

RESOLUTION EXPRESSING BOARD COMMITMENT TO EFFORTS OF VOLUNTARY DESEGREGATION

WHEREAS, Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) desires to provide the best education to all children served by the school district, and is committed to equal opportunities for all students in schools throughout the system;

WHEREAS, the student population in WCPSS is culturally, geographically, economically, racially, and ethnically diverse, and this diversity is a valuable resource for teaching students to live and thrive within a global community;

WHEREAS, WCPSS has a responsibility to advocate for our children's education by actively supporting the improvement of Wake County's renowned public education system, including one of its cornerstones – its magnet schools;

WHEREAS, in 1982, WCPSS began converting traditional schools to magnet schools with enhanced innovative curriculums supporting the following goals:

- Filling underused schools and empty classrooms,
- Achieving voluntary desegregation of schools,
- Alleviating growth and overcrowding issues in the expanding suburbs,
- Expanding educational opportunities and choice throughout Wake County,
- Promoting program innovations to foster system-wide improvements,
- Providing more parental participation through a program of optional school choices, and
- Providing a long-range plan for student assignment and facility use.

WHEREAS, in the same timeframe, the U.S. Congress enacted the Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP), under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which was predicated on Congressional findings that:

- Magnet schools are a significant part of the Nation's effort to achieve voluntary desegregation in our Nation's schools.
- These efforts help ensure equal educational opportunities for all students.
- Magnet schools offer a wide range of distinctive programs that have served as models for school improvement efforts.

WHEREAS, the WCPSS magnet schools have been an effective tool in the management of school capacity, while enhancing cultural diversity. In WCPSS's 33 magnet schools, there is an average of 100% capacity utilization.

WHEREAS, WCPSS is committed to providing quality education opportunities for all students regardless of background characteristics by providing an educational environment that enhances educational success. WCPSS also is committed to providing diverse settings for education that promote an understanding and appreciation of cultural differences.

WHEREAS, WCPSS has adopted a directive to transition our student assignment model to use community-based attendance zones in an effort to provide stability, parental choice, and growth-management strategies while being committed to schools of choice.

WHEREAS, the Wake County Board of Education is committed to establishing a plan of Community Assignment Zones. This zone-based assignment model will be developed during the next 9-15 months with input from various community stakeholders, WCPSS staff, and other government planning and zoning officials.

WHEREAS, the Board Directive for the establishment of Community Assignment Zones called for the inclusion of:

- A multi-year transition plan that limits impact on student re-assignment and ensures program equity per zone;
- A plan that ensures a commitment to a high quality education for ALL children;
- Consistent and logical feeder patterns with a defined plan for “optional choice” assignment opportunities. These opportunities will highlight strong support for high quality year-round and magnet schools as viable options for families, while planning for vocational and alternative options as well.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, WCPSS stands committed to voluntary desegregation in an effort to reduce and prevent minority group isolation and promote cultural integration.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, In an effort to encourage voluntary desegregation community-based attendance zones will utilize schools-of-choice with a predetermined selection process across zones, regions and the county-wide district. The Community-Based assignment model will also include an evaluation component to provide regular review of each zone attendance area in an effort to reduce and/or prevent minority group isolation;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Wake County Board of Education reaffirms the importance of magnet schools in WCPSS as a tool for voluntary desegregation, and authorizes and endorses the application to the United States Department of Education for a Magnet Schools Assistance Program grant to enhance the programs offered to increase cultural diversity and reduce minority isolation of students at the following schools: Smith Elementary, Brentwood Elementary, and Millbrook High School.

This the 6th day of April 2010,