

MARCH 2, 2010 – Board of Education Meeting

Community-based Assignment approved 5-4. Despite being cited for being in violation of their own Code of Ethics by a fellow Board member as well as warnings of resegregated schools, a 5-4 majority of the Wake Board of Education tonight voted in support of a resolution calling for community-based assignment that eliminates socio-economic diversity as a consideration for assignment.

More than 40 residents spoke against the resolution before the vote was taken, many stating that the move would result in resegregation of the school system. The decision to go forward on the resolution on community-based assignments, which would break up the County's system into assignment zones, was passed without any research or data on financial implications. Board member Anne McLaurin read the Board's own Code of Ethics, saying the resolution did not meet requirements of that Policy's guidelines.

After attempts to amend the resolution or delay its discussion failed on a 4-5 vote, with Chairman Ron Margiotta breaking the ties, the resolution was passed on a 5-4 vote, with Mr. Margiotta and members John Tedesco, Debra Goldman, Chris Malone and Deborah Prickett voting in favor of the resolution.

The vote came after the Board members heard a detailed budget report from Chief Business Officer David Neter, who told members the district faces a \$21 million shortfall in its \$1.2 billion operating budget. This will result in a \$63 reduction in per pupil spending in the coming year, Neter said, as well as Reductions in Force in Central Office staff, which support teachers and staff in the system's schools

The resolution will be treated as a policy and will come up for a second reading at the Board of Education's next March meeting, which was moved

to Tuesday, March 23.

The Board also voted to convert Leesville Elementary and Leesville Middle back to a traditional calendar, despite the fact that only 32 percent of parents at Leesville Elementary answering the Board-administered survey stated a preference for a traditional calendar. 60 percent of survey respondents at Leesville Middle stated a preference for a traditional calendar. Ms. Prickett said that since the campuses were connected, both schools should be converted. Likewise, Mills Park Elementary will be converted to traditional, and Mills Park Middle School, built to be opened in July as a year round, will instead open on a traditional calendar. The Board also considered, but did not convert, Salem Middle and Wakefield Elementary, both of which will remain on a year round calendar.

In addition, the Board voted 5-4 to receive Board of Education training from the Civitas Institute, a nonprofit organization with a stated mission "to facilitate the implementation of conservative policy solutions to improve the lives of all North Carolinians."