

Press Conference Statement
April 26, 2010

Former Board of Education Members have come together to support the Wake County Public School System. We want to join with others in the community to ensure an equal opportunity for a sound basic education for every child in Wake County Public Schools.

Although we were elected in geographic districts, we believe we served our constituents best when we acted as guardians of the educational welfare of ALL the children of Wake County. We consider Wake County our community and believe that by careful attention to the entire system we make best use of the resources available to prepare every child for a meaningful future and success in the 21st century.

We are thankful that previous leaders made the bold decision to create a county-wide school system, an affirmation of the belief that "every child is our child."

1. We support the Wake County Public Schools.

We are proud of the national recognition that the Wake County Public School System has achieved (and the roles we played in that achievement), but we are even more thankful that our public schools have contributed so much to the well-being of all our citizens, our county and our region. We acknowledge that much remains to be done, especially with regard to low-achieving children, if we are to continue to be recognized as one of the very best urban school districts in the country. We support open dialogue and data driven strategic planning to build further on our school system's strong foundation.

2. We support an equal opportunity and excellent education for every child.

For over 30 years, the Wake County Public School System has been a model for school districts around the nation. Because research consistently shows that challenges to success for all students in high poverty and racially isolated schools are greater, we have worked to prevent the creation of such schools.

Our highly respected school system has helped fuel growth and prosperity in our county. The number of students in the Wake County Public School System has grown from 54,000 in 1982 to 140,000 in 2009. The explosive growth has necessitated a fast paced, on-going building program. The board has balanced the demand for new schools with the need to renovate, maintain, expand, and sometimes replace existing schools.

Our nationally recognized magnet program has played a vital role in our growing school system. It has helped ensure that schools are utilized to their maximum capacity. It is a

cost effective tool that nurtures healthy schools, providing a range of educational opportunities and serving as an incubator for the development of new programs for all schools.

Schools that strive for high academic achievement, strong support for teachers, diverse student populations, community and parent involvement, modern facilities, and a positive climate for learning, should continue to be our benchmarks for excellence.

3. We care about Wake County remaining one of the best places to live in the country.

The school system is a critical factor in defining Wake County as one of the nation's best places to live. We must attract the best and brightest teachers and administrators, as well as innovative and engaged new residents. Strong schools in every part of the county contribute to this effort.

4. We are willing to support and work with the board and community to make sure each child is served well.

Although most of us were elected in districts, we committed fully to serve the whole county. All of us, Republicans, Democrats, and Independents, were elected in non-partisan elections and worked collaboratively with policy makers representing many points of view. We were guided in decision-making by what we believed would contribute most to the education of all the county's children and help build a strong and vibrant community. We can accomplish more by working together.

We offer our services and experience to the current board and community to help ensure the worthy goal that each child in Wake County receives the equal opportunity and quality education he or she deserves.

This statement has been endorsed by:

Cliff Wimberley
Susan Parry
Jean Schilawski
Ann Koonce
J.C. O'Neal
John Gilbert
Patti Head
Eleanor Goettee
Jeff York

Linda Johnson
Bill Fletcher
Amy White
Wray Stephens
Carol Parker
Judy Hoffman
Tom Oxholm
Kathryn Watson Quigg

Rosa Gill
Horace Tart
Beverley Clark
Mary Holroyd
Casper Holroyd
Roxie Cash
Lori Millberg
Roy Tilley