

Dear Board of Commissioners Chair Joe Bryan and Board of Education Chair Rosa Gill,

The Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce and the Wake Education Partnership wish to present to you at your April 16 joint meeting a proposal on funding student achievement. Over the years, the Wake County Board of Education (BOE) and the Wake County Board of Commissioners (BOC) have exhibited strong leadership and a willingness to work together to build one of the most successful public school systems in America.

Since the countywide school system was created in 1976, academic results have been among the highest in both the state and the nation. However, explosive growth and shifting demographics have increasingly challenged the ability of our elected officials to remain focused on the academic performance of the students in our school system. Our community has always had, and expects to continue to have, excellence in its public schools. Everyone understands the economic health of our community, and the future of our children depends on it!

For a variety of reasons, ranging from responsible stewardship to global competition, it is time to renew our community's commitment to student achievement. We must recognize that what got us to this level will not take us to the next level. Raising student achievement will require our BOE and our BOC to create an environment in which we provide laser-like focus and appropriate resources to advance student achievement to globally competitive levels.

As business and education advocates, we believe a better alignment of roles and responsibilities between the two Boards is in order to secure Wake County's place as a national leader in public education while, at the same time, effectively planning for our growth. Therefore, we offer the following principles:

1. Strengthen our commitment to measurably improve student achievement.
2. Focus on student performance for all students.
3. Commit to closing the achievement gaps.
4. Align responsibility and accountability for issues of growth.

We respectfully propose the development of an interlocal agreement between the Board of Education and the Board of Commissioners, whereby:

- ~ The BOC and BOE establish a multi-year funding formula for the annual county appropriation, providing for student and operations growth and implementing 2007 curriculum audit strategies for measurable improvements to close all achievement gaps between current performance and potential.
- ~ Under contract to the BOE, the BOC assumes responsibility for the purchase of land, and the design, construction, operation and maintenance of schools.

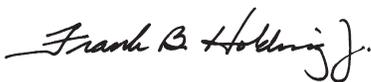
If you adopt this concept, the people of Wake County will see increased focus, funding and accountability for student achievement—while having one Board that has accountability for school construction and maintenance. Both the BOC and BOE will demonstrate an expanded and strengthened commitment to creating the best public school system in America. From this new relationship, our community will provide greater support for continued excellence in our public schools and support the commitment required to achieve that excellence.

When our system of school governance was established in the last century, our state's leaders could not have imagined the pace and level of growth we are experiencing. Rather than do the same things the same way each and every year—it is time to change how we do things for the benefit of our community and its children.

While this is clearly a win-win proposal for the taxpayers and all adults in our community, the biggest winners are the students who attend our public schools!

We look forward to meeting with you and discussing the concept further on April 16.

Sincerely,



Frank Holding Jr.
Chair, Board of Directors
Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce



Virginia Parker
Chair, Board of Directors
Wake Education Partnership