



Date 06-19-12

Wake County Board of Education

BOARD

PRECIS

Subject

STUDENT ASSIGNMENT POLICY REVIEW DIRECTION TO THE SUPERINTENDENT

Staff Liaison Present

Keith Sutton, Vice Chair

Main Points

Board members, as well as students, parents and members of the community, have expressed concerns about some of the effects of the current student assignment plan that does not provide base school assignments. Board direction is requested on considering any adjustments to the student assignment plan for 2013-2014 to incorporate the use of base school assignments.

Fiscal Implications

To be determined.

Savings:

Recommendation for Action

Board direction is requested.

The Wake County Board of Education directs the Superintendent and staff to begin developing a proposal to convert the Wake County Student Assignment Plan for the 2013 – 14 school year from a choice-driven plan to an address-based assignment plan with expanded magnet and theme-school choice. This effort should integrate the best practices and strategies gained from the institutional knowledge of the Office of Growth and Planning and the data and research obtained by the Student Assignment Task Force.

Finding an effective and sustainable means to assign students in Wake County has been a challenge due to population growth, budget constraints, and other factors. While varying segments of the community place higher priorities on certain values, there are several key components that must be taken into consideration for any plan. They are as follows:

- Student achievement
- Stability
- Proximity

Student Achievement

The Wake County Student Assignment Plan will play a critical role in developing and maintaining a system of healthy schools throughout the county that supports student achievement and equity. While every school may not be equal in terms of its needs and allocation of resources, the district will make every effort to ensure that each school provides the maximum opportunity for all students and teachers to succeed and that every child is provided with a high quality educational experience. To accomplish this, academic achievement targets will be developed to determine a range for optimal school performance. In addition, the Board will revisit Policy 6200 to develop appropriate socio-economic factors to consider in the assignment process. These may include the use of census data, and/or individual data provided by parents such as income, educational attainment, or other information.

Stability

A focus on stability of assignment will be integral to the development of a multi-year plan. This will involve a periodic review of the plan at least every three years to monitor indicators such as population growth, demographic shifts, academic trends, and school performance data, as well as, program preferences expressed by parents. Thorough reviews and regular updates of the node system will increase stability by providing the system with the ability to keep neighborhoods and subdivisions cohesive and intact as much as possible. Other possible features that should provide increased stability may include the development of a “stay where you start” policy and programmatic feeder priorities.

Proximity

Over the last two years, the System has worked to increase the number of students who attend schools closer to their homes. A base assignment plan will build on these efforts by assigning a school or schools that are within a proximate distance to each known address. This effort will provide each student a school assignment within a reasonable distance of his or her residence, and it will also provide

prospective families to the area with a reasonable degree of predictability of a base school assignment. Current residents who are newcomers to the school system, such as charter school and home-schooled students, will also have the same reasonable degree of predictability. Seat capacity is critical to success in achieving this goal.

This directive is intended to set a clear path for establishing a solid foundation upon which any successful assignment plan in Wake County can be built. This directive is not intended to be a policy or establish policy. It sets forth measurable objectives, targets, and a sequence of tasks that the Wake County Board of Education directs the Superintendent and staff to perform as we move forward in the planning and implementation of the assignment plan for the 2013-2014 school year and beyond.

The 2013-2016 assignment plan will be multi-year, address-based student assignment plan that will provide reasonable predictability and stability in assignment. The plan will make student achievement a high priority at every school, while making sure that every student attends a reasonably proximate school. The goal of this plan is to also ensure that every student in the Wake County Public School System attends a healthy school.