

I would like to extend my congratulations to our new board members and our new chairman, and offer my best wishes for the entire board, as you move forward with decisions for the future of Wake County Schools. With that future in mind, I would like to share some thoughts on decision making, specifically on transparency, consensus building, use of data, and a focus on the child.

- Transparency is a guarantee of all school boards across the country. It is why these meetings are required to be open. However, a meeting that shares little of the decision making process with the public is far from open.
- Consensus building is the antithesis of partisanship. School decisions should extend from open discussion of best practice where all parties are heard. They should not extend from opinion, or emotion, not from positional authority, nor political leverage.
- Data should be at the center of ALL school decisions, not just data on our local schools, but data from national studies on best practice research that will serve children best. With so much high quality data available for literally every aspect of school decision-making, there is no need for brainstorming or reinventing the wheel.
- It is most important to remember that the client is the child, and serving them is the sole purpose that any school system exists. Student learning and growth should always be first and foremost on any board member's agenda, as stewardship for quality opportunities for all children is your central charge.

Please be fully cognizant of the fact that school systems of excellence around the country are professional organizations. They thrive in environments that employ data from best practice research, and they promote the effective involvement of all stakeholders. School decisions that are data based, objective, and translate to best practice protocols for our schools will serve all our children well. Again, my best wishes for a great year! Our children are depending on it.

Thank you.