



Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, II
President

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE

NORTH CAROLINA STATE CONFERENCE

PO Box 335 • Durham, North Carolina 27702

866-626-2227 • 919-682-4700 • FAX 919-682-4711

www.naacpnc.org www.hkonj.com

Amina J. Turner
Executive Director

June 13, 2011

Dear Superintendent Tata:

We hope this letter finds all things well with you. We have appreciated your willingness to hear the NAACP's fundamental principles for public education and to discuss how Wake County can move forward together toward building the best public schools in the nation. At our last meeting, we agreed that once you had developed some initial plans for moving forward we would meet again to discuss the impact those plans would have on all our children. We write in the hope that you remain committed to meeting with us.

The NAACP's position regarding public education is not so much concerned with the color of the plan (blue or green) or the color of the pupils, but whether the red and yellow, black and white children who are precious in God's sight will all be afforded a high quality, constitutional, well-funded, diverse education. All children deserve excellent public schools, which mean we need schools to be excellent in every part of the county. Among other issues, we would like to discuss these three questions:

1. What empirical data shows how the two proposals will further student achievement in ways beyond the diversity plan, which had a nationally recognized record of success here in Wake County, developed by Superintendent Bill McNeal and his colleagues?
2. If well over 90% of parents, in a survey last year, said they were satisfied or very satisfied with their children's schools, why would Wake County choose to abandon rather than simply improve such a plan and enable it to address the vibrant economic and population growth that it fueled? Why does neither of these plans build on rather than abandon the McNeal plan?
3. You were quite clear with us that you do not intend to create racially-identifiable, high-poverty schools in Wake County. And a recent study by the Brookings Institute establishes that the number one cause of urban economic decline is a failure to deal with segregation of public schools. The twenty most depressed urban areas in the U.S. are also the ones with the most segregated school systems.

The empirical scholarship on education is virtually unanimous that diversity and resources are keys to student achievement. How will either of the proposed plans ensure, *with built-in and concrete corrective mechanisms* that any significant increase in re-segregation will trigger, that Wake County will not create or increase racially identifiable, high-poverty schools?

We hope to discuss these matters with you at your earliest convenience; hopefully next week before the decision-making processes go much further. As a society, we must only endorse education policies that meet the standards of our constitutions, state and federal, the best available scholarship and research, as well as the proven lessons of history. All three remind us that that separate has never been equal and that any promise of equality without diversity is an empty one.

Yours in the Spirit of Truth and Justice,

Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, II