

My name is Sally Wooten and I am a life long resident of Raleigh, as is my husband. We have three children, all of whom have attended The Raleigh School which is a wonderful small private elementary school. We felt that our children's needs would be best met at a private elementary school and then planned for them to enroll in public school for middle and high schools.

After graduating, my oldest went to Daniels will continue to Broughton next year. My younger ones are 5<sup>th</sup> grade twins and were excitedly expecting to follow in their brother's footsteps and be Blue Jackets at Daniels. I volunteer at the school quite a bit, and our twins have gotten very comfortable with helping me at the concession stands, attending various events and athletic games at Daniels, and even know quite a few teachers by name, including the principal. They feel at home there, and ask me daily where they are going to go to 6<sup>th</sup> grade. They are very sad when I say I don't know. My heart aches for them because I know they are truly worried and scared about attending a middle school they don't know at all with absolutely no one that they know.

Like most parents, we were shocked when we saw the numbers for the incoming 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Daniels. We feel we have been duped by what we had been told about school choice. All along, the words "choice", "proximity", "sibling" were used when the public was told about the plan. But once we could finally see the numbers that the Board has implemented in this new plan, we realize these words are not true. By overfilling schools as you have, you remove the option of many children going to their base school. That is not right. You all need to leave at least 100 seats available at schools that are typically higher ranked so that neighbors who are new to the public school system can have the choice to attend as well as offer the choice for a child in a poorer school pattern to have the choice to attend a better school. Isn't that what the plan was supposed to do – create neighborhood schools and promote choice so that if someone wanted to go to a school that better fit them or offered better academics, they could?

Your math with the feeder patterns really leaves the public in awe. And I do think that if the general public were aware of the numbers, you would see that people are not satisfied or happy with what you are planning to go forward with. The reason you haven't heard more of a roar is that in general, people don't know that the 6<sup>th</sup> grade is overfilled at Daniels. They don't realize that you are putting the fifth graders from 7 feeder schools into

Daniels which will create the overcrowding that the teachers and staff will have to deal with.

Not only would Daniels be our first choice, it is the closest school to us at a mile away, and it is where our twins' sibling is. But with the 7 feeder schools you have assigned to Daniels, you leave me no choice and I am mad and disappointed that you all knowingly are doing this not only to my family but to hundreds of others across Wake County.

This plan discriminates against those who have chosen for one reason or another to not be in the public school system. We have been paying the same taxes as everyone else, and should not be punished by not being able to attend our neighborhood school. We bought our house thinking that our children would attend Daniels and Broughton, as people in our neighborhood have since I was in preschool.

This new plan affects everyone in Wake County in an adverse way. It hurts real estate and also business. Why would a business move here if it couldn't guarantee it's employee's a good school system where parents would know their child's school according to where their home was located?

I've heard that we're too far along this path to not continue the implementation of this new assignment plan. I beg to differ. Now that you have started the implementation and see the problems clearly, why not take this next year to fix them and then implement the plan without all of the problems. Do you plan to say next year that some of the kids in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade cannot continue at Daniels in 7<sup>th</sup> to alleviate the overcrowding of that grade? And if not and all those extra students stay, then the 7<sup>th</sup> grade will have to add teachers and teams to accommodate the increase in students...and then that will happen again each year until this overfilled class graduates from Broughton.

A good leader re-evaluates at every stage. I doubt a general who has taken his troops across many miles would continue with the battle if he got to the battlefield and saw that his troops were overmatched. I think he would turn around to save the men, not continue with the plan because they had traveled so far.

Three of the board members who designed this plan are moving on to run for other office. They will leave the rest of you holding the bag and cleaning up the mess if you continue forward with this plan. I hope that for the sake of Wake County, you will be responsible leaders that we thought you were when you were elected and re-evaluate this plan and the very real problems that it has before you go further with implementation. The public and the staffs of the schools deserve that!