today. Our students can’t wait for the Board to get it right. They can’t come back and do over 3rd grade or 6th or 9th when you get the plan right. Please be honest in stating that you know revisions will be needed, and that you will make them immediately.

4. And the final honest statement I’d like to hear from every member of this Board is that you will take seriously your responsibility to secure adequate funding from the local, state, and federal level for this school system. We’ve been lucky so far that student success has outperformed the inadequate funding. In 2011, Wake County’s per pupil funding was **#102 out of 115** school districts in a state that is 49th out of 50 states in funding! We wouldn’t accept our student SAT and EOG scores to be in the bottom 11% in a state that is in the bottom 2% in funding. Our students and teachers deserve a Board that models integrity, and values education enough to provide adequate funding for teachers and for student success.

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