

Education Summit

Engaging Citizens in Support of Public Schools



A Presentation at the Education Trust Conference, November 2004

© 2004 Wake Education Partnership

Wake Education Partnership

- North Carolina's first independent local education fund founded in 1983
- Privately funded, community-based public education advocacy organization working to strengthen student achievement
- "Critical friend" of the school system



Who we are...

- 20+ working volunteer committees
- 10 full-time staff members
- \$1.5 million budget
- Partner with the Public School Forum of North Carolina and the Public Education Network, as well as hundreds of local businesses and community organizations



What we do...

- Mission: Uniting community resources for excellence in public education
- Program of work:
 - Leadership and professional development
 - Community engagement
 - Research and advocacy



Wake County, N.C.

- County population of around 700,000 includes urban, suburban and rural areas over 832 square miles
- Average per capita income: \$27,004
- Median household income: \$54,988
- 89% are high school graduates, 43% have college degree
- 72% white, 20% African-American, 5% Hispanic and 3% Asian



Wake County Public School System

- 24th largest system in the United States with 134 schools, 114,000 students and more than 7,000 teachers
- Consolidated county-wide system includes Raleigh and 11 municipalities
- Combination of traditional, year-round and magnet schools
- Student profile (02-03): 62% white, 26% African-American, 6% Hispanic and 4% Asian; 29% FRL (elementary)



Starting the Summit

- Began planning in 1997 for first Summit in 1998
- Initial collaboration between Wake Ed Partnership and the Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce
- Process for gathering community feedback to establish goals and priorities for public schools
- Began Community Assessment process around the same time



General Summit Overview

- 600+ participants, including parents, educators, elected officials and representatives from businesses and community organizations
- Speakers provide context, information about theme/focus area
- Volunteer facilitators guide table discussions, collect feedback
- Follow-up with newsletter, Web site



Student Achievement Data for 1998

- 81.1% of 3rd-8th graders performing at/above grade level in reading and math
 - 92.5% of Asian students
 - 91.1% of white students
 - 80.4% of multiracial students
 - 66.5% of Hispanic/Latino students
 - 57.4% of African-American students
 - 54.2% of students receiving FRL
 - 52.6% of special education students



Summit and Goal 2003

1998: Achieving New Horizons



Goal 2003: By 2003, 95 percent of students in grades 3 and 8 will be at or above grade level as measured by the State of North Carolina End-of-Grade tests.



Summit History

- 1999: Readers to Achievers



- 2000: Getting It Right From the Start



Summit History

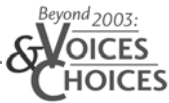
- 2001: Taking Off the Mask - Quality, Confidence and Results in Public Education



- 2002: Investing in the Goal - Resources, Resolve and Quality Public Schools



Beyond 2003: Voices & Choices



- County-wide community feedback program to gather input toward shaping the next system goal
- Learned from Goal 2003 about the importance of involving teachers and the broader community, including county commissioners
- Collected more than 1,800 surveys



Student Achievement Data for 2003

- 91.3% of 3rd-8th graders performing at/above grade level in reading and math
 - 97.1% of Asian students (+4.6)
 - 96.8% of white students (+5.7)
 - 93.2% of multiracial students (+12.8)
 - 82.7% of Hispanic/Latino students (+16.2)
 - 79.8% of African-American students (+22.4)
 - 77.4% of students receiving FRL (+23.2)
 - 70.9% of special education students (+18.3)



Other Data

- Teacher turnover rate is relatively low at 11.3% (2004), although slightly higher than previous years
- SAT average: 1067 (up from 1052 in 1998)
- Drop-out rate for grades 7-12: 2.3% in 2002 (down from 2.8% in 1998)
- Connection between increased community involvement and rising achievement



Summit and Goal 2008

2003: Many Voices, Smart Choices – Charting the Future of the Public’s Schools



Goal 2008: By 2008, 95 percent of students in grades 3 through 12 will be at or above grade level as measured by the State of North Carolina End-of-Grade or Course tests, and all student groups will demonstrate high growth.



Strategies for Goal 2008

- Increase challenging educational opportunities for all students;
- Increase participation and success in advanced classes at the high school level;
- Increase the percent of 9th grade students graduating within four years;
- Recruit, develop, support and retain a highly qualified workforce to ensure student success;
- Identify and seek resources necessary to support student success; and
- Build a consensus of support through community collaboration.



2004 Begins New Cycle

- Journey to 2008: Planning, Process and Possibilities



Community Perception

- 2004 Wake Public Education Community Assessment shows upward trend in perceptions of WCPSS
- Suggests that the Wake community has a growing connection with its public schools



Key Summit Strategies

1. Recruiting host organizations and participants from across the community
2. Training facilitators to guide table discussions so that participants can provide feedback
3. Presenting data- and research-based information to participants
4. Sharing the results publicly and holding ourselves accountable each year



1. Hosts and Participants

- Recruit from a broad spectrum of stakeholder groups—may be first contact with “system” for many participants
- Use advisory or planning committee
- Consider different needs, knowledge levels and interests of different stakeholders
- Develop multiple strategies for reaching different groups



Participants for 2004

- More than 600 total participants
- Of the 384 completed evaluations:
 - 54% teachers and administrators (of these, 69% identified a second category)
 - 29% parents/PTA representatives
 - 22% community organization reps
 - 22% business or chamber reps
 - 4% elected and government officials
 - 4% college and university representatives



2. Facilitators and Feedback

- Train volunteer facilitators to guide table discussions and collect feedback from participants
- Facilitators should represent range of participants – not just educators
- Mixed groups at each table allow for sharing range of perspectives
- Not about persuading, agreeing or arguing



Facilitators and Feedback

- Sample table questions include:
 - Using the list included, identify the main obstacles to meeting Goal 2008 and then brainstorm ways to overcome these obstacles.
 - Prioritize the list of strategies for helping our high schools meet Goal 2008.
 - Prioritize the list of focus areas to help set goals beyond 2003.



3. Data and Research

- Speakers provide current data from WCPSS and other relevant research
- Create fact-based context for table discussion – not just perceptions/ misperceptions and myths
- Publish data, research and other resources in event materials
- Serves as information and accountability



Data and Research

- Past Summit speakers include:
 - President, NC Citizens for Business & Industry
 - Dean, NCSU College of Education
 - Superintendent, WCPSS
 - Co-chairs, Citizen Advisory Committee
- Data provided includes local, state and national figures



4. Results and Accountability

- Some results are presented at meeting
- All results available online, in newsletter and distributed to media and host organizations – use multi-media approach
- Presented to community/school leaders
- “Report Card” presented each year from previous Summit
- Guides Partnership’s Program of Work



Questions and Answers

Cyndi Soter O’Neil - Wake Education Partnership
(919) 821-7609 ext. 25
coneil@wakeedpartnership.org

Susan Parry - Wake County Board of Education
(919) 850-8869
skparry@wcpss.net

Charlotte Turpin - Wake - N.C. Association of Educators
(919) 821-3128
wakepresident@bellsouth.net

