



9115 Westside Parkway
Alpharetta, GA 30009

advanc-ed.org
888.41 EDNOW (888.413.3669)
678.392.2285
770.346.9260 fax

October 2, 2012

Dr. Stephen Gainey, Acting Superintendent
Wake County Public School System
5625 Dillard Drive
Cary, North Carolina 27518

Dear Dr. Gainey,

As specified in the AdvancED Monitoring Visit Report, November 29-30, 2011, Wake County Public Schools is expected to submit an Institution Progress Report by November 1, 2012. The Institution Progress Report will be reviewed and a determination will be made as to the accreditation status of the high schools and any next steps, if warranted. The Monitoring Team's findings provide a progress status rating, summary of findings, directives to guide next steps, and recommendations to help ensure that Wake County Public Schools continues to sustain the progress made to date. Please refer to the directives to guide your response related to progress in meeting Required Actions 1 and 4. A copy of the November 2011 Monitoring Report is included for your reference.

The Required Actions that remain In Progress are:

Required Action 1

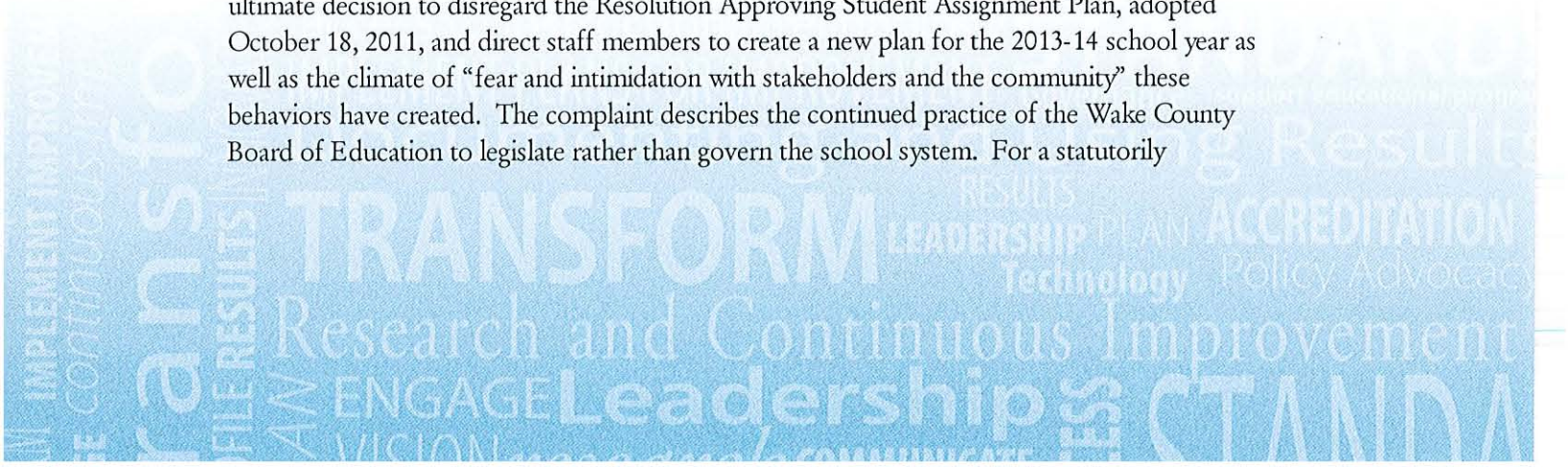
Create and implement a Strategic Plan to guide the future work of the school system.

Required Action 4

Define in policy the purpose and role of adopting resolutions as a governing practice.

Additionally, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) has received a new complaint that Wake County Public Schools Board of Education is engaging in behavior in violation of AdvancED® Accreditation Standards and/or policies.

The complaint pertains to the board's behavior and actions since the most recent AdvancED Monitoring Review, November 29-30, 2011. The complaint focuses on the Board's process and ultimate decision to disregard the Resolution Approving Student Assignment Plan, adopted October 18, 2011, and direct staff members to create a new plan for the 2013-14 school year as well as the climate of "fear and intimidation with stakeholders and the community" these behaviors have created. The complaint describes the continued practice of the Wake County Board of Education to legislate rather than govern the school system. For a statutorily



recognized, non-partisan governing board, determining major or significant policies and direction by partisan votes of simple majority is not an effective process to govern the school system.

The content of the complaint is related to Required Actions 2, 3 and 5, and outlines the following:

Required Action 2:

Analyze and revise the “node” system of assigning students to schools to ensure objectivity, transparency and consistency.

Complaints:

1. The Resolution Approving the Student Assignment Plan, adopted with a 6-2 vote on October 18, 2011 supporting the New Choice Plan, directed “... that the student assignment plan will remain in effect for a minimum of three years, allowing continuity for students and families.” On June 19, 2012, the new Board majority “subverted that promise and directed staff to create a new plan for the 2013-14 school year.”
2. The lack of communication and transparency of the Board related to the June 19, 2012 Board decision to “drastically alter the Student Assignment Plan.”
3. Public disregard by Board member Susan Evans of the “concerns and involvement of educational and community advocacy groups... who were intimately involved and consulted during the seven months of creating the new assignment plan.”
4. Violations of Board Policy 1035, B2: *Render all decisions based on the available facts and independent judgment and refuse to surrender that judgment to individuals or special interest groups;* and Board Policy 1005: *It is important that a Board member is nonpartisan in dealing with school matters and that he/she not subordinate the education of children and youth to any partisan principle, group, interest or personal ambition which is to subordinate education to a partisan policy* occurred when “alteration of the Choice Assignment Plan was completed with extreme influence of Great Schools in Wake (GSIW).”
5. Board members Susan Evans, Jim Martin, and Christine Kushner “were and possibly still are active leaders in this group.” [referring to GSIW]

Required Action 3:

Establish and implement an agenda setting process to ensure that every member of the Board of Education and key system leadership are well-prepared for each meeting.

Complaint

1. Board member Kevin Hill “attempted to schedule work sessions thru the superintendent prior to being elected Board chair, circumventing the then-current chairman.”

2. Board member Kevin Hill “inappropriately scheduled a secret meeting of the newly elected board majority prior to being elected and assuming responsibilities as chair. Further, the newly sworn-in majority secretly attended said meeting to discuss reassignment with educational consultant Mr. Michael Alves.”
3. “Offensive and intimidating behavior by members of GSIW” was allowed by Chairman Hill during public board meetings creating a climate of “fear and uneasiness among citizens wishing to speak during public comment.”

Required Action 5:

Provide on-going cohesive and consistent training to all members of the Board of Education regarding their roles, responsibilities, and the strategic direction of the school system.

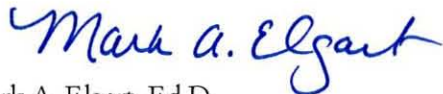
Complaint:

1. Violation of Policy 1035, which is the Code of Ethics, by Board member Susan Evans when she referred to Superintendent Tata in a “derogatory manner” in a March 2012 email.
2. During the May 15, 2012 public Board meeting, Susan Evans told Board member Debra Goldman to “just hush,” and Board member Deborah Prickett to “get a life.”
3. Chair Hill in an email exchange between Board members dated March 28, 2012 “requests and encourages off-the-record and private discussions and deliberations between the Board members about school business.”
4. “Private deliberations were held regarding the placement of WCPSS Leadership Academies at Peace College with a majority of Board members. Peace College had initially agreed, and then after the private deliberations with the newly elected majority - at the exclusion of the minority, the President of Peace called the agreement off by stating that ‘due to the division and controversy on the Wake County Public School System board,’ the university was removing itself from consideration.”
5. “Board member Jim Martin, a professor at North Carolina State University, requested a discussion of the Policy Committee to create a policy that would specifically benefit NCSU professors. This is a violation of Policy 1036 and 1035, using Board positions for personal gain and avoiding impropriety.”
6. The violation of the Open Meeting Law when a July 8, 2012 email sent by Chair Hill to Board members “presented a document titled *Possible Seat Allocation for 2012-13*. The document included a draft date of 6/18/12. The 5-4 vote to alter the new choice plan with these directives had not been taken until June 19, 2012... , the day after the document was drafted.”

7. The *News and Observer* reports Board member Susan Evans made “racist comments about the trends of the new choice plan and her concern with the percentage of ‘white kindergartners’.”

In keeping with AdvancED’s Accreditation Policies, the school system is required to respond to this most recent complaint. Please include your response to this complaint in the Institution Progress Report, which is to be sent to AdvancED by November 1, 2012. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact me.

Sincerely,



Mark A. Elgart, Ed.D.
President/CEO
AdvancED

Enclosure

cc: Dr. Donna James, Director, AdvancED North Carolina
Annette Bohling, Chief Accreditation Officer
Warren Jacobson, Vice President for Public School Systems