

# Wake Education Partnership

Monthly Newsletter

February 2012



Steve Parrott

## A Message From Our President

In making the transition from the corporate world (where I worked for 32 years) to the educational community, I've found numerous instances where business principles have been used to improve the quality of education for Wake County students. These include organizational and individual assessment, leadership, teamwork, performance expectations, etc. In my role leading the work of Wake Education Partnership, I thoroughly enjoy seeing the research being done on "what's actually working" in our schools and classrooms to increase academic achievement.

I recently reviewed a synthesis document from the Center for Public Education that looked at more than 300 studies published within the past seven years. The Center's focus was on the work being done to turn around low performing schools in economically disadvantaged communities. The question: What combination of practices, attributes and resources produces successful schools?

Findings from the research:

### **Building Blocks**

- A culture of high expectations and caring for students
- A safe and disciplined environment
- A principal who is a strong instructional leader
- Hard-working, committed, and able teachers
- A curriculum focused on academic

## IN THIS ISSUE

- [President's Column](#)
- [Teacher Leadership Grants available now!](#)
- [Upcoming Events](#)
- [In Context: Subscribe Today!](#)
- [Our Cornerstone Investors](#)
- [Learn More About Us](#)
- [Meet Our Investors: GlaxoSmithKline](#)
- [Be A Part Of The Largest Arts Show Of The Year!](#)
- [In Their Words: Why the Partnership Matters](#)
- [Partnership Connections](#)
- [By the Numbers: A Measure of Wake County Schools](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

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Welcome! We hope you find the information and links in this publication helpful. To find out more about us:

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- [Read our Annual Report](#)
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**Meet Our Investors**

achievement that emphasizes basic skills in mathematics and literacy

**Practices**

- Increased instructional time
- Ongoing, diagnostic assessment
- Parents as partners in learning
- Professional development to improve student achievement
- Collaboration among teachers and staff

As for what inspires a school to start on the road to improvement, I like the research by Kannepal and Clements (2005) suggesting three potential motivators: state passage of a reform act, a school's recognition that it has "hit bottom," or the transformation of a school's culture into a belief system that asserts that all children can learn and succeed, regardless of the income or other demographics of their community.

Clearly, schools that cultivate a culture of high expectations, for students and teachers alike, that emphasize academics and student learning, and engage in continual assessment and efforts to improve, are on the road toward becoming high-performing schools. Sounds a lot like basic business principles for how corporations and small businesses can succeed in their world.

The Partnership will continue to explore how these success indicators and others can be applied in our school system as part of the work we do. Please [join our communication list](#) for the newsletter and our *In Context* publications to learn more.

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**teacher leadership grants**

**2012-2013 Grant Applications**  
**Available Now!**

The Partnership is offering two types of Teacher Leadership Grants for the 2012-2013 school year. Online applications



**GlaxoSmithKline** has been a Cornerstone Investor with the Partnership since 1995 - that's 27 years!

This year they chose to support our [Teacher Leadership Grants program](#), which provides funding to Wake County teachers.

The teachers submit online proposals that are read and scored by a committee of volunteers. The grants provide opportunities for teachers to challenge themselves and their students in new and exciting ways.

Teacher Leadership Grants align with all of the Partnership's strategic initiatives, as well as the Wake County Public School System's effort to support professional learning teams.

This alignment increases the relevance of the grants program and meets a growing need of teachers. Applicants may apply for a Professional Learning Team Grant to create or support the work of Professional Learning Teams in their school, or they may apply for an Innovative Instruction Grant, which is more closely tailored to individual disciplines.

Because of funding from **GSK**, more students will benefit from the hard work of their teachers.

The Partnership salutes **GlaxoSmithKline** for its commitment to improving our teachers through their investment with the Partnership.

are available now at our [web site](#).

**PROFESSIONAL LEARNING TEAM**

**GRANTS:** These grants provide support for new or existing professional learning teams and their efforts to target student achievement.

Professional Learning Team grants will be available in amounts up to \$5,000 for school-wide teams or up to \$2,500 for grade-level or subject-area teams.

**INNOVATIVE INSTRUCTION GRANTS:**

These grants encourage and provide support for innovative approaches to instruction for teachers and/or teams. Three categories are available:

- General - open to any content area.
- Science - target science achievement and science content.
- Health and Nutrition - target nutrition, health, and wellness.

Innovative Instruction grants will be available in amounts to \$1,000 for an individual teacher application, or \$2,500 for grade-level or subject-area teams.

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Teacher Leadership Grants are open to all Wake County public school teachers, teachers' assistants, school psychologists or counselors, social workers, IRTs and media specialists. Recipients will be notified in May 2012 and will receive funding at the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year to implement their grants.

You can support Teacher Leadership Grants with an investment in this program. For more information or to learn more, email [Julie Crain](#) or contact her at 821-7609.



**2012 Pieces of Gold**

**29th Annual Performance  
Wednesday, March 14  
7:00 p.m.  
Memorial Auditorium**

**Be a part of the largest student performance event of 2012!**

The 2012 [Pieces of Gold](#) performance will be the largest in the school district's history! With more than 1,000 public school students performing on stage from 30 different schools, this promises to be a sold out event at Memorial Auditorium with more than 2,200 people attending.

Wake Education Partnership is pleased to play such a pivotal role in this annual production and we want to offer you the chance to show your support.

Pieces of Gold is far more than the signature display of talent for which it is known. It is also an acknowledgement by our schools, parents, business leaders and community that artistic expression and creativity is an important part of academic achievement as well as the development of 21st century work skills.

[Tickets](#) are available now to help us support the arts through this event!

Please purchase your ticket and join our Presenting Sponsor Progress Energy as well as Capitol Broadcasting Company, Golden Corral, SAS, Duke Raleigh Hospital, Davidson & Jones, AECOM,



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## Upcoming Events

### Students@Work Week!

February 27 - March 2, 2012

Students@Work Week is an opportunity for North Carolina businesses to provide job shadowing experiences for middle school students in their community.

Students@Work Week is a project of the North Carolina Business Committee for Education in partnership with First Gentleman Robert Eaves.

You can find a toolkit for your business [here](#).

### NC Science Festival

April 13 - 29 2012

The North Carolina Science Festival is a multi-day statewide celebration showcasing science and technology.

The Festival highlights the educational, cultural and financial impact of science in our state. Through hands-on activities, science talks, lab tours, nature experiences, exhibits and performances, the Festival engages a wide range of public audiences while inspiring future generations.

A full [calendar of events](#) across the state is available.

Applebee's. MMI Public Relations and Progressive Business Solutions for this year's 29th anniversary performance of Pieces of Gold.

Your support this year will allow us to use ticket sale proceeds to help fund our [Teacher Leadership Grants program](#). Tickets are available at the Memorial Auditorium Box Office on Wilmington Street or via [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com)

Please email [Fran Carruthers](#), the Partnership's VP of Development, for sponsorship details or call her at 919-821-7609 x 130.



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## In Their Words Why The Partnership Matters

From time to time, people will graciously drop us a line telling us why the Partnership matters to them. For those of you who have done so, many thanks.

To get a fuller idea of what it is we do, we encourage you to [visit our site](#) where you can learn more about our work with Wake County's schools.

Don't be shy. Send us an email letting us know why the Partnership's work matters to you. We sincerely appreciate the support.

*"This grant means the world to us, for we*

## [NC CAP Youth STEM Summit](#)

April 28, 2012 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

[NC Center for Afterschool Programs](#) (NC CAP) is partnering with the [NC Museum of Natural Sciences](#) to host a statewide [Youth STEM Summit](#) to empower and inspire youth from across the state to return to their communities and develop STEM projects that involve strong museum, school, and community partnerships.

Participants will have the opportunity to connect with college-aged community mentors and apprenticeship opportunities, and will gain resources for forging more of these connections in the future.

The [Youth STEM Summit](#) will be part of the Grand Opening of the Museum's [Nature Research Center](#) as well as part of the [NC Science Festival](#).

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### [In Context](#)

An independent review of school issues for business leaders, elected officials and the education community in Wake County.

*Provided free by Wake Education Partnership*

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### [Our Cornerstone Investors](#)

The following have invested in the work of

*wouldn't be able to have these opportunities without the generosity of the companies that donate money! Our school teaches over 900 students and this will impact them and future students for years to come! Thank you for supporting our school!"*

**Heather Callaghan**  
**Fifth Grade Teacher**  
**Olive Chapel Elementary School**

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### [Partnership Connections](#)

Wake Education Partnership is pleased to work not only with local businesses and the school system, but also with a wide variety of groups focused on children and their families.

Below are a few highlights from our work in the community.

- The Partnership was pleased to present a student assignment update to members of Allen Tate Realtors this week. Allen Tate Realtors has reached out to the Partnership on several occasions as a way to keep its Realtors informed of change in the new school choice student assignment plan.
- On Feb. 7, Julie Crain attended a half-day executive briefing offered by VitalSmarts. The briefing reviewed training options designed to help organizations create high-performance learning cultures.
- On January 31, Wake Education Partnership (thanks to the generosity of RBC Bank) hosted 70 teachers, administrators and staff members from Wake County Public Schools at the Carolina Hurricanes hockey game as part of the RBC Bank Non-Profit Night. This was a great way for us to

the Partnership at \$10,000 and above. We would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank them and want you to know who they are.

AT&T  
 Bank of America  
 BB&T  
 Biogen Idec Foundation  
 Capitol Broadcasting Company  
 GlaxoSmithKline  
 Golden Corral  
 Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce  
 Lifetouch  
 News & Observer  
 Progress Energy  
 RBC Bank  
 Rex Healthcare  
 SAS  
 SunTrust Bank  
 Time Warner Cable  
 Wells Fargo

recognize the contributions our educators make each day in the development and academic success of our Wake County students.

- The Partnership would like to say "thank you" to the Knightdale 100 for asking us to present the third annual review of academic progress in Knightdale area schools. The [presentation slides](#) and a [full video](#) of the event are available online.

Working with a wide range of groups is part of [Who We Are and What We Do](#), giving us us an opportunity to learn more about the needs of the district and to make sure the perspectives of local businesses are well represented in discussions at all levels.

## By the numbers...

### A measure of Wake County schools

The 2010-2011 annual dropout rate was released recently and it contained generally good news for Wake County. The rate is lower than the state average and lower than most urban districts in North Carolina. Wake's three-year decline was also among the largest in the state.

The annual dropout rate is also a good time to highlight the sometimes confusing relationship between dropout rates and graduation rates. While it might seem logical to assume one is the inverse of the other, that's not how it works. There are a few basic reasons for the difference. The most obvious is that dropout rates are reported for only one year while graduation rates track the number of freshmen who graduate four-years later.

But what happens if a student takes five years to graduate, moves to another school, moves and then drops out of someone else's school or just can't be tracked? All of these reasons help illustrate why the two numbers should be thought of as two distinct indicators of school progress. The following table helps put the differences in perspective by showing the dropout rate for 2010-2011 and the graduation rate for the same year.

District	Wake	Durham	Forsyth	Guilford	Mecklenburg	NC
<b>Dropout Rate</b>	3.25%	3.67%	3.81%	2.71%	3.57%	3.43%

<b>Graduation Rate</b>	80.9%	73.9%	78.8%	83.1%	73.5%	77.9%
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Source: NC Department of Public Instruction

Please contact our [staff](#) at 821.7609 if you have any questions about our work or if you wish to find out how you can invest in public education through the Partnership. If you like what you see here or at our [web site](#), please encourage your friends and colleagues to join our mailing list. It costs nothing to receive Partnership materials.

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