



# ALL FOR ALL:

*Teacher Excellence for Every Child*



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A REPORT OF THE

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WAKE TASK FORCE ON

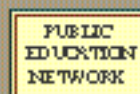
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TEACHER EXCELLENCE

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North Carolina  
Department of Public Instruction





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*Teacher Excellence for Every Child*

**A Report by the  
Wake Task Force  
on Teacher Excellence**

January 2001

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**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

A call for higher standards in education is sweeping across our country. Forty-nine of fifty states have now adopted some form of standards to measure student performance and academic achievement. This call for higher standards is not just for schools and school systems to improve their performance. Standards are a focal point for entire communities to form consensus on what is most important educationally and to marshal their community resources to help schools achieve their desired outcomes. Standards empower communities to care for their children in ways that they have been unable to do in the past.

In September 1996 the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future released its report *What Matters Most*. The report's authors argued that the goal of dramatically enhancing school and student performance is not likely to succeed without a sustained commitment to teacher learning and professional development. The suggestions of the National Commission, chaired by then North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt, served as a framework for communities to focus on teacher excellence in the service of higher academic standards for children.<sup>2</sup> The business, university, and educational communities convened the Wake Task Force for Teacher Excellence to support Wake County teachers in providing excellent teaching to raise the achievement of all students in Wake County.

*By the year 2006, America will provide all students in the country with what should be their educational birthright: access to competent, caring, and qualified teachers.*

- GOAL OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON TEACHING AND AMERICA'S FUTURE<sup>1</sup>

### RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION:

- 1. Get serious about standards for both students and teachers** by creating performance-based systems of teacher licensing, advanced certification, and education program accreditation that are linked to new student standards, connected to one another, and based on current knowledge about effective teaching.
- 2. Reinvent teacher preparation and professional development** by creating extended preparation programs that include a year-long internship in a professional development school, ensuring mentoring for beginning teachers, and developing sustained, content-based professional development for veterans.
- 3. Fix teacher recruitment and put qualified teachers in every classroom** by streamlining hiring procedures, eliminating barriers to mobility, providing incentives for teaching in shortage areas and fields, and creating high-quality pathways into teaching for mid-career entrants.
- 4. Encourage and reward teacher knowledge and skill** by creating evaluation and compensation systems that reward expert teachers, remove incompetent teachers, and allow teachers to share their skills without leaving the classroom.
- 5. Create schools that are organized for student and teacher success** by flattening hierarchies, reallocating resources to teaching and technology, redesigning roles and schedules, and rewarding schools that improve learning.

<sup>1</sup> National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, *What Matters Most: Teaching For America's Future* (New York: National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996), 6.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

*“You talk about life’s ultimate lottery...is the sequence of teachers that a child has.”*

- DR. WILLIAM SANDERS,  
SPEAKING AT WAKE EDUCATION  
PARTNERSHIP,  
30 MARCH 2000

**THE CONTEXT—TEACHERS MATTER**

National studies have confirmed the centrality of teachers in programs that raise student performance and in school reform in general, and the findings of the National Commission echo this belief.<sup>3</sup> Research of the longitudinal impact of teachers and teaching on student performance has demonstrated that teachers can have powerful effects, both positive and negative, on future student success. Dr. William Sanders, formerly of the University of Tennessee and currently of SAS Institute, has developed a testing method that accounts for variations in student race and background in order to determine the value a teacher adds to a child’s education over the course of an academic year.<sup>4</sup> His studies have found that having two consecutive sub-par teachers is detrimental to a student’s academic success. Further, Dr. Sanders reported little compensatory effects of a student subsequently having good teachers on the work of bad ones. Clearly, teachers are crucial elements of a high-quality education.

Locally, Wake County has added pressure to its teaching corps by adopting a system-wide goal for student performance. The goal is that, by 2003, 95% of students tested will be at or above grade level, in grades 3 and 8. Achieving this goal will require teachers to differentiate their instruction and to motivate and teach all children in ways they have not been asked to do in the past. Wake County teachers face important challenges in effectuating our community’s success.

As expectations of teacher performance increase, teachers themselves are becoming scarcer. National educational publications have discussed an impending crisis in teacher recruitment.<sup>5</sup> With more opportunities having been created for women in the workplace, a traditional labor pool for teachers is quickly drying up. Statistics show that, by 2010, North Carolina will have to add the same number of teachers it currently employs because of the growing numbers of teachers who are or will be retiring (see Table 1). With Wake County’s phenomenal growth, that shortage will be even more noticeable. For the first time in its twenty-five-year history, Wake County schools opened the 2000-2001 school year with teaching positions unfilled.

Historically, a teacher shortage has meant school systems would be pressured to place teachers in classrooms regardless of

**Table 1. Teacher Recruitment Projections, 1998-2010<sup>6</sup>**

|                                   | <b>PROJECTION</b><br>(thousands) | <b>% OF CURRENT</b><br><b>TEACHING FORCE</b> |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Nationwide</b>                 | 2,500                            | 63   |
| <b>North Carolina</b>             | 80                               | 100  |
| <b>Wake County Public Schools</b> | 12                               | 171  |

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Linda Darling-Hammond, *Teacher Quality and Student Achievement: A Review of State Policy Evidence* (Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, University of Washington, 1999), 4.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. William Sanders, presentation to the Wake Task Force on Teacher Excellence, 30 March 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Susan Moore Johnson, “Teaching’s Next Generation,” *Education Week*, 7 June 2000. Available: <http://www.educationweek.org/ew/ewstory.cfm?slug=39johnson.h19&keywords=Teaching%27s%20Next%20Generation>

<sup>6</sup> Linda Darling-Hammond, “Solving the Dilemmas of Teacher Supply, Demand and Standards: How We Can Ensure a Competent, Caring and Qualified Teacher for Every Child,” (New York: National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 1999). Available: <http://www.tc.edu/nctaf/publications/solving.pdf>; and Wake County Public Schools Human Resources Department, estimating turnover of 1,000 teachers/year and a teaching corps of approximately 6,000.

their preparedness and with little concern for quality. The intent of the Wake Task Force was to offer possible remedies for these teacher shortages. In a study of teacher supply, Linda Darling-Hammond quoted other educational researchers as saying: “*Not only has the raising of standards not exacerbated teacher shortages, it may even—at least where accompanied by significant increases in teachers’ salaries—have helped to alleviate them (and, at the same time, enhanced popular respect for teaching as a profession)*”.<sup>7</sup>

Locally, the 2000 Wake Public Education Community Assessment, conducted by The Gallup Organization for Wake Education Partnership and sponsored by the Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce, the A.J. Fletcher Foundation, and *The News and Observer*, found large gaps between the public’s *desire* for strong teachers and their *perceptions* of the Wake County teaching corps:

- ◆ Whereas 94% of citizens felt that caring teachers were an important characteristic of a very successful school, only 56% felt that caring teachers were present in Wake County Schools—a 38-point gap.
- ◆ Whereas 96% of citizens felt that teachers with a strong background in their subject matter were an essential characteristic of a very successful school, only 51% felt that Wake teachers were strong in their subject matter—a 45-point gap.
- ◆ Only 6% of Wake citizens graded their schools with an “A,” whereas 45% graded them a “B.” Of the five factors

most likely to influence a citizen’s grade of the Wake County Public Schools, two dealt with teachers (teachers with strong subject matter preparation and caring teachers).<sup>8</sup>

Clearly, as these statistics indicate, teaching is an important issue on the minds of Wake County citizens. For student achievement and for continued local economic development, Wake County must attract quality teachers, retain those teachers, train them to become better teachers, and support them as both professionals and valued employees.

#### THE CHARGE

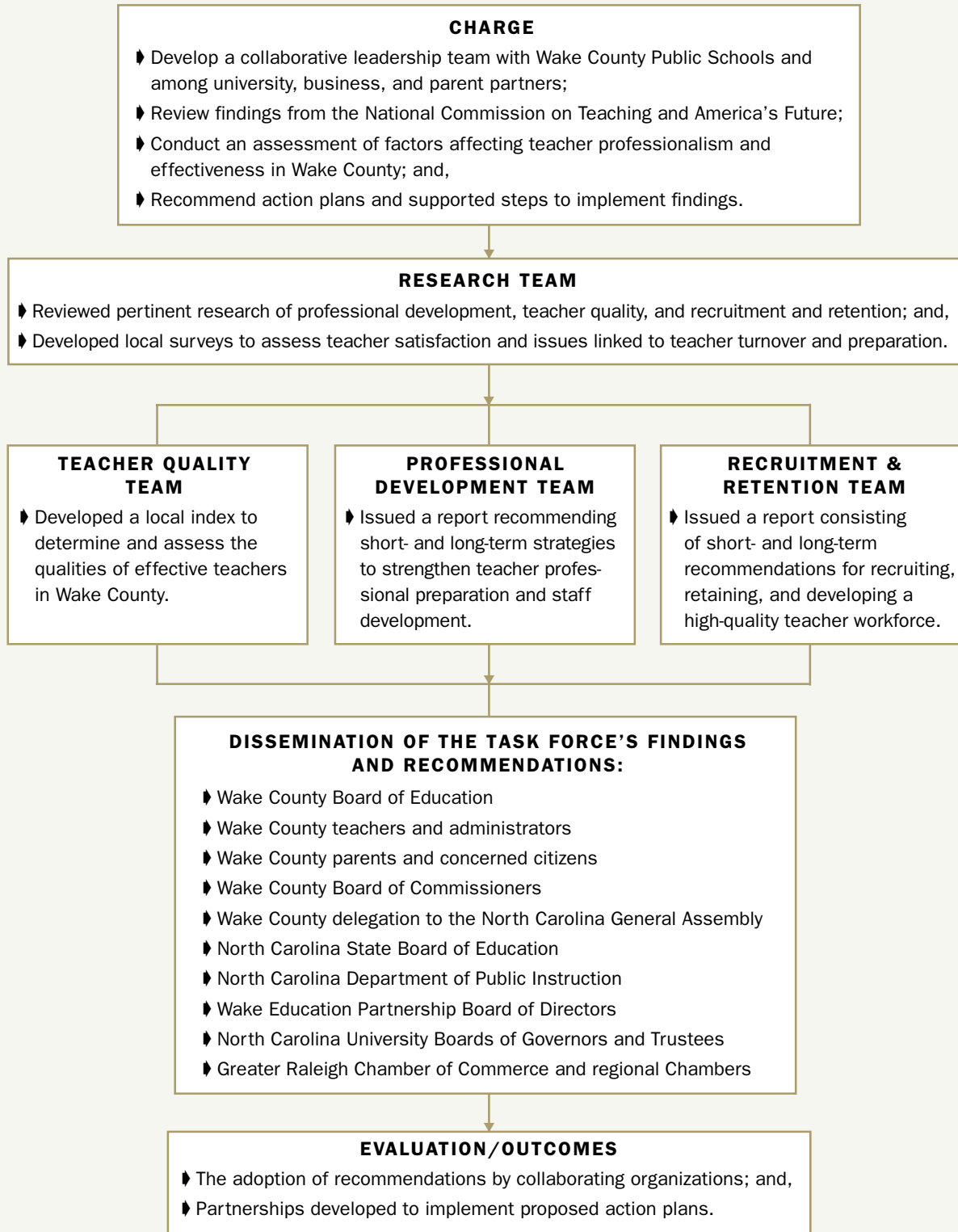
Since the National Commission issued its report, communities nationwide have developed local action plans to advance its findings. Together, the National Commission, the Public Education Network, Wake County Public Schools, and the Wake Education Partnership formed a local response to the findings. Wake County’s effort, the Wake Task Force on Teacher Excellence, was charged with:

- ◆ developing a collaborative leadership team with the Wake County Public School System and among university, business, and parent partners;
- ◆ reviewing findings from the National Commission;
- ◆ assessing the factors affecting teacher professionalism and effectiveness in Wake County; and,
- ◆ recommending action plans and steps to implement the Commission’s findings.

<sup>7</sup> Sedlack and Schlossman, as quoted in Linda Darling-Hammond, “Solving the Dilemmas of Teacher Supply, Demand, and Standards: How We Can Ensure a Competent, Caring and Qualified Teacher for Every Child.”

<sup>8</sup> Complete results from the 2000 Wake Public Education Community Assessment can be found online at <http://www.wakeeducates.org>

**Figure 1. Wake County Task Force on Teacher Excellence process map.**



To this end, the Task Force was divided into four action-research teams: Research, Teacher Quality, Recruitment and Retention, and Professional Development. Each team prepared a report with key findings about Wake County teachers and with recommendations for the future. (See Figure 1).

### **THE PROCESS**

All four teams comprised representatives from the business, university, and school communities in Wake County. From the school perspective, school and central office employees were involved so that a complete community perspective could be achieved. Each team met independently to undertake its work, which consisted of exploring the current state of the teaching force in Wake County, finding best practices and ideas from research and around the country, and crafting recommendations for the local level. The Research Team, while undertaking its own data collection, also worked in support of the other action-research teams.

### **OVERALL PROJECT PLAN**

The Wake Task Force on Teacher Excellence implemented a two-phase process to assess and strengthen the quality of the teaching workforce in the Wake County Public Schools through data collection and civic engagement. The Task Force, facilitated by the Partnership and jointly commissioned with the Wake County Public Schools, was co-chaired by Dr. Bill Burke, Senior Dean, at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Education, and Mike Patterson, Chairman of the Board of Centura Bank. The 60-member team included representatives

from businesses, area universities, the NC Department of Public Instruction, the Wake Chapter of the North Carolina Association of Educators, and many other community groups and organizations.

### **DATA COLLECTION**

The Task Force used recommendations from the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future as a framework to guide its efforts. Each of the four action-research teams described earlier were co-chaired by leaders from higher education and business and were jointly staffed by Wake Education Partnership and the Wake County Public Schools. Each team was assisted by staff with research-based graduate degrees to ensure the project's research component was of the highest quality.

The Task Force was guided by the Executive Committee composed of the co-chairs, the staff, and volunteer co-chairs of each action-research team. The Executive Committee met bimonthly for the duration of the project, whereas each team met as needed to complete its objectives.

### **CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

A recurring theme from the Task Force's business and university partners was for the work to be relevant and actionable. The teams therefore employed two different perspectives in undertaking their tasks: one thinking about key issues, current research, and weighty recommendations; the other thinking about civic accessibility and engagement. To that end, Task Force staff and members adopted a civic engagement strategy to disseminate the Task Force's

findings to key stakeholders throughout Wake County (see Figure 2). This engagement strategy will culminate in the summer of 2001 with an official response from the Superintendent of Wake County Public Schools.

**Figure 2. Dissemination and Action Plan.**

**Goals:**

- ◆ Engage citizens and policy makers in reviewing recommendations; and,
- ◆ Support Wake County Public Schools in responding to the Task Force recommendations with specific policy changes and an action plan.

| Activity  | Outcomes   |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-Release, WCPSS Admin. Cabinet</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster understanding, clear communication and support</li> </ul>                            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Release, Board of Education Board of Commissioners Chambers of Commerce PTA leaders; others</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review report, discuss implications, solicit feedback in small groups</li> </ul>            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher to Teacher: Shaping an Agenda for Change</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review report, discuss implications in small groups, solicit feedback</li> </ul>            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher Education Roundtable</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review report, discuss implications for changing district-schools relationship</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent to Parent: Shaping an Agenda for Change</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review report, solicit input</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business to Business: Shaping an Agenda for Change</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review report, solicit input, consider cost implications</li> </ul>                         |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superintendent's Report and Action Plan</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report and input from prior sessions shaped into superintendent's call to action</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2001 Planning Conference</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key partners join to act on superintendent's plan</li> </ul>                                |

**SUMMARY—CHANGE FORCES IN WAKE COUNTY**

Too often in education, the lives of teachers have been contrasted to the lives of students in a series of tough political choices: legislatures decide between salaries or program supplies; county commissions and school boards choose between teachers and buildings when allocating funds. The Task Force has endeavored to yoke educational issues to a single common vision: high academic achievement for Wake County youth. Teachers matter—they are integral to why students succeed or fail. Finding ways to support, assess, and recognize excellent teachers should be a community-wide responsibility with roles for all Wake County citizens.

Changing the climate of the school system and the community with regard to qualified teachers and high student achievement is not an easy job. Change often creates distress as citizens and leaders begin moving into unfamiliar territory. The solution is not, however, to stop moving. In the *New Meaning of Educational Change*, Michael Fullan stated, "Understanding change is just as much a matter of 'doing' reform as it is of studying it."<sup>9</sup> Wake County has the opportunity to become a change agent, altering relationships among leaders in education, higher education, and business to improve significantly the lives of Wake County's children. Taking this opportunity to make change will affect many of the goals we as a community seek to accomplish in the future.

<sup>9</sup>Michael Fullan, *The New Meaning of Educational Change* (New York: Teacher's College Press, 1991), 345.

## II. OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force approached its work through the efforts of four action-research teams. In addition to each team's recommendations, issues and needs about overall efforts to address teacher excellence in Wake County emerged, prompting the Task Force to make four overarching recommendations.

### **1. Make Teacher Quality a Priority in Wake County**

This report provides the foundation for Wake's ground-breaking strategy to shape the first-ever county-wide plan to mobilize public and private leadership and resources to make measurable improvements in our community's teacher corps and to boost student achievement, performance, and learning. Nothing less than a sustained emphasis on teacher excellence will be required to guarantee Wake County Public Schools realize the 95% achievement goal and public school renewal in our community.

The Task Force urges public school leaders to begin immediately to gather input from a broad range of community groups and interests regarding the recommendations included in this report. Using the findings included in this report, the Superintendent of Wake County Public Schools will engage leaders as active partners to solicit feedback from teachers, parents, universities, businesses, and grassroots neighborhood groups to create an action plan for all of Wake County. This action plan should complement and refine the research-based findings presented herein. The plan should also address the expectations for the local community to partner in an unprecedented change process.

Specifically, school and community leaders must now begin an integrated approach to advance findings from this report and to craft a meaningful and accountable relationship centered on teacher quality. This relationship would replace scattershot efforts with a concerted, focused, and measurable strategy accompanied by clear expectations for change.

The Wake County Board of Commissioners, the Wake County Board of Education, and leaders from business, universities, teachers' associations, and parents will be affected by a new relationship with an authentic focus on high-quality teachers who teach every child enrolled in the public schools.

### **2. Establish New Lines of Communication and Mutual Accountability for Teacher Excellence in Wake County**

Historically, those with an interest in teacher quality lacked a structure to channel that interest into meaningful action. Teacher groups have been criticized for overly concentrating on job protection rather than issues of accountability and performance. Parents, many of whom are active through individual school PTAs, focus largely on boosterism and often fear reprisals from school leaders if they take action on performance issues. Through the collaborative strategy that made this report possible, Wake County now possesses the beginnings of an infrastructure to sustain a focus on teacher excellence.

*“It’s like a lawyer who spends all of his time in court and no time preparing a case. Would you want that lawyer representing you?”*

- MICHAEL FULLAN,  
DISCUSSING TEACHERS  
AND TIME WITH THE WAKE  
LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Specific action steps recommended to build upon this beginning include:

- ◆ Create a new, quasi-independent Wake County Teacher Quality Task Force in cooperation with the Superintendent. The task force should include representatives from key stakeholder groups, such as universities, business, parents, teachers, and state agencies (e.g., the N.C. Department of Public Instruction).<sup>10</sup> The task force would then:
  - Use data generated by the Wake County Public Schools, the State Department of Public Instruction, and others to measure and report on issues of teacher quality in the public schools;<sup>11</sup>
  - Strengthen accountability and communications through input to the Wake County Board of Education, other elected bodies, and key community groups about indicators of teacher quality and the alignment of program activities; and, finally,
  - Advance public and private investment in program strategies and in fundamental change within schools and the system itself to address needs associated with teacher quality. This level of oversight will assure movement from a program-driven focus to an outcome-driven, results-oriented focus.

### **3. Get Serious about Addressing Resource Issues**

The four teams engaged in the Task Force consistently found two barriers impeding real change in teacher quality: time and money. If Wake County is to move the following recommendations to action, both barriers must be surmounted.

#### **Time invested in teacher quality matters.**

To elevate teacher performance and professionalism, teachers must have adequate time for training and problem solving. Revisiting the structure of the school day and the school year to allow more time for teachers’ professional development is one remedy (this topic is discussed in detail later in this report). Research by Professor Michael Fullan at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education has demonstrated that, unlike U.S. teachers, those in Japan and Germany spend much more time planning their lessons and less time in front of a classroom.<sup>12</sup> Teachers need time to review and discuss student work and to analyze best practices. This recommendation does not necessarily involve increasing teacher salaries but does involve allotting more time during the day for professional development activities. A system with quality teachers will allot more time for teachers to enhance their skills and knowledge in ways that directly affect student achievement.

<sup>10</sup> Because of its established relationships with school, business, and community partners, Wake Education Partnership would be an ideal facilitator for this discussion.

<sup>11</sup> This report highlights new directions and strategies for data collection by state and county systems. Accountability in the reporting of this data will ensure its availability and accuracy.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Fullan, presentation to Wake Leadership Academy, 19 October 2000.

**Money invested in teacher quality matters.**

Allowing teachers more time for professional development is just one recommendation in this report that will require increased funding. Providing teachers with tools used by other professionals, from business cards to reliable access to voice mail and the Internet, means that Wake County leaders must take the challenging step of finding more money. Even though Wake lags behind all other large North Carolina communities in spending on its public schools, local leaders have been reluctant to push for increased taxes to get the system on par with other systems. A credible case for increasing taxes or identifying other funding streams will be essential for implementing many of the recommendations in this report.

**4. Strengthen Technology Use in Wake County Public Schools**

The emergence of new technologies, especially massive databases that take advantage of increasingly affordable computer processing power, offers school administrators the opportunity to assess performance improvement over time. During the process of gathering data for this report, the teams discovered that the Wake County Public School System's Central Services too often lacked the personnel to respond adequately to the need for information. Two examples were

the offices of Human Resources and Evaluation and Research, which manage the complex information systems for Wake County Public Schools, the nation's 25th largest public school system. Staffs were unable or incapable of finding information because of inadequate technology and the volume of requests made of these departments. Wake County Public School leaders should seriously consider studying the demands made on personnel in these departments, especially in light of the extraordinary growth in the school system and changing expectations for performance.

**A note on technology.**

Investment in technology at the system level is a critical need. Investing in technology will allow for thorough data collection and form a foundation for developing technology-oriented teacher training and curriculum that will result in higher student achievement. For example, a professional development library for teachers could provide a process for developing an online intellectual community accessible to all and could serve as a repository for locally developed curriculum.<sup>13</sup> Another example of technology use, taken from IBM's Reinventing Education program, consists of online portfolios illustrating the successes teachers have accomplished in working with students. An initial investment in technology could yield cost-effective results for student achievement, school system data collection, and teacher professional development.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.ibm.com/ibm/ibmgives/downloads/reinven2.pdf>

### III. RESEARCH TEAM

#### INTRODUCTION

As with the National Commission, the Wake Task Force on Teacher Excellence was a data-driven and research-based endeavor. The Research Team was charged with “reviewing existing data and ongoing data collection related to teacher satisfaction including recent surveys and exit interviews.” In completing its charge, the Research Team received considerable cooperation from the Wake County Public School staff. The team also leveraged private resources to extend the capacity of the Human Resources and the Evaluation and Research Departments of the Wake County Public Schools to delve more deeply into preexisting data. Ultimately, the Research Team engaged in five streams of data collection, all related to teachers and their perceptions of working in Wake County. The data collection included:

- reviewing 1998-1999 data on Wake County teachers from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction;
- designing and conducting teacher and principal focus groups;
- inserting items and reviewing findings from the biennial Wake County Public Schools Teacher Survey;
- reviewing findings from Wake County Public Schools Exit Surveys, 1997-2000; and,
- collecting and reviewing data from Wake-NCAE Teacher Surveys.

The Research Team shared information from its data collection with other teams, as the data were being processed.

Additionally, the Research Team supported the other teams by fielding their information requests. For example, the Research Team worked collaboratively with the Recruitment and Retention Team in collecting and interpreting data from a survey administered by the Wake Chapter of the North Carolina Association of Educators. Following is a brief description of the survey and key findings from the five research projects undertaken by the team.

#### WAKE COUNTY TEACHER DATA

One of the difficulties encountered by the entire Task Force was determining the current number of teachers in Wake County. Throughout this report, the Task Force will cite different counts of Wake County teachers from different sources. Using 1998-1999 data on Wake County teachers from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, the Research Team set out to establish a thorough understanding of the Wake County teaching corps. Using statistical software, the team reviewed 6,808 records of Wake County teachers provided by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

#### KEY FINDINGS

- ◆ 72% of Wake teachers hold a bachelor’s degree;
- ◆ 27% hold a master’s degree; and,
- ◆ 49% of Wake teachers are in a precarious position in their careers, with 21% having three or less years’ experience and 28% having twenty years or more.

Implications of the third finding are important because teachers with three or less years of experience leave at a higher

rate than do teachers with more experience. In addition, teachers with twenty or more years' experience are eligible for retirement, thus illustrating a looming problem for Wake County as teachers begin to *age out* of the education system at a time when the student population continues to grow.

**CONCLUSIONS**

The team believes these baseline data are of crucial importance as the school system begins to track teachers. For example, tracking the distribution of highly qualified teachers across the system would yield important insights into the link between teachers and student learning. Wake County Public Schools is implementing a new data management system that will facilitate the use of this type of data in the future. Annual reports from Wake County Public Schools Human Resources Department of data generated from the new system will be important in helping the school system to answer critical questions about the distribution of well- and ill-qualified teachers throughout the system and for refining its data management efforts. For example, are Wake County's least prepared teachers found in greater numbers in Wake County's neediest schools? Addressing these types of issues should be a priority for ensuring excellent teachers are in every classroom.

**PRINCIPAL AND TEACHER FOCUS GROUPS**

With Johnson, Zabor, McManus, a professional research firm located in Research Triangle Park, the Research Team coordinated two in-person teacher focus groups

and a telephone-based principal focus group.<sup>14</sup> The purpose of these focus groups was to extend and expand upon more quantitative data collection to gain an authentic teacher perspective. Focus group interviews revealed that both teachers and principals shared the same definitions of a quality teacher but had difficulty in describing how teachers could be assessed to measure quality. Both groups agreed that teacher professionalism, as reflected through faculty and staff relationships and general working conditions, were key issues in teacher retention.

Each focus group member was asked to list the attributes of a quality teacher and to reach consensus in ranking those qualities. Table 2 illustrates the wide array of educators' perceptions about quality

*“If there was some way they could get reimbursed for taking courses toward their Master’s in Education, that would help retain the teachers and improve their skills as well.”*

- FOCUS GROUP PRINCIPAL

**Table 2. Attributes of Quality Teachers**

| Rank | Principals   | Teacher Group 1 <sup>a</sup>   | Teacher Group 2 <sup>b</sup>                                    |
|------|--|--|---|
| 1    | Caring   | Passion (needs of students first)  | Education/knowledge (curriculum, life-long learner)             |
| 2    | Knowledgeable in subject matter, life-long learner | Knowledge (subject matter, classroom management skills, life-long learner) | Flexibility/adaptable to change                                 |
| 3    | Committed  | Determination (high expectations for children)                             | Classroom management skills (leadership/management skills/time) |
| 4    | Creative (resourceful/adaptable) and flexible      | Flexibility  | Effective communication skills                                  |
| 5    | Effective communicator and resilient               | Confidence   | Enjoys working with people (caring and nurturing)               |

<sup>a</sup> Communication spans all five qualities.  
<sup>b</sup> A supportive administration underlies all five qualities.

<sup>14</sup> Johnson, Zabor, McManus, Inc., Unpublished report of findings from focus groups with teachers conducted for Wake Education Partnership Task Force on Teacher Excellence (Research Triangle Park, NC), August 2000; Johnson, Zabor, McManus, Inc., Unpublished report of findings from focus groups with principals conducted for Wake Education Partnership Task Force on Teacher Excellence (Research Triangle Park, NC), September 2000.

*“Often teachers want to hear from us [the principal] what we think of their teaching, and often our hands are tied by the many other demands that we must deal with. We certainly don’t have enough time to deal effectively with teachers who demonstrate real weaknesses or who have performance problems.”*

- FOCUS GROUP PRINCIPAL

*“It is very different when you are in charge of a classroom—you have to manage what goes on, on a daily basis. When I look back at college, I can count on one hand the times we had addressed classroom management in college courses.”*

- FOCUS GROUP TEACHER

teaching. When asked about finding ways to measure teacher quality or performance, participants in the focus groups were hesitant to do so.

**CONCLUSIONS**

One-on-one interaction with school-level staff is an important way of collecting data. In this project, the teachers and principals gave voice to other data collected. Focus groups empower the participants and serve to alert central office staff to emerging issues and concerns within the teaching corps. The community should invest in a program to continue regular teacher and principal focus groups and share the information from these groups with the public schools and the citizenry of Wake County.

**WAKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS TEACHER SURVEY**

Working closely with the Evaluation and Research Department of the Wake County Public Schools, the Research Team solicited possible items for inclusion in the biennial Wake County Public Schools teacher survey. Results from the

survey confirmed that a great majority of Wake County teachers reported being qualified to teach in the fields to which they are assigned and that the school system’s professional development programs are perceived as helpful and effective. Many of the questions in the staff survey dealt with staff development. The percentage of teachers who *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with statements in the survey about staff development are provided in Table 3.

Results from the staff survey also revealed that more than 70% of staff would prefer training to occur on teacher workdays or on regular school days when a substitute teacher is available. Nearly 84% of teachers had participated in staff development activities in the previous year, and more than 88% of teachers believed student achievement and their personal teaching skill should determine what type of and how much staff development training they need. Additionally, 96% of teachers self-reported teaching in the area or areas in which they were licensed.

**Table 3. Teacher Responses to Staff Development**

| Item  | Teachers Strongly Agreeing or Agreeing |
|---|--|
| Wake County training efforts are of high quality                | 59.9%                                  |
| Staff development has improved my teaching skills               | 56.2%                                  |
| I have input into staff development topics                      | 62.5%                                  |
| School-based staff development is preferable to centrally-based | 74.5%                                  |

**CONCLUSIONS**

In the absence of comparison data, determining what these data indicate about the Wake County teaching corps is difficult. That 96% of teachers reported teaching in their licensed area is a positive finding, as this was a key initial concern of the Task Force. This issue is a complex one. At the middle and high school levels, teachers who teach one class in a topic in which they are not licensed can still report teaching within their licensed area. Tracking teacher course loads more carefully and paying special attention to the relationships between license status and student achievement are other areas of data collection the school system should encourage.

Another area of concern is professional development. More than 40% of Wake teachers reported feeling that staff development had not improved their teaching skill, a sobering fact that points to the need for reworking the delivery of professional development within the system. Teachers expressed concerns over the quality and efficacy of their staff development and identified new directions for delivering staff development through the Internet or as a result of student performance and self-assessed needs.

**WAKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS EXIT SURVEYS**

Working in cooperation with the Human Resources Department of the Wake County Public Schools, 544 teacher exit surveys administered between 1997 and 2000 were coded and tabulated. Those

forms were filed but previously untabulated because of outdated software. Key findings, reflected in Figure 3, show 32% of employees who filled out the survey left the system because of a move, reflecting the transitional nature of the Triangle region’s workforce, and 12% of respondents classified themselves as *dissatisfied*. Negative opinions of staff cooperation and fair supervision from school-based administrators directly correlated with a dissatisfied rating.

Some findings from the staff exit surveys reinforced themes reported by other researchers nationwide. For example, almost 88% of teachers completing the survey felt that opportunities for promotion ranged from some to non-existent. Only 43% felt their supervisor was aware of their work and recognized them for it, and only 34% rated the Wake County Public Schools benefits package as *very good*.

**Figure 3. Top reasons teachers exit Wake County Schools.**



**Table 4. Top Five NCAE Member Responses to Why They Chose Teaching**

| Rank | Response                                  | Frequency |
|------|---|-----------|
| 1    | Love or enjoyment of children or students | 36.59%    |
| 2    | Desire to make a difference               | 15.23%    |
| 3    | Childhood experience or family history    | 14.19%    |
| 4    | Love of learning/watching others learn    | 9.24%     |
| 5    | “Calling” or natural ability/inclination  | 7.42%     |

Note. N = 768.

**Table 5. Top Five NCAE Member Responses to Why They Chose Wake County**

| Rank | Response  | Frequency |
|------|---|-----------|
| 1    | Spouse’s job or career move                           | 31.24%    |
| 2    | Grew up or lived in Wake County                       | 20.15%    |
| 3    | Livability of Triangle region: culture, commute, etc. | 12.85%    |
| 4    | Salary supplement                                     | 11.24%    |
| 5    | Quality or reputation of WCPSS                        | 8.76%     |

Note. N = 685.

**Table 6. Top Five NCAE Member Responses to Factors that Would Keep Them in the Classroom**

| Rank | Response                            | Frequency |
|------|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1    | Money                               | 25.99%    |
| 2    | Love of their jobs                  | 14.34%    |
| 3    | Respect/treated as a professional   | 10.08%    |
| 4    | Smaller class sizes                 | 6.01%     |
| 5    | School-level administrative support | 6.01%     |

Note. N = 1,081.

## CONCLUSIONS

Although the exit surveys yielded important insights into characteristics of the Wake County teaching corps and reasons teachers left the system, the survey itself needs major revision. The range of reasons teachers can state for leaving the system overlap and may obscure real problems (e.g., would a dissatisfied teacher who had found alternate employment check *dissatisfied* or *new job?*). Wake County should expand its efforts to track teachers who leave the system and report their findings annually. In addition, special emphasis must be paid to the high percentage of teachers who move frequently and to the percentage of teachers who leave Wake County within their first three years of employment. Retaining new teachers will be crucial to developing an effective teaching corps. When considered with data from the Wake NCAE survey (discussed below), suggesting more than 30% of respondents came to teach in Wake County because of a spouse’s job or career move, these data have implications for teacher recruitment and retention.

## WAKE CHAPTER, NC ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATORS SURVEY

In the spring of 2000, the Wake Chapter of the North Carolina Association of Educators sent out a four-question survey to its members. Results from 650 surveys reflected the transitory nature of the Triangle population. Many respondents stated they came to teach in Wake County because of factors related to a spouse’s job. When asked what would keep them in the classroom, teachers responded most often with a call for higher pay. Tables 4-6 show the frequency of responses for each of three questions asked in the survey.

## CONCLUSIONS

Although the Wake NCAE survey sampled only a portion of all Wake teachers (NCAE members), the findings from this type of outside data collection can hold important insights for Wake County Public Schools. The ability to disaggregate responses by type of school, region of the county, or other variables would be helpful in reporting the information.

## SUMMARY

Results from these five data collection streams present a snapshot of the Wake County teaching corps. The skill of Wake County teachers can be inferred from the 84% of Wake County students who are at or above grade level on North Carolina end-of-grade tests. Underlying this impressive statistic, however, are more important data about the Wake teaching corps. Mobility and retention are major challenges confronting the system. Additionally, Wake County teachers are concerned about lifestyle issues: inadequate pay and a lack of both time and professional development opportunities to improve their teaching skills. Finally, teachers seem willing to confront the quality issue, but they are less certain about methods of assessing quality teaching or accountability.

In addition to the need for a revised exit survey and continued tracking of boilerplate teacher data from the Department of Public Instruction, Wake County needs to align its teacher and test score data to determine the effect of teacher qualification on student achievement and to ensure that groups of students or sections of the county do not suffer disproportionately from having ill-trained or ill-qualified teachers.

Questions of quality continue to confound teachers and their administrators. The Task Force can give direction to an important undercurrent of concern about teacher professionalism and quality, both within the community and the Wake County teaching corps. If Wake County is to move from “knowing great teaching when it sees it” to holding the school system accountable for excellent teacher performance, the leadership must determine what constitutes quality teaching system-wide and report on teacher excellence.

## IV. TEACHER QUALITY TEAM

### INTRODUCTION

Addressing the Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce on September 21, 2000, Superintendent Bill McNeal noted the changing mission of the Wake County Public Schools requires all children be prepared for a new economy in which workers are thinkers and problem solvers who appreciate diversity. Public school graduates who enter the Research Triangle Park workplace or one of the regional colleges or universities must possess the ability to work effectively in teams and to remain learners capable of adapting to new technologies. The district's adoption of its 95% achievement goal occurred with the community's active participation.

These elevated expectations place the greatest burden on classroom teachers who often feel disconnected from the real world and from changing workplace expectations. Gaining the public's trust rests with assurances that public schools can meet these expectations. Inevitably the focus turns to the quality of teachers and teaching.

Although the connection between teacher quality and student achievement has become more widely accepted, disagreements persist about what constitutes high-quality teaching and teachers. In fact, local focus group participants have argued that teacher quality could not be accurately measured at all.

Like the teachers, principals were against the whole idea of an index to measure

teacher "effectiveness." A middle school principal stated that he is able to distinguish, at present, between those teachers who are "OK" and those who are "at a high quality." However, he has not heard of, nor read about, any way to measure this.<sup>15</sup>

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future suggested that local communities consider developing benchmarks to be used in assessing the overall health of the teaching workforce. This so-called Index of Quality would provide measures that over time would reflect the preparedness of the teaching corps and trends that would reveal possible underlying problems.

### OUR COMMUNITY AND TEACHER QUALITY

The question becomes: What is the community's role with its public schools in seeking agreement about the meaning of teacher quality? Second, how will the community and its schools systematically monitor and report on these agreed-upon measures. Nothing short of common language about the meaning of quality will be necessary to define and act upon the gap between expectations and current reality.

Historically, public school systems have lacked an organized constituency who could look broadly at issues of quality and specific indicators tied to success and teacher effectiveness. PTA and business leaders tend to lack a sustained organizational tie to public schools to consider

*"Some think a licensed teacher is a competent teacher and that's not always the case. When they leave school to become teachers they're just beginning."*

- DR. JOHN PENICK, PROFESSOR,  
NC STATE UNIVERSITY

<sup>15</sup> Johnson, Zabor, McManus, Inc., Unpublished report of findings from focus groups with principals, 9.

issues of quality over time. School leaders are too burdened with the daily management of schools and growing enrollment to dedicate time and other resources to issues that lack an organized and vocal constituency.

The emergence of charter schools and the growing chorus for privatized alternatives to the public schools have energized efforts to organize community stakeholders around the issue most central to a school's ability to compete in the future and to succeed with all children: teacher quality. Teacher shortages exacerbate the urgency to address this issue, as even successful public school systems like Wake County must now proactively consider how best to align resources—those in the public schools and the community—to attract and retain exceptionally capable classroom teachers.

Sustained growth in Wake's public schools and competition for qualified teachers from other school systems have forced administrators to focus on recruiting teachers rather than on measuring the quality of the teachers being hired. Administrators employed in the system's Human Resources Department justifiably note that gauging the quality of the teacher workforce is a luxury when limited personnel are available to attend to even critical tasks, such as verifying teacher credentials and references.

The strongest evidence to support the above assertions is the absence of system-wide data about the quality of the teaching workforce in Wake County's public schools. For example, one key

indicator of a quality teaching workforce, noted by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, is the presence of teachers assigned to subjects in which they are certified to teach.

These data are not gathered centrally and, although they are collected at the school level, no one in the system was generally aware of this key measure of quality in Wake's schools (see the Research Team section for a closer discussion of key issues involved in tracking this variable).

Wake County Public Schools does conduct a biennial survey among the district's 6,500 teachers to assess teacher satisfaction with school climate and support provided by principals and the central office. This data collection strategy, part of the system's focus on implementing a highly regarded and awarded Total Quality strategy, assesses ongoing quality improvement and aids administrators in refining practices to address overall teacher satisfaction.

## THE CHARGE

The Teacher Quality Team was charged with developing a local Wake County definition of teacher quality and with seeking input from a range of school and community stakeholders about the Index.

### 1. Establish a Teacher Quality Index

Proposed is the creation of a Teacher Quality Index to define a range of indicators for use in assessing the relative strength of Wake County Public School System's teaching workforce. The Index (see Table 7) is intended to measure progress over time in improving teacher preparedness and the attributes of new

teachers recruited to the public schools, especially those identified by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future as linked to improving student achievement.

The Teacher Quality Team, representing higher education, business, teachers, and parents, met over the course of three months to shape the components of the proposed Index. The team considered many factors associated with quality schools and teachers and then narrowed its final recommendations to items that could be readily measured and reported by the Wake County Public Schools.

The Index and its associated activities are intended to guide the public schools in improving upon its data gathering and reporting in ways that will enhance overall recruitment and retention of desirable educators and boost community participation in and understanding of these issues. For example, the Task Force recommends that teachers, parents, and other key community members be actively engaged in seeking broader input into and agreement on the proposed Index's measures that are uniquely suited to the expectations of Wake County.

**Table 7. Proposed Teacher Quality Index**

| <b>Priorities</b>                   | <b>Critical Quality Indicator</b>  | <b>Measure</b>  |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| Recruitment                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early teacher contracts in critical needs areas</li> </ul>  | Percentage; compared over time  |
| Preparation for teaching            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Licensed in subject area</li> <li>• Licensed in multiple areas</li> </ul>   | Percentage each year<br>Percentage each year  |
| Continuous improvement              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training dollars per teacher</li> <li>• Hold National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification</li> <li>• Hold advanced degrees</li> </ul>   | Comparison over time<br>Comparison over time<br>Percentage  |
| Work systems that promote success   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turnover rate</li> <li>• Diversity</li> <li>• State and local per pupil expenditure</li> <li>• Teacher retention</li> <li>• Teacher autonomy to make needed changes</li> </ul>                      | Less than state rate<br>Percentage<br>Comparative to other systems<br>Comparison over time<br>Survey response |
| Teacher satisfaction                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absentee rate</li> </ul>  | Rate  |
| Distribution of teachers in schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers licensed in subject areas assigned</li> <li>• Teachers with three or less years experience</li> <li>• Provisionally licensed teachers</li> <li>• Teachers with advanced degrees</li> </ul> | Improvement over time within system   |

Items included in the proposed Teacher Quality Index require explanation so that community members can more easily consider the merits for their inclusion (see Table 8).

**Table 8. Definitions of Attributes in Proposed Teacher Quality Index**

| Attribute   | Definition   |
|---|--|
| • Early teacher contracts   | Offered to teachers in the recruiting process, typically those with more desirable credentials                                     |
| • Teachers licensed in subject area                                     | Maintains a license in the subject area in which the teacher is assigned   |
| • Teachers holding advanced degrees                                     | Possesses Master’s degree or Doctorate   |
| • Teachers licensed in multiple areas                                   | Possesses licenses in multiple subjects (can be assigned flexibly within the school) and is prepared to teach assigned students    |
| • Training dollars per teacher  | Dollars invested in teacher training per student   |
| • Hold National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification | Successfully completes National Board Certification, a rigorous process of study and testing to enhance teacher quality nationwide |
| • Turnover rate   | Teachers leaving Wake County Public Schools, as measured annually  |
| • Diversity   | Measure of racial and ethnic diversity among the teaching corps  |
| • State/Local per pupil expenditure                                     | Measure of available funding for program services in the operation of schools  |
| • Teacher retention   | Annual measure of teachers retained  |
| • Teacher autonomy to make needed changes                               | Teacher attitudes as expressed in surveys and focus groups   |
| • Absentee rate   | Percentage of teachers absent from school on any given day   |
| School-level Indicators   |  |
| • Teachers licensed in subject areas assigned                           | Teachers licensed in the subject in which they teach at each school  |
| • Teachers with three or less years’ experience                         | Number/percentage of teachers with three or less years’ experience at each school  |
| • Provisionally licensed teachers                                       | Number possessing “preliminary” licenses at each school  |
| • Teachers with advanced degrees  | Number possessing advanced degrees at each school  |

*“This is a wealth of diagnostic information which you can begin to feed back to teachers, that can be used in a very positive, diagnostic way.”*

- DR. WILLIAM SANDERS,  
ADDRESSING WAKE NATIONALLY  
BOARD CERTIFIED TEACHERS,  
21 MARCH 2000

## **2. Assess Teacher Effectiveness at the Classroom Level**

Proposed is the thoughtful and systematic expansion of efforts already underway by Wake County Public Schools to assess teacher performance at the classroom level through the use of student test data. This so-called Value-Added Assessment model of teacher effectiveness suggests that student performance can be isolated to determine teacher ability regardless of differences among the students entering the classroom, such as race and family income. Although controversial, this work can be an important tool in developing models of teacher professional development tailored to individual teachers' strengths and weaknesses.

### **Background**

Over the past decade, accountability for the public schools has been focused at the school level. However, the emergence of new technologies, especially affordable computer processing of massive amounts of information, has opened the door to accountability at the classroom level. By aggregating student performance data on standardized tests over a multiyear period, statistical models can be used to determine how well students learn under a given teacher.

The Value-Added Assessment of teacher effectiveness is most often associated with Dr. William Sanders. This model uses student performance over time on end-of-grade tests, end-of-course tests, or both to assess the value a teacher adds through his or her instructional program to student achievement. A student's performance is compared not only with other students' performance but also against that individual's past performance.

Quoted in the nation's most prominent education periodicals, Dr. Sanders noted, “The evidence is overwhelming that the percentage of teachers that are just ridiculously ineffective is much smaller than people think—I would judge maybe 3 to 5 percent. But I feel very strongly that even those folks should be given some assistance and some time to become more effective, or they should be encouraged to seek employment elsewhere. Because they're harming kids.”<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Jeff Archer, “Sanders 101,” *Education Week*, 5 May 1999. Available: <http://www.educationweek.com/ew/1999/34sander.h18>

**Teacher Input**

When a team of Wake County National Board Certified Teachers were asked to issue recommendations for how the Value-Added model might be successfully

employed, they issued the following recommendations (these recommendations will be more fully developed when the team of teachers releases its final report in spring 2001):

▶ **Model:**

- Build credibility for the model among teachers.
- Avoid scores becoming the endpoint in and of themselves.
- Consider the implications of additional student testing on students, teachers, and school climate.
- Note that NC's is a criterion-referenced testing program versus TN's norm-referenced testing.
- Recognize the impact of factors, such as mobility among students, teacher assignments, student reassignments, and family circumstances (such as divorce, etc.).
- Implement in limited, positive diagnostic ways and build slowly toward more formal use in teacher accountability.

▶ **Teacher Support:**

- Develop stronger support systems for teachers to use the data.
- Identify common characteristics of good and poor performers found in the data.
- Assuming above, can changes be made? Attend to school climate itself.
- After mentoring and support, develop an outplacement system for teachers who still perform poorly.
- Avoid using the model as the sole basis for teacher evaluation.

▶ **Parents and the Public:**

- Prevent public access to confidential data about teacher performance.
- Anticipate that parents may demand to know which teachers are most effective.
- Educate citizens about the model's value and limitations.

*“...I’ve clearly shown that in inner-city schools especially, African American kids were represented in the least effective teachers’ classes. What leads me to this is because inner-city schools are disproportionately where the new hires go.”*

- DR. WILLIAM SANDERS,  
ADDRESSING WAKE NATIONALLY  
BOARD CERTIFIED TEACHERS,  
21 MARCH 2000

## V. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION TEAM

### INTRODUCTION

A quality teacher for every child was the overall goal of the recommendations made by this dedicated team. Anecdotal data tell us less qualified teachers are often paired with high-needs students. Therefore, the team's intent was to provide recommendations to ensure *all* students are paired with dedicated, well-prepared, supported teachers. These recommendations do not represent a business-as-usual model. Rather, they call for a paradigm shift in how we view the importance of teachers in the Wake County Public School System. Schools are complex learning environments, and any comprehensive reform will require changes in organization, culture, and resource allocation. In a growing school system where resources are constrained, the focus on hiring and retaining a quality workforce is imperative. Wake County Public Schools' current system of recruiting and retaining teachers is in dire need of a major overhaul to ensure quality teachers are present in all Wake County classrooms. The recommendations stemming from this team target new-teacher recruitment, retention, and issues surrounding a paradigm shift toward raising the bar of support for all teachers. Strategies are offered that challenge the community and its leadership to make the necessary changes to assure Wake County has the best and the brightest teachers for every child. No more important element exists in the learning process than an excellent teacher.

This past school year, Wake County had nearly 100 vacant teacher positions at the opening of the traditional school calendar year.<sup>17</sup> Many vacancies were in special needs areas, such as special education, English as a Second Language, and science. These shortages parallel the demand for increasingly better performance from both students and teachers. The challenge for Wake County is to entice quality teachers to continue teaching in our schools, but the system cannot do the job alone. Community commitment is vital for creating vigorous efforts to recruit and retain fully qualified teachers.

Supply issues alone, however, may not explain the difficulty in recruiting and retaining a quality teaching force. Research reviewed by the National Commission found that the "hiring of under-qualified teachers in many communities was less a function of labor market shortages than it was of cumbersome hiring procedures that chase away good candidates and prevent efficient and timely hiring. ...A process that takes months to conduct discourages qualified applicants who are unwilling to wait and often results in late hiring of much less qualified applicants."<sup>18</sup> Although teachers expressed the importance of compensation, the team discovered during its data collection that a professional working environment is more critical to retaining the professional teacher. Teachers cited improved professional climate and

<sup>17</sup> Tim Simmons, "In Search of Certified Teachers," *News & Observer* (Raleigh). 13 August 2000, A1.

<sup>18</sup> Darling-Hammond, "Teacher Supply," 8.

working relationships, along with benefits commensurate with other similar professions, as areas needing improvement. In its recommendations, the team addresses this and other teacher concerns targeting compensation, professional climate, and benefits.

### PROCESS

The recruitment and retention team was comprised of twelve active members who represented area businesses, Wake County Public School Central office administrators, teachers currently in the field, retired administrators from the Wake County Public Schools, the Wake Education Partnership, and the Wake County Chapter of the North Carolina Association of Educators. The team intentionally set out to create recommendations both feasible and measurable. In preparing its recommendations, the group spent ten months reviewing related journal articles, conducting two surveys, hosting guest speakers, and taking field trips to area businesses that exemplified good recruiting and retention practices. Additionally, the team faced challenges in obtaining data for review.

The team's lack of easy access to data warrants further explanation. During the 1997-1998 school year, the computer system in the Wake County School System failed. Historical employee data were lost, including service dates, certification areas, career histories, and lists of continuing education classes completed. To recreate the missing data, each employee was asked to furnish Human Resources personnel with current

information. At the same time, the department experienced several restructuring efforts. The change in leadership, shifting of positions, and loss of records resulted in large gaps in the database. To prevent data loss in the future, the school system modernized its technology by purchasing a new data management system, scheduled to go-live in spring 2001.

These missing data negatively affected the Recruitment and Retention Team's efforts, as requested historical data had either been recreated or were simply unavailable. Because the team had difficulty analyzing data trends, members were assisted by the Task Force's Research Team, who were able to retrieve exit data in the form of scan sheets. Subsequent analysis of these data resulted in a review of 544 exit surveys spanning the years 1997-1999. The Research Team also gathered data from additional sources that proved helpful to the Recruitment and Retention Team.

Because baseline data were largely unavailable, the team advocates that baseline data be gathered during the first year of implementation of its recommendations to monitor and improve effectiveness. In addition, the team calls for implementing a well-structured accountability model to monitor elements of the plan. Further, the team proposes this model include a list of persons responsible for implementing each strategy. School-level leadership will be essential to the successful implementation of these recommendations.

*“If the Wake County School System did a better job of retaining, we wouldn’t have to recruit.”*

- HENRY KNIGHT,  
FORMER SCHOOL BOARD  
MEMBER

## CHARGE

The Recruitment and Retention Team was charged with identifying short- and long-term strategies for recruiting and retaining a high-quality teacher workforce in Wake County. The expected outcomes of these recommendations will be the following:

- Fewer teachers will leave the Wake County Public School System.
- Adequate numbers of teachers for all identified teaching positions will be hired and prepared to teach every student on the first day of school.
- A stand-by pool of qualified applicants who have been completely processed and are ready to be assigned will be available to fill all teaching position needs identified during the first two weeks of school.
- Professional teachers will enjoy teaching in the Wake County Public School System and derive a sense of accomplishment as a professional.
- The backlog of paperwork within the Human Resource Department of the Wake County Public School System will be eliminated.
- Timely communication with potential applicants will occur.
- Information will flow smoothly between system employees and the Human Resources Department.

To provide a quality, caring teacher for every child, Wake County school administrators must focus on retaining and recruiting only the best teachers and enact a paradigm shift in the way the

school system creates a professional climate. Before specific recommendations can be enacted, four broad recommendations must be in place.

## BROAD RECOMMENDATIONS

### **1. Provide a Quality Teacher for Every Child Beginning the First Day of School**

Every child deserves an excellent teacher. Success for children will come only by having caring and competent teachers in all classrooms. Higher standards and stronger accountability systems rely on the presence of an excellent teaching corps. The teacher makes a critical difference in a child’s learning. Therefore, the school system must focus on strategies that ensure only effective teachers are recruited and retained.

### **2. Retain Our Experienced Teachers**

To assure enough qualified teachers are present in the system, administrators must do more than simply increase the number of new teachers they recruit—the attendant challenge is to reduce the demand for new teachers. Eliminating a myriad of factors that drive teachers from the profession and putting in place strategies to support and compensate quality teachers can accomplish this task.

For 1998-1999, Wake County Public Schools had an overall teacher attrition rate of 13%. At a rate of \$11,570.65 per teacher, the total turnover cost per year to the Wake County Public School System to rehire and retrain teachers is \$9,198,666.80.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Memorandum to the Wake County Public Schools Administrative Cabinet from Human Resource Department Director citing 5,537 teachers and a turnover rate of 13.1%; National Institute of Business publication, “Success on Recruiting and Retraining,” Summer 2000.

### **3. Reduce the Turnover Rate of Recently Hired Teachers**

During the next four years, the population of the Wake County Public School System will increase to more than 100,000 new students. This growth, combined with the number of teachers expected to retire or otherwise leave the school system each year (28% of Wake teachers currently have 20 or more years of experience, making many eligible for state retirement), means that Wake County must recruit high-quality teachers into the system to keep pace with student growth and the attrition of its teaching corps. The projected need over the next four years is 4,000 new teachers, based on current rates of turnover and attrition.<sup>20</sup> This past school year, Wake County had nearly 100 vacant teacher positions at the opening of the traditional school calendar year.<sup>21</sup> Between August and October 2000, 119 teachers left the Wake County School System. This group included 36 teachers who were new to the system, 18 special education teachers, 57 regular education, and 51 tenured teachers.<sup>22</sup>

Newly graduated teachers resign at a rate of 12% in their first year, 14% in their second, and 10% in their third. Tracking these former employees through effective exit surveys could yield important data for the Wake County Public Schools. Where do these former employees go? Why are they leaving? From which schools of

education are they graduating? Are some education schools likely to prepare more of those who stay, and, if so, why?

The standards for student achievement have been raised. By 2003, the Wake County Goal states that 95% of the students tested will be at or above grade level, as measured on the end-of-grade test. To reach and exceed this high-stakes expectation necessitates the presence of quality teachers in all classrooms.

Often, the district does not hire the best-qualified applicants for teaching positions because their own procedures keep them from doing so. Therefore, the strategies for addressing this issue include revamping the mentoring program, reinventing the Human Resources Department, and creating a culture of professionalism in schools and among teachers.

### **4. Provide Teachers with Benefits Commensurate with Other Similar Professions**

The salaries of new and experienced teachers create recruitment and retention problems. According to a national study, 78% of the public favors raising teacher salaries to meet the nation's recruitment challenges.<sup>23</sup> Compensation and working conditions that influence decisions to remain in teaching are important elements in successful teacher retention.<sup>24</sup> Issues of salary include not only the low rate of starting salary when compared to

*“The issue isn’t merely the number of teachers we need; the issue is the caliber of people we need, how we prepare them, how we support them, and how we keep them in the classroom.”*

- GARY GALLUZZO,  
“WILL THE BEST AND BRIGHTEST TEACH?” *EDUCATION WEEK*,  
5 MAY 1999. AVAILABLE:  
[HTTP://WWW.EDWEEK.ORG](http://www.edweek.org)

<sup>20</sup> Personal communications, Diane Kent-Parker, Director of Recruitment and Retention, Wake County Public Schools Human Resources, October 2000.

<sup>21</sup> Simmons.

<sup>22</sup> Toni Patterson, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, Wake County Public Schools, presentation to Wake County Public Schools Administrative Cabinet, 5 December 2000.

<sup>23</sup> David Haselkorn and Louis Harris, *The Essential Profession: A National Study of Public Attitudes toward Teaching, Educational Opportunity and School Reform* (Belmont, MA: Recruiting New Teachers, Inc., 1998).

<sup>24</sup> North Carolina Teaching Fellows Commission, *Keeping Talented Teachers* (Raleigh: North Carolina Public School Forum, 1999), 11.

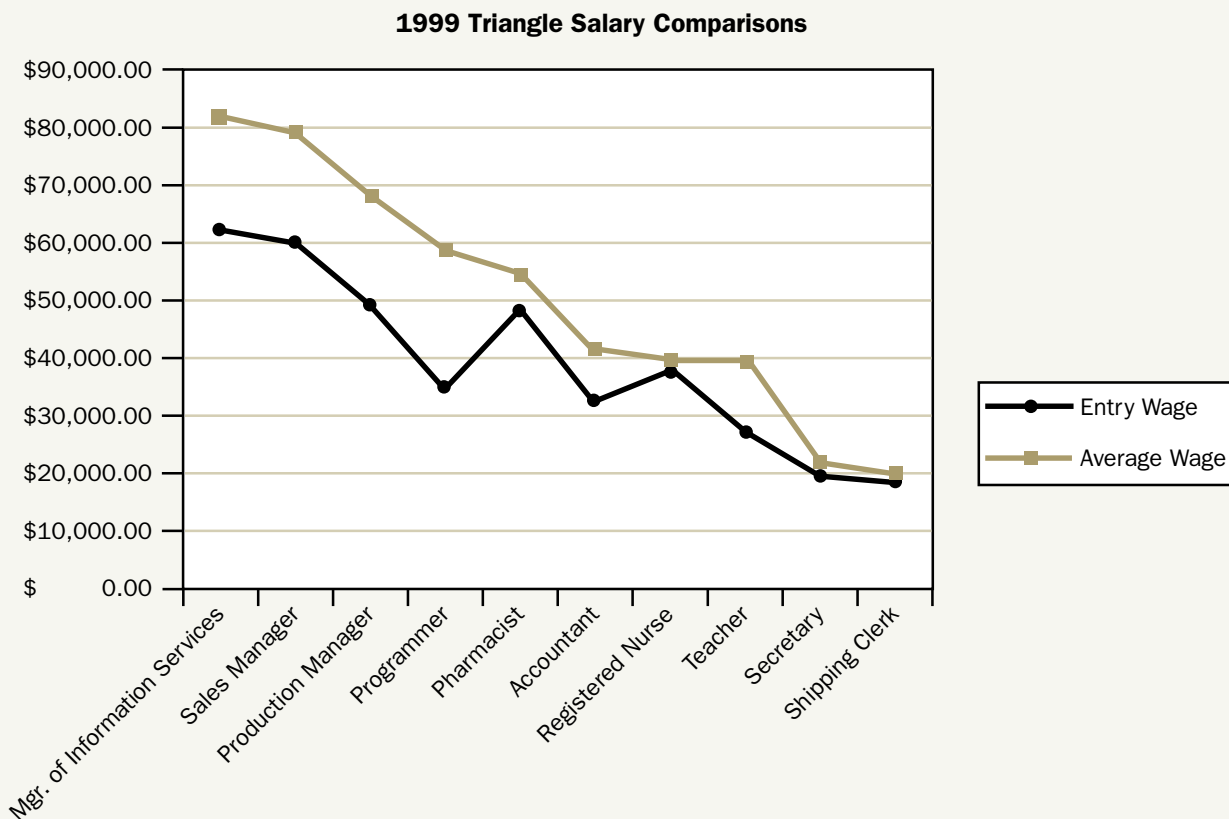
other professionals with similar educational training but also the inability to increase a teacher's salary substantially over the aggregate of his or her career.<sup>25</sup>

Figure 4 illustrates the difference between entry and average wages of Triangle professions.<sup>26</sup> Looking at this difference gives an idea of the earning potential of these professions. For Wake County teachers, the difference between starting and average wage was \$13,225, below other Triangle area professions

such as sales or Manager of Information Services. These data give a glimpse of the growth in salaries for different professions.

Figure 5 shows the growth from entry-level to average wage for Triangle area professions for 1999. On the 1999-2000 Wake County pay scale, a first-year teacher will make \$26,695 a year. If that teacher taught for 15 years and earned a master's degree (thus getting to a higher pay scale) that teacher would still earn only \$42,430, a growth of \$15,000 over

**Figure 4. Comparisons of differences between entry and average wages of professionals in the Research Triangle Park, 1999.**



<sup>25</sup> Wake County Economic Development Program, *Research Triangle Regional Data Book 2000* (Raleigh: Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce, 2000).

<sup>26</sup> *Research Triangle Data Book*.

the course of a career. Long-term salary expectations are much higher in other professions and in many blue-collar occupations.<sup>27</sup>

**SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS**

**1. Restructure the Teacher Compensation Package**

For Wake County to be competitive in the marketplace, the school system must pay its teachers a comparable market wage. An implementation plan should be developed that creates pay for extra duties and investigates methods for increasing the local supplement. Nontraditional compensations should also be investigated, such as providing stock options for teachers and allowing up to one year of unpaid leave (sabbaticals) for teachers after they have completed 10, 20, and 25 years of service. (Teachers would have the option

of returning to the school where they last taught, if there is an opening at that school and if the teacher is qualified for the position. In other words, teachers would have the first right of refusal on such a position). Establishing endowed teaching chairs using private support would fund opportunities for teachers to participate in these sabbaticals. Additionally, teaching fellowships could be created in collaboration with local colleges, universities, and the private sector, giving teachers the opportunity to interact with area businesses in curriculum development in high-needs areas, such as science and mathematics. Another incentive could be providing affordable housing for teachers through low interest mortgages and private investment into housing designed for teachers.

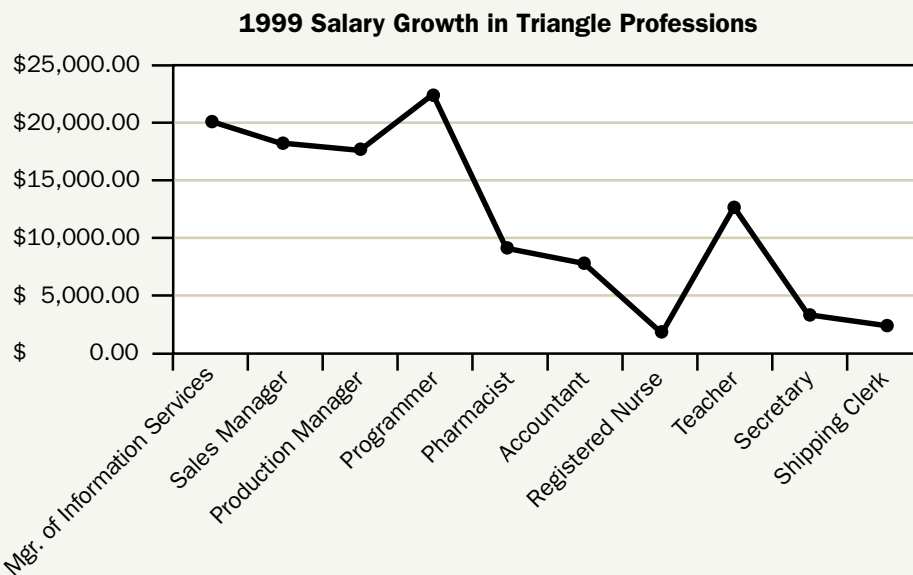
**TEACHERS' VILLAGE**

The concept of a cluster of homes for teachers has become a reality in downtown Raleigh. Through the efforts of philanthropist Gordon Smith, seven homes are slated for occupancy by current and future teachers. The idea is to provide the teachers living in this cluster of homes opportunities to improve their skills and share their knowledge.

**CINCINNATI PUBLIC SCHOOLS MODEL**

On October 6, 2000, the leaders of the Cincinnati Public Schools and the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers jointly announced the implementation of a ground-breaking model for teacher evaluation, pay, and professionalism. The model allows for advancing and compensating teachers based on their performance on high standards of good teaching. For more details, go to the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers web site ([www.cft-aft.org](http://www.cft-aft.org)).

**Figure 5. Growth from entry-level to average wage in Triangle professions in 1999.**



<sup>27</sup> Research Triangle Data Book.

*“There is too much pressure and stress put on teachers new to the profession. They are pulled out of class for all kinds of required staff development and then told to get great test scores. First and foremost, new teachers need strong mentor support and opportunities to network with co-workers within the school.”*

- WCPSS VETERAN TEACHER,  
FALL 2000

*“Over the last decade, a number of researchers have classified the weak support for beginning teachers as a form of professional dereliction.”*

- NORTH CAROLINA TEACHING  
FELLOWS COMMISSION,  
KEEPING TALENTED TEACHERS

## **2. Restructure the Current Use of Time**

Historically, teacher work has been perceived as based only on contact time with students. This way of thinking undermines the realities of how time is used in teaching. Teachers face the constant battle of not having enough time to plan and develop lessons; assess students' progress; grade assignments; learn new technologies; order supplies; meet with parents; participate in school committees; assist in student clubs and sports activities; cover hall, bus, and lunch duty; and reflect on their teaching and research best practices. Teachers need time to plan, teach, work collaboratively with their peers, reflect on their work, and both develop and practice new skills and strategies. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future estimates that elementary teachers have only four hours a week and high school teachers only forty-five minutes a week for planning and training.<sup>28</sup> The problem involves both the number of days and the number of hours in a day available to teachers for accomplishing their work. For teachers to organize their activities to ensure student success, the current school schedule needs to be completely transformed. Restructuring personnel at the site level through flexible and creative scheduling and extending the school year for teachers to an eleven- or twelve-month pay schedule would allow more time for teachers to do their jobs. If this goal is to be achieved, a strong push from the private sector, calling for leadership and know-how among key administrators and policy leaders, is crucial.

## **3. Reinvent the Mentoring Program to Support New Teachers**

Teachers participating in focus groups conducted for this report cited mentoring as a key to supporting professional growth in the first three years of a teacher's career. Although teacher perceptions of the Wake County mentoring program were mixed, many saw the potential.<sup>29</sup> Mentoring promotes professional growth as teachers learn to analyze and improve their instruction in a collaborative, nonthreatening environment. Mentoring for beginning teachers is an essential element for their success.

In Wake County schools, teachers who mentor spend more than a year in training. These veteran teachers mentor up to three and four beginning teachers, while carrying full teaching loads themselves. However, although many beginning teachers are assigned mentors from different fields, they often do not meet with their mentor until well into the school year. Therefore, a strategy must be developed ensuring qualified, trained mentors are available to provide support to first- and second-year teachers who are in the process of earning permanent certification. This task can be accomplished by creating a teacher leadership position to coordinate, facilitate, and evaluate the effectiveness of each school's mentoring activities. As well, the school system must provide mentors and new teachers with sufficient time for mentoring.

<sup>28</sup> North Carolina Public School Forum, *A Profession in Jeopardy* (Raleigh: North Carolina Public School Forum, 1996), 4-6.

<sup>29</sup> Johnson, Zabor, McManus, Inc., Unpublished report on findings from focus groups with teachers, 17.

The issue of mentoring brings up the topic of initially licensed teachers (ILTs). Wake County needs to learn more about these unique professionals in the system. What are their scores on evaluations and other accountability measures? The implementation of a statewide product-based assessment for new teachers shows promise and possibilities. A group of Wake County-based Nationally Board Certified teachers is now looking at what a possible Wake County *product-based* assessment would look like for all licensed teachers, including factors such as observations, records of student work, and standardized test data.

#### **4. Reinvent the Human Resources Department**

The stated mission of Wake County Schools' Human Resources Department is to recruit, retain, and create working conditions to enable the success of high-quality employees who will achieve the system's 95% goal. A streamlined recruitment process and specific strategies for teacher retention will ensure well-qualified teachers can easily find work in Wake County and be able to do that work in a supportive professional environment. For the department to succeed in its mission, departmental leaders must think strategically about school staffing and understand its critical role in supporting school success. They must also become more responsive to existing employees and attract exemplary teachers by doing the following:

- Recruit year round and keep an updated list of applicants for positions throughout the school year.

- Create an applicant pool of approved candidates prior to releasing applicant names to principals so that Human Resources personnel can reduce confusion and speed up proper placement of teachers (e.g., confirm status of certification, years of experience, references, background checks, etc.).
- Develop a data-driven method for quickly identifying and recruiting teachers. Make sure the method has pre-set goals, is measurable, and has timelines to evaluate its effectiveness.
- Streamline the paperwork flow for new hires. Start from the day the Human Resources Department receives a teacher's application to the end of his or her first month of employment.
- Establish and promote Wake County Public School System's Internet site for perspective employees. The site should make clear both the school system's and the community's commitment to teachers. For example, the site would include information on the availability of fellowships, support groups, or both for those seeking National Board certification.
- Convene human resources specialists to consider e-business strategies to move the department to a paperless, user-friendly, on-time delivery system that seeks and secures nurturing teachers for all children.
- Revisit cost implications of reinventing the Human Resources Department.
- Develop a protocol to enable the Human Resources Department to handle efficiently all processes pertaining to employment.

*“We need more mentors, who need more incentives to do this important job. We need to do all we can to improve working conditions. That would include access to a phone, a reasonable time for lunch, protection from too many non-instructional demands, support when dealing with difficult parents, and a manageable teaching assignment.”*

- VETERAN TEACHER,  
SPRING 2000

*“The Human Resources Department is unable to meet the demands for recruiting and retaining employees to the system. We can't even keep up with processing applications. There have been numerous studies that indicate our needs, but nothing is ever done to fix the problem.”*

- CENTRAL OFFICE HUMAN  
RESOURCES EMPLOYEE,  
FALL 2000

### **5. Institute Targeted Recruiting Programs**

This past school year, Wake County had nearly 100 vacant teacher positions at the opening of the traditional school calendar year.<sup>30</sup> As stated earlier, many vacancies were in special needs areas, such as special education, English as a Second Language, and science. These shortages occur at a time when the demand is rising for increasingly better performance from both students and teachers. The challenge for Wake County is to entice quality teachers to continue teaching in our schools. Wake County Public Schools must have vigorous community commitment to its efforts to recruit and retain fully qualified teachers.

The Task Force proffers a number of strategies for filling the demand for teachers in high-needs areas. Pay differentiation, which pays higher salaries to teachers recruited for hard-to-hire positions, and a one-time signing bonus to teachers in targeted, high-needs areas (e.g., English as a Second Language, earth science, special programs, technology, low-performing schools) should be extended. The system should explore innovative recruiting techniques, such as using teachers from foreign countries and soliciting ex-military personnel and employees from surrounding community corporations and businesses. Another example of innovative hiring is the Human Resources Department's proposal to hire a limited number of lateral entry teachers and emergency permit teachers to

fill critical need positions. This plan calls for targeting applicants with special expertise who have successfully taught full time in a classroom teaching setting as a professor, assistant professor, associate professor, instructor, or visiting lecturer at a constituent institution of The University of North Carolina, a North Carolina community college, or other higher education institution. Implementing the alternate license route will yield another source of teachers who have been reluctant to enter teaching at the secondary level because of additional coursework and Initially Licensed Teachers (ILT) guidelines. Such guidelines are designed for the novice teacher.

### **6. Create Professionalism in All Schools and Among Teachers**

In focus groups with teachers and principals, teachers expressed their desire to be treated as the professionals they were trained to be. Also, teachers on an open-ended questionnaire cited treatment as a professional as one of the top three factors in their remaining in the teaching profession in Wake County.<sup>31</sup>

Exit surveys of 544 teachers were administered and reviewed by Wake County Public Schools between 1997 and 2000 (see Section III). The results of those surveys revealed that teachers who had a negative impression of working relationships among their staff and the effectiveness and fairness of their supervision were more likely to cite job dissatisfaction as their reason for leaving the system.

<sup>30</sup> Simmons.

<sup>31</sup> Johnson, Zabor, McManus, Inc. Unpublished report of findings from focus groups with teachers, 12-14; Wake NCAE Survey 2000, unpublished survey conducted for this study.

The reasons teachers cited for leaving the Wake County Public Schools and the teaching profession are the same reasons reflected in a multitude of state and national studies.<sup>32</sup> The reasons are as much about climate as they are about compensation issues.

The school system must create a culture that supports and develops the following:

- Stronger leadership within the school that is focused on teacher excellence and teaching. For example, identify and support emerging leaders through the Wake Leadership Academy and increase and improve the opportunities for relevant on-site continuing education.
- A means for providing teachers with the tools used by similar professionals to do their jobs, such as business cards, voice mail, and the Internet.
- Effective communications among teachers, administrators, support staff and the community about the system's goals, policies, and procedures.
- A reformatting of the communications department to enhance and promote teachers as highly respected individuals within the school system and in our community.
- Options for creating a positive working climate to ensure:
  - well-maintained, attractive schools;
  - orderly schools;
  - safe schools; and
  - schools as places of learning.

## CONCLUSIONS

Given the projected teacher shortages and the high-stakes accountability goals in the Wake County Public School System, the need for qualified, caring teachers for every child is greater than ever before. This crisis is a wake-up call for upgrading the profession. One researcher has called teachers “street-level bureaucrats” because of the important role they have in the success or failure of policies aimed at improving student performance.<sup>33</sup> As a result, school systems must pay close attention to, and make important investments in, teacher quality and training. Teachers are the heart of schools and the single most important factor in assuring all students succeed. Teachers need to be compensated fairly and made to feel respected and connected to their community and their colleagues.

***“The work tools that virtually any other working person in a professional, technical or support job takes for granted are luxuries for many teachers. Teachers perform jobs without the benefit of a discrete workspace, file cabinets, shelving, a phone, computer and clerical support. For teachers, the absence of professional work tools is a constant annoyance and a daily reminder of how the work teachers perform is viewed.”***

-NORTH CAROLINA  
PUBLIC SCHOOL FORUM,  
A PROFESSION IN JEOPARDY

<sup>32</sup> North Carolina Public School Forum, 5.

<sup>33</sup> Weatherly and Lipsky, as quoted in Richard Elmore, “Backward Mapping: Implementation Research and Policy Decisions,” *Political Science Quarterly* 94 (Winter 1979-80): 601-616.

## VI. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM

### INTRODUCTION

Unquestionably, schools will improve if we staff them with competent, caring, and qualified professional teachers who possess the knowledge and skills needed to teach all children to acceptable proficiency. Further, throughout their careers, teachers must have sufficient and extensive opportunities to upgrade their content knowledge, repertoire of teaching skills, and other measures and means of unlocking the keys to solving student learning problems.

The purpose of professional development is to improve student learning. Any professional development model must ultimately demonstrate that student learning is improved as a result of teacher participation. Teachers, therefore, must play the lead role in identifying and studying the learning problems their students encounter as they seek to master subject matter content. Once the problems are identified, professional teachers are then ready to compare their current state of knowledge and skills with what they must know and be able to do to ensure that all children attain grade-level proficiency and above. School systems must commit to providing the time and resources needed to create learning opportunities that specifically address teachers' needs.

### PROCESS

The Professional Development Team, which included representatives from area businesses, higher education, the Department of Public Instruction, and the Wake County Public School System, was charged with recommending short- and long-term strategies to strengthen the professional development of Wake County's teachers. A survey of literature about professional development was conducted to identify exemplary standards. The team reached a consensus to utilize standards from The National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching (NPEAT), a voluntary association of 29 national organizations that engages in collaborative research-based action to achieve teaching excellence that raises student performance.<sup>34</sup> The nine standards are a synthesis of recent research in professional development and are influenced by and mapped closely to similar recommendations made by the U.S. Department of Education and the National Staff Development Council (see Figure 6 on pages 40-41). Afterwards, the team gathered information to determine the current status of professional development in the Wake County Schools and conducted a gap analysis by comparing the current practices and policies of the Wake County Public School System's professional development program with each NPEAT standard. From this gap analysis, comparing the real with the ideal, both broad and specific recommendations emerged (see Figure 6).

<sup>34</sup> Available: <http://www.npeat.org>

For the Wake County Public School System to provide professional development activities centered on teachers' needs, a paradigm shift is required in the way the school system's leaders think about and structure professional development. The following three overriding recommendations must, therefore, be in place before specific recommendations can be enacted:

**1. The School System Must Trust Its Teachers**

Teachers, especially those who are fully certified and qualified to teach the subjects and grade levels they teach, must be the driving force behind the design and delivery of professional development. Teachers must be given opportunities to identify the learning problems of individual and groups of students in their classrooms, to determine what they need to help them deliver more effective instruction, and then to select the professional development activities that would best help them satisfy those identified needs. The Central Office role is to set the standards for student performance, to monitor school and student performance, and to issue appropriate rewards and sanctions.

**2. The School System Must Overhaul Its Professional Development Infrastructure**

Dismantle the powerful top-down professional development infrastructure currently in place and replace it with a new, more decentralized and smaller infrastructure that aligns with the recommended changes in philosophy and beliefs about professional development. Under the new structure, the primary role of the Central Office will shift from mandatory regulator of staff development to a professional development broker who directs resources to schools upon their request to address the specific needs of the school, its teachers, and its students.

**3. The School System Must Be Committed to Resolving the Time Problem**

Lack of time during the school day and year prevents teachers from engaging in the serious sustained professional development they need. Teachers need considerable time to analyze and identify problems and to learn new ways of thinking and teaching.

*“The problem with professional development heretofore is more a philosophical one and one of how much a system respects its teachers and their expertise and how much the system is willing to support their development.”*

- DR. SAMMIE CAMPBELL PARRISH,  
NC CENTRAL UNIVERSITY

*“Development takes time, but longterm professional development does not fit into the model.”*

- TOM BLANDFORD,  
NC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC  
INSTRUCTION

**In a brainstorming session on how to help teacher morale, conducted in September of 2000, Instructional Resource Teachers in the Wake County Public School System suggested the following:**

- ◆ **Provide** opportunities at the school for experienced teachers to share their experiences and successful strategies with less experienced teachers.
- ◆ **Develop** a time for teachers to reflect across grade levels about instructional strategies.
- ◆ **Focus** faculty meetings on instruction.
- ◆ **Strengthen** the workforce and foster a supportive climate through peer coaching.

*“Teachers are most excited about professional development when they are given the opportunity, without time constraints, to collaborate with others—to read, to discuss, to plan, to share, to give feedback, and to analyze. Unfortunately, this is usually not available to teachers.”*

- BONNIE LOVE,  
NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFIED  
TEACHER

## SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Base All Professional Development for Teachers on an Analysis of Student Learning

Allow teachers to determine what they need to know and do to close the gap between actual student performance and the goals for student performance. This student-centered focus is not standard practice. Too often, professional development activities focus on teaching strategies, model approaches, and curricular approaches pursued as goals in and of themselves. Teachers must be allowed to select professional development activities that will enable them to meet the needs of all their students.

### 2. Expect Teachers to Become Reflective Practitioners

Teachers must be granted opportunities to reflect regularly on their practice and methods to determine where they are most effective and ineffective in terms of student learning. Teachers themselves must continually modify their practice to pinpoint successful approaches that assure proficiency for all learners in their classrooms. Teachers must be given opportunities to identify what they need to learn and to provide input into the type of professional development they need. When Central Office leaders assume the role of identifying problems and creating programs, teachers are prevented from developing the analytical skills needed for continual school improvement.

### 3. Ensure the Majority of Professional Development Is School Based and Problem Based

Treat teachers as intellectuals and problem solvers who need time and opportunity to collaborate at the work site to find solutions to complex teaching and learning problems. When professional development is connected to

#### Revising Professional Development District Success: New York City

*“We have a simple theory: children learn from their interaction with teachers. If the performance of students is less than we would like it to be, then we have to improve the interaction between teachers and students.”*

-Anthony J. Alvarado,  
Superintendent,  
Community School District Two  
New York City Public Schools

Most staff development in District Two is school-based. Staff developers are master teachers who are in the schools for significant periods of time. No staff developer has an office in the district office.

There are summer institutes, after school classes, teacher networks, groups of teachers doing research, visits to other classrooms and professional development labs.

Some staff development is planned from the district office, but the majority is initiated by the schools.

Professional development funds are allocated to the schools. The funds cannot be spent on direct services to children; they must be invested in the staff. The schools decide how the money will be spent.

identifying and solving real and immediate problems in teaching and learning, what is learned is more meaningful and relevant. Teachers are more motivated to learn and engage in school improvement efforts that will have a direct impact on student achievement. On the biennial teacher survey conducted by the Wake County Public School System's Evaluation and Research Department in the spring of 2000, 74.5% of the teachers who responded indicated they preferred school-based staff development over centrally based.

School change requires that teachers work together to identify problems and seek solutions. The school system must design and offer professional development opportunities that enable teachers to develop their capacity to work collaboratively. These activities should include opportunities for university professors, classroom teachers, and principals to engage in action research in the context of their school and classrooms. University-school partnerships and professional development schools can serve as vehicles for accomplishing these tasks. In addition, quality learning opportunities that occur outside the school, such as teacher networks, graduate study, and teacher centers, should also be available.

#### 4. Solve the Dilemma of Teacher Time

Teachers need time to engage in substantive and sustained professional development. They need time to work in collaboration with their peers, to form inquiry groups that focus on resolving problems encountered in teaching and learning, to plan together, and to conduct research. In addition, teachers need to develop new

teaching skills and strategies, but these activities require substantial time for instruction, practice, and follow-up technical assistance. To build the needed time into the school day, school-level administrators must engage in flexible and creative scheduling and the school system must support efforts to extend the school year for teachers to eleven or twelve months.

*“Serious conversation about shared work is always a powerful resource for the people doing the work.”*

- CANDYE SLAY,  
WCPSS PRINCIPAL

#### Revising Professional Development District Success: Maryland

*“You have to build a system where the pieces are aligned and where there are connections between professional development and teacher evaluations and school improvement planning. The school needs to have the freedom and the internal capacity to be in charge of its own change process.”*

-Collene Seremet,  
Assistant Superintendent,  
Dorchester County, Maryland

Dorchester County's professional development provides choice, long-term investment, coaching, and follow-up. It is embedded in the daily work of teachers, aligned to the school and district goals, and supported by a reward system.

Today, Dorchester County's professional development is student-outcome centered rather than curriculum centered, focused on school and individual needs rather than system needs, integrated with the supervision process rather than separate, developed around individual and small group activities rather than large group activities, provides intensive coaching rather than little or no follow-up, and is principal and/or teacher led rather than central office driven.

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*“...reform must concentrate on teachers and their professional lives almost as intensely as it does upon students and their performance.”*

- RICHARD SCHRAMM,  
NATIONAL HUMANITIES CENTER

### **5. Ensure the Expertise of Area Colleges, Universities, and Businesses Can Be Easily Accessed**

Devise a system or vehicle for matching these broad community resources with specific needs identified by teachers in their schools. While the majority of professional development should be school based, teachers' learning is also enhanced when they acquire new ideas and knowledge from sources external to the school system.

### **6. Collaborate with Colleges and Universities to Align Their Professional Development and Course Offerings with the Needs of Teachers**

Work in partnership with the area colleges and universities to develop courses and programs that will address specific curricular, pedagogical, and school improvement needs identified as critical to improving student achievement. Promote the development of programs designed to address the specific needs of lateral entry teachers who do not have a degree in education and excellent teacher assistants who desire to become teachers.

### **7. Evaluate Professional Development in Terms of Its Impact on Student Achievement**

To determine what is effective and ineffective, the evaluation of professional development must go beyond surveying the participants' initial reactions to the professional development activity. Evaluation must also focus on the participants' learning, the participants'

use of the new knowledge or skills, the organizational support and change, and, ultimately, student learning outcomes. Information sources might include teacher portfolios, observations of teachers, peer reviews, and student performance data.

### **8. Increase Time and Attention Devoted to Teachers' Needs for Attaining Greater Content Knowledge**

Too often professional development is perceived only as a means of achieving changes in methodology. A teacher's content knowledge, both its depth and breadth, also plays a significant role in student performance and achievement.

### **9. Commit to Funding Professional Development at the Industry Standard**

According to Wake County's Department of Evaluation and Research, a review of staff development in 1998-1999 showed that the system devoted about 1.2% of the overall budget to staff training efforts. The system target is to devote about 2% of the budget to training and development experiences by 2003. The Professional Development Team recommends the school system increase the funding 1% per year until the industry standard of 10% of budget is reached.

**10. Build Strong Public Consensus and Support for Continuous Professional Development for Teachers**

The continual development from novice to master teacher plays a crucial role in retaining excellent teachers in the profession and in the Wake County Public System. Highly successful teachers develop their knowledge and skills over time and throughout their careers. The district must publicly endorse, value, and support continuous adult learning and must commit to the idea that such learning supports whole school reform and student success. Improving teacher capabilities without changing the conditions that influence the opportunities to use these capabilities is often counterproductive. These conditions include time and opportunities to try new practices, adequate funding, technical assistance, and sustained follow through. Unless professional development is part of a larger change process, it is not likely to be effective.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Redesigning professional development to include the recommendations of the Professional Development Team will require the difficult challenge of moving beyond discussions of best practices to figuring out how to design a system that will create the changes needed. The challenges will include how best to create a collaborative culture, to develop the necessary leadership skills, to enhance teachers’ and administrators’

capacity to analyze data, and to build communities of learning that transcend the schools. These challenges will require district- and school-level restructuring, resource reallocation, more time and personnel, and changes in conceptions of how teachers learn. Research of cognitive development has encouraged teachers to provide instruction that builds on their students’ prior knowledge, actively involves them in the learning process, incorporates factors that will inspire them to learn, and embeds learning in authentic, collaborative contexts. Professional development for teachers must include these same learning principles.

Redesigning professional development to incorporate these principles and to emphasize individual and collective transformations will take time to develop and to yield results. The effects on student achievement might not be evident in the short run, but the school system must commit to providing the long-term changes needed to produce effective learner-centered professional development for its teachers.

**Revisoning Professional Development**

| Before                            | After                               |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| In-service training               | Professional development            |
| Curriculum-centered               | Student-outcome centered            |
| Focus on system needs             | Focus on school/teacher needs       |
| Separate from supervision process | Integrated with supervision process |
| Large group activities            | Individual/ small group activities  |
| Little follow-up                  | Intensive coaching                  |
| Central office driven             | Principal/ teacher-led              |

*Journal of Staff Development* (Summer, 2000): 18.

**Figure 6. Professional development gap analysis matrix: NPEAT standards, Wake County Public School System’s current practice, and related recommendations.**

| NPEAT Standard   | Wake County Public Schools Current Practice  | Recommendations   |
|--|--|---|
| <p>1. The content of professional development focuses on what students need to learn and how to address the different problems students may have in learning material.</p>                     | <p>The Wake County Public Schools, in its effort to meet local and state accountability standards for student achievement, has an extensive and often overlapping staff development housed primarily in various Central Office departments. Seemingly, a number of different offices identify, design, and deliver professional development to teachers; determining <i>one-size-fits-all</i> content based on districtwide tests results. Content, though not based on specific student problems, does often include activities to expand teachers’ repertoires of instructional strategies but lacks the value that would be added by being problem specific. Further, professional development designed to improve teacher knowledge of subject area content is rare.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust teachers.</li> <li>• Resolve the time problem that prevents teachers from engaging in the serious and sustained professional development they need.</li> <li>• Overhaul and redesign the school system’s professional development function and infrastructure to reflect the new paradigm of teachers as leaders.</li> <li>• Base all professional development for teachers on an analysis of student learning and what teachers say they need to learn and be able to do to close the gap between actual student performance and the goals for student learning.</li> </ul> |
| <p>2. Professional development should be based on the analyses of the differences between (a) actual student performance and (b) goals and standards for student learning.</p>                 | <p>The Wake County Public Schools takes seriously its responsibility to utilize state accountability data to improve instruction and to be certain teachers are familiar with and use the various state and county curriculum standards and documents. The professional development opportunities that grow out of this centralized analysis, however, do not appear to lead to the next logical step of determining why an individual student, class, demographic group, or grade level is experiencing difficulties in mastering content and skills.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expect teachers to become reflective practitioners who regularly examine their practice and methods to determine where they are most effective and make adjustments accordingly.</li> <li>• Ensure the majority of professional development is school based and problem based.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>3. Professional development should involve teachers in the identification of what they need to learn and in the development of the learning experiences in which they will be involved.</p> | <p>No systemic process appears to exist for involving teachers in either identifying what they need to learn through professional development opportunities or designing the experiences in which they will be involved. In the Wake County Public Schools, professional development encompasses, primarily, activities identified by Central Office as enabling teachers to accomplish academic goals.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treat teachers as intellectuals and problem solvers who need time and opportunity to collaborate at the work site to find solutions to complex teaching and learning problems.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>4. Professional development should primarily be school-based and built into the day-to-day work of teaching.</p>  | <p>Professional development in the Wake County Public Schools is largely centralized and occupies a large percentage of the time allotted to teachers for professional development activities. Principals do arrange school-based activities when time permits.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide time for teachers to participate in substantive and sustained professional development that includes work-based learning and classroom demonstration, practice, and follow-up.</li> </ul>  |

| NPEAT Standard   | Wake County Public Schools Current Practice   | Recommendations  |
|--|---|--|
| <p>5. Professional development should be organized around collaborative problem solving.</p>   | <p>The collaborative problem solving that leads to the design of professional development activities in the Wake County Public Schools occurs largely at Central Office.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the power, potential, and specific expertise of area colleges, universities, and businesses can be easily assessed and readily matched with the professional development needs identified by teachers.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>6. Professional development should be continuous and on-going involving follow-up and support for further learning-including support from sources external to the school that can provide necessary resources and new perspectives.</p>                           | <p>Continuous professional development involving follow-up support and peer coaching is rare in the Wake County Public Schools. Although there are some excellent examples of the school system partnering with businesses and universities such as the Business Education Leadership Council (BELC) and the Centennial Middle School on the campus of North Carolina State University, teachers in the school system primarily engage in professional development designed and delivered by the school system.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with colleges and universities to ensure their professional development and course offerings are matched with the identified needs of the teachers.</li> <li>• Evaluate professional development in terms of its impact on student achievement to determine what works and what doesn't.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>7. Professional development should incorporate evaluation of multiple sources of information on (a) outcomes for students and (b) the instruction and other processes that are involved in implementing the lessons learned through professional development.</p> | <p>Beyond participants' initial reactions to the professional development activities, evaluation of professional development and its impact on student achievement is largely non-existent in the Wake County Public Schools.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give increased time and attention to the needs that teachers have to attain greater content knowledge.</li> <li>• Commit to providing the necessary resources for effective professional development by incrementally moving toward the industry standard of 10% of budget.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>8. Professional development should provide opportunities to gain an understanding of the theory underlying the knowledge and skills being learned.</p>  | <p>Providing opportunities for teachers to develop a theoretical understanding of the knowledge and skills being learned in the Wake County Public School System's professional development activities is sporadic and dependent on the presenter.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build strong public consensus and support for the notion that highly successful teachers develop their knowledge and skills over time and throughout their careers from novice to master teacher and that this continual development plays a crucial part in retaining excellent teachers in the profession and in the Wake County Public Schools.</li> </ul> |
| <p>9. Professional development should be connected to a comprehensive change process focused on improving student learning.</p>  | <p>In the Wake County Public Schools, the change process has been limited to that brought about through state accountability legislation and initiatives.</p>   |  |

## VII. CONCLUSIONS

Teaching is at a crossroads in Wake County. With a high student achievement goal looming two years into the future, now is the time for Wake County to act on its understanding that investing in teachers yields results for students.

Although the job of this Task Force was not easy, the group did see its project as a vehicle for moving its recommendations into the school system and community. The Task Force and the Citizen's Advisory Committee on School Funding and Construction represent strong models for community collaboration and consensus around issues of teacher quality and student achievement.

Schools and teachers are held accountable for their performance through complex systems of rewards and sanctions that help to reinforce the practices that affect student achievement. On the other hand, community accountability is difficult to define and measure. Currently, no explicit accountability model exists for community members to support excellent public education for Wake County students. Ensuring Wake citizens continue to exhibit support for

the kinds of reforms and recommendations outlined in this report will be up to the strength of personality and the goodwill of leaders from the business, university, and educational communities. Accompanying this report is a dissemination strategy that will engage citizens and policy makers in a series of meetings. During these meetings, key stakeholders will be asked to review the report, discuss implications, and provide feedback. Careful attention must be given to the feedback provided during these meetings because these data will inform the superintendent's action plan. This community engagement dissemination strategy will result in the Superintendent's response through specific policy changes and an action plan. This *all for all* strategy will result in all citizens of Wake County working to assure a competent, caring teacher for every Wake County student.

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## APPENDIX

### MEMBERS OF WAKE TASK FORCE ON TEACHER EXCELLENCE

| Name                     | Organization Represented                        |
|--------------------------|---|
| Charles N. Anderson, Jr. | Ellis & Winters                                 |
| Karen E. Banks           | Wake County Public Schools                      |
| Jeanette R. Beckwith     | Leesville Road Middle                           |
| Thomas T. Blanford       | N.C. Professional Teaching Standards Commission |
| John C. Boling           | SAS Institute                                   |
| Maurice W. Boswell       | Wake County Public Schools                      |
| Robert E. Branch         | Centura Bank                                    |
| Valerie B. Brown         | Wake Education Partnership                      |
| William I. Burke         | UNC-Chapel Hill                                 |
| Del Burns                | Wake County Public Schools                      |
| Larry Campbell           | Research Triangle Institute                     |
| Kip Caton                | Fuquay-Varina Elementary                        |
| Cynthia M. Chamblee      | Great Expectations in East Wake County          |
| James W. Clark           | North Carolina State University                 |
| Martye Earp              | NORTEL Networks                                 |
| Delores W. Fogg          | Wake County Public Schools                      |
| Mac Forde                | Centura Bank                                    |
| Karen Garr               | Office of the Governor                          |
| Lynne G. Garrison        | Blue Cross & Blue Shield of NC                  |
| Robbie D. Graham         | Wake County Public Schools, Retired             |
| David G. Haase           | North Carolina State University                 |
| M. Anthony Habit         | Wake Education Partnership                      |
| Donna M. Hargens         | Green Hope High                                 |
| Maureen Hartford         | Meredith College                                |
| Eric A. Houck            | Wake Education Partnership                      |
| G. Thomas Houlihan       | N.C. Partnership for Excellence                 |
| Samuel H. Houston        | edgate.com                                      |

| Name                    | Organization Represented              |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Kimberly H. Hughes      | Wake County Public Schools            |
| Robert S. Isenberg      | Wake County Public Schools            |
| Susan W. Jordan         | Wake County Public Schools, Retired   |
| Gary K. Joyner          | Kilpatrick Stockton, LLP              |
| Diane Kent-Parker       | Wake County Public Schools            |
| Henry C. Knight         | Keep In Touch Wireless Choices        |
| Jerod J. Kratzer        | Meredith College                      |
| R. David Lane           | BellSouth                             |
| Bonnie B. Love          | Lynn Road Elementary                  |
| William R. McNeal       | Wake County Public Schools            |
| Julie M. Nau            | Wake NCAE                             |
| Sammie Campbell Parrish | North Carolina Central University     |
| Michael S. Patterson    | Centura Bank                          |
| Toni A. Patterson       | Wake County Public Schools            |
| Meg Peet                | Jeffreys Grove Elementary             |
| John E. Penick          | North Carolina State University       |
| Kenneth G. Reece        | Bank of America                       |
| Violet B. Rhinehart     | Durant Road Middle                    |
| Richard R. Schramm      | National Humanities Center            |
| Jane V. Slay            | North Ridge Elementary                |
| Hiller A. Spires        | North Carolina State University       |
| Dianne B. Suber         | St. Augustine's College               |
| Kathy Sullivan          | N.C. Department of Public Instruction |
| Gerard Ter Wee          | P. F. Properties                      |
| Richard A. Urquhart III | Investors Management Corporation      |
| Beulah C. Wright        | Wakefield Middle                      |
| Charles Yarborough      | Peace College                         |

