

JOURNEY TO 2008

WAKE EDUCATION SUMMIT '05

Successful Teachers, Successful Students

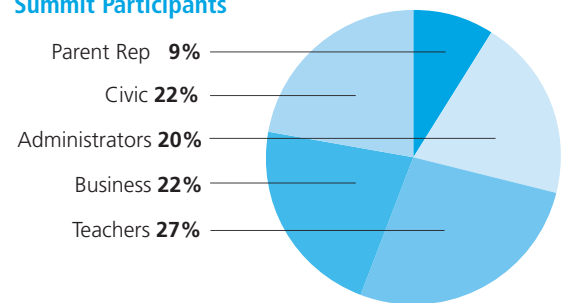
2005 Summit: Focus on Successful Teachers

MORE THAN 400 Wake County community, business and parent leaders convened on April 28, 2005, at Raleigh's McKimmon Center for the eighth annual Wake Education Summit. Focused on the theme *Journey to 2008: Successful Teachers, Successful Students*, participants at the Summit discussed the realities of teaching in today's classrooms and prioritized recommendations to support the recruitment and retention of excellent teachers as one strategy for achieving Goal 2008. The Summit, coordinated by Wake Education Partnership, was hosted by more than 40 businesses and community organizations and was open to the public.

"It's exciting to be part of a process that exhibits community collaboration at its finest. To have business leaders, parents, education leaders, civic leaders and government officials working together is not only unique but a true testament to the commitment everyone has made to work toward further excellence in our public schools," said Robin Costello, Summit co-chair and senior director of development and external relations for the N.C. Child Advocacy Institute.

The 2005 Summit also served as the release of a new report from the Wake Task Force on Teaching Excellence, a citizen-led committee convened by Wake Education Partnership. The report, titled "Recruit, Retain and Respect," includes local and national research on teachers and teaching, as well as recommendations about recruiting, retaining, supporting and developing quality teachers for all of Wake's public school classrooms.

Summit Participants



Participants at the 2005 Summit represented a wide range of stakeholders, including business people, elected officials, community representatives, parent leaders and educators.

Presenters included Summit Core Team Co-Chairs Dr. Bill Atkinson, WakeMed Health & Hospitals president and CEO, and Robin Costello; Dr. Barnett Berry, president of the Southeast Center for Teaching Quality; Bill McNeal, superintendent of the Wake County Public School System; and Wake Task Force on Teaching Excellence co-chairs Dr. Dudley Flood, education consultant, and Jay Silver, attorney with Kilpatrick Stockton.

Feedback generated during the Summit by business, government, school and community partners will be presented to school and community leaders for their consideration in creating strategies to reach Goal 2008. Past recommendations have directly affected policy changes, including the adoption of Goal 2008 after the 2003 Summit, and the use of resources by community groups and the public schools. Each Summit has enhanced the strategic focus of agencies, businesses and the schools, while creating a climate of shared ownership for excellence and measurable results.

Barnett Berry, president of the Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, illustrates the importance of designing schools to better support teachers.



WAKE MUST WORK TO “RECRUIT, RETAIN AND RESPECT” TEACHERS



Facilitator Dan Unkefer listens with participant Nancy Shoemaker, representative from the American Association of University Women, during the table discussion.

Report from the Wake Task Force on Teaching Excellence

Increased time for planning and collaboration, emphasis on the role of the principal in teacher support, and a focus on effective professional development, career enhance-

ment and leadership opportunities are among the recommendations for teaching excellence in Wake County, according to a report from the Wake Task Force on Teaching Excellence released at the 2005 Wake Education Summit.

Titled “Recruit, Retain and Respect,” the report includes local and national research on teachers and teaching, as well as recommendations about recruiting, retaining, supporting and developing quality teachers for all of Wake’s public school classrooms. The Task Force, a citizen-led committee convened by Wake Education Partnership, was co-chaired by Dr. Dudley Flood, education consultant, and Jay Silver, attorney with Kilpatrick Stockton, and included representatives from higher education, business, public schools, agencies and statewide policy makers.

“If quality teaching is important in the lives of children, if we value experience, dedication and excellence in teaching, if we continue to challenge and raise our expectations of teachers — then teachers should also be able to work in a county that values experience, minimizes distractions, and honors the desire and need for personal and professional fulfillment,” said Silver. “Teachers are willing to live up to every measure of accountability so long as they believe there is a tailwind moving with them, rather than a headwind impeding them.”

Following the release of the report, the Task Force will work with Wake Education Partnership, the Wake

County Public School System and other businesses and organizations to make the recommendations a reality.

“Wake County is fortunate to have a public school system where students, teachers and administrators can succeed. Our schools can either move forward to ensure continued success or risk failure and mediocrity,” said Flood. “If teaching excellence is our goal, WCPSS employees, the Board of Education and the Board of Commissioners, as well as other elected leaders and local corporate and community partners will need to work together to lead our schools and our students to higher achievement and success.”

The report, released by Wake Education Partnership, is sponsored by ABB, Capitol Broadcasting Company and GlaxoSmithKline, with support from KB Home and Kilpatrick Stockton. For more information about the Wake Task Force on Teaching Excellence or to download a copy of the report, visit www.WakeEdPartnership.org.

Bringing out the **BEST** in teachers

This article was first published in The News & Observer on May 1, 2005, and is reprinted here with permission from the author, Editorial Page Editor Steve Ford.

At least convicts on a chain gang, swinging their sledgehammers and bush axes, could join voices in soulful chants lamenting their misdeeds, mistreatments and misfortunes.

Public school teachers? In their fashion they work just as hard, and they do it willingly, even joyfully. Yet too often, what they’ve got is a failure to communicate.

Not that it’s their fault. Paradoxically, a job that most of us would find daunting, if not overwhelming, in the amount of interpersonal contact it demands can also be a very lonesome pursuit. Working with students all day can mean that time to interact professionally with other teachers — time that’s crucial to honing the tools of the trade — becomes a precious luxury.

Sure, teachers are bound to cross paths at lunch or in the lounge. But it can be a rare break from routine for one to have a chance to watch another in action, or to be observed and coached by a more experienced colleague. No wonder teachers sometimes feel as if they’ve been left to their own devices to cope as best they can.

One helpful counter-strategy involves team teaching, an approach that has found favor in some school systems. Still, there seems to be a deep hunger on the part of teachers for the kind of cooperative mindset that makes many workplaces more effective and rewarding.

If the several hundred people who trooped Thursday



Facilitator Nora Hernandez (above), president of the Latin American Women's Club, asks her table participants to vote during the discussion. Wake County Commissioner Phil Jeffries (right) shares his views on what our community can do to support teachers in the public schools.

to an annual “education summit” meant to boost the Wake County schools weren’t already clued in to the importance of more communication, coaching and collaboration within the teaching ranks, the message surely had come through loud and clear by the time they left.

This year’s summit was in fact focused on one of public education’s biggest challenges — how to attract sufficient numbers of bright, capable, dedicated teachers, and how afterwards to keep them on board.

It’s a problem with several intertwined causes. Boiled down, the job simply burns through people at an alarming rate. And school systems have a devil of a time finding others to take their place — at least, others to whom we’d be eager to entrust our kids’ education and their future.

Ask around as to what’s usually seen as the big drawback to becoming a teacher, and the answer is likely to hinge on piddly paychecks.

Low pay no doubt remains an issue in North Carolina, despite improvements in recent years. Affluent Wake County, embracing the capital of Raleigh, operates the state’s second largest school system with more than 114,000 students. Its teacher salaries still lag in national comparisons, both as an overall average and at entry level.

Not only is the pay modest — Wake’s average is \$40,992, typically for a 10-month contract — but the job can be physically and mentally exhausting. Without the compensation that comes from helping young people break through barriers to understanding and fueling their fires of curiosity, even fewer would want to bother.

We’re lucky indeed to have people who are convinced by that kind of compensation to join the teaching ranks. But what happens once they join? A report

for the Wake Education Partnership, a business-government group that sponsors the annual summit here, highlighted the need to improve the professional climate for teachers, especially new ones. Its recommendations sound as though they would apply most anywhere this side of teaching’s Promised Land, if indeed such a wondrous place exists.

Teachers by all means need more time regularly allotted to them to get their ducks in a row — to plan, to counsel, to reach out to parents.

Schools no longer can afford to throw new teachers into a sink-or-swim regime with the most challenging students. Those newcomers, as they cope with their new career’s shakedown phase, need whole-hearted support from experienced mentors, including ample time to observe how successful teachers get the results they’re after.

There need to be conscientious efforts to make sure those best practices are shared and adopted. And teachers need to be confident they will be nurtured as valued professionals along a rewarding career path. Interchangeable cogs in a giant baby-sitting machine, they aren’t.

Who’s supposed to make sure these ground rules are followed? School boards and superintendents can preach, but principals have to supply the day-in, day-out leadership that encourages good teachers to stick with it for the long haul. There can hardly be a better gauge of principals’ effectiveness. And no community, whether it’s education-friendly Wake County or any other place in the country, including ones far less fortunate, can afford to let its school principals drop this ball.

Summit Evaluations Offer Positive Feedback

More than two-thirds of participants at the Summit returned an evaluation form, giving high ratings to such items as the table discussions, speakers and information presented.

General satisfaction among those who turned in surveys was high. Of the 262 participants who completed surveys, 75 percent rated the table discussion at this year’s meeting as “excellent” and 24 percent rated the discussion “good.” Speakers also received high marks, with 65 percent of respondents rating the presentations “excellent” and 34 percent as “good.” When asked if the information presented at the Summit was helpful, 65 percent of those surveyed strongly agreed and 34 percent agreed. Just over half of the evaluation respondents were attending the Summit for the first time.



Attorney Jay Silver explains the recommendations of the Wake Task Force on Teaching Excellence presented in the report, "Recruit, Retain and Respect."



Participants at the Summit prioritized the seven recommendations of the Wake Task Force on Teaching Excellence

RECOMMENDATION	RANK	POINTS	PERCENT OF TOTAL
1 Embed more time within the school day for all teachers to plan and reflect, to participate in professional development and to collaborate with other key personnel.	3	593	20.4%
2 Ensure that principals have the understanding and capacity to create an environment that supports quality teaching and the retention of quality teachers.	4	514	17.7%
3 Support teaching as a profession through career enhancement and leadership opportunities (totals for 3a - 3e).	1	891	30.6%
a. Develop a process for teachers to use critical self-analysis and shared reflection to plan their own professional development, using the "Quality Teaching Characteristics" index or other tools.		86	2.9%
b. Make the sharing of best practices routine among teachers within and across schools.		216	7.4%
c. Ensure that professional development includes a range of opportunities to support teachers as they grow in their careers from novice to experienced teacher.		154	5.3%
d. Improve mentor programs to more consistently meet the needs of new teachers.		218	7.5%
e. Create career pathways for teachers using the Teacher Enhancement and Leadership System (TELS).		217	7.5%
4 Improve working conditions for special education teachers, including salary incentives, reduced case loads, planning time and paperwork assistance, to reduce increasing turnover rates.	7	45	1.5%
5 Review and upgrade teacher salaries and benefits systematically to keep pace with competitive job markets.	2	645	22.2%
6 More carefully plan how curricular decisions impact teachers with a coordinated, system-wide timeline for new initiatives.	6	64	2.2%
7 Recruit advocates among the business community and parents to support teaching excellence.	5	1583	5.4%

2004 Summit REPORT CARD

Participants at last year's Summit discussed potential obstacles and high school strategies for meeting Goal 2008, the community-wide goal adopted in November 2003. Built on information gathered through the year-long *Voices & Choices* initiative and the 2003 Summit, the new goal raises the bar and expands its reach to include all students in grades 3 through 12. The goal further aligns Wake County student achievement efforts with state and federal standards as outlined by the ABC state testing program and the No Child Left Behind legislation.



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

In pursuit of this goal, the Board of Education will:

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

In addition to providing feedback about Goal 2008, discussions at the 2004 Wake Education Summit identified priorities that have impacted the work of many organizations across Wake County. During the 2004 Summit, more than 600 participants met in small groups and voted on the top priorities for our public schools and for the community. Summarized on the following pages are the top few priorities along with new and ongoing activities that have developed over the past year. Although this list is not comprehensive, it does provide an indication of the ongoing work in support of public education across Wake County.



Pam Kohl, representing Congressman Brad Miller's office, listens to her table's discussion about the recommendations of the Wake Task Force on Teaching Excellence.



POTENTIAL OBSTACLES TO GOAL 2008

1 INADEQUATE FUNDING

- *Quality Matters*, an annual study of the school system's spending and performance, seeks to develop shared goals for quality and value in the Wake County Public School System. With the fifth edition of *Quality Matters* slated for release in fall 2005, the School Finance Committee, an independent group of business and community leaders convened by Wake Education Partnership, is working to address such issues as base line financials, growth and facility concerns, issues that need to be addressed in order to meet Goal 2008, and attracting and retaining top talent for our schools. In an effort to spur continuous dialogue around the increasingly important issue of funding for our public schools, the School Finance Committee has enhanced its scope to provide opportunities for community engagement and feedback, beginning with the hosting of a Forum on Growth earlier in 2005.
- The Wake County PTA Council Executive Board approved a "Funding for Growth" resolution in February 2005. This resolution serves as a positioning statement for the council to voice its concern over the lack of adequate funding for both operational and capital needs in the WCPSS and calls for increased funding from all levels of government.
- Wake NCAE, which represents teachers, administrators, teacher assistants, bus drivers, mechanics, custodians, cafeteria workers, clerical workers and all other WCPSS employees, continues to advocate for a supplement pay increase for certified staff and pay increases for all support staff.
- In September 2004, the Wake County Board of Commissioners approved \$2 million in additional funding for the Wake County Public School System because of the enrollment surge of more than 5,000 new students over the previous school year.

2 RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF QUALITY TEACHERS

3 LACK OF SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS

- Wake Education Partnership convened the Wake Task Force on Teaching Excellence in January 2004 to make specific recommendations on the current state of recruiting and retaining the best teachers in Wake County public schools. Following the report's release at the 2005 Summit, the Task Force will encourage collaborating organizations to adopt relevant recommendations and implement action

plans. In addition to its secondary research, the Task Force also conducted a Teacher Congress and an Administrator Review in November 2004 to engage more than 120 Wake County teachers, principals and administrators in reviewing the recommendations, offering feedback and establishing priorities for our community.

- New and continuing opportunities for teacher leadership and professional development include both proposed and available activities such as Wake Leadership Academy, the Kenan Fellows Program and other offerings through the WCPSS Office of Continuous Improvement and Professional Development.
- Many organizations, including local Chambers of Commerce, Wake-N.C. Association of Educators, Wake County PTAs, Wake Education Partnership and the Triangle Urban League, honor teachers across Wake County through awards and grants.
- Bill McNeal has worked extensively with a group of 22 Wake County Public School System Teacher Leaders, through his Superintendent's Teacher Advisory Council (STAC). This council strives to tackle some of the tough issues that teachers say will help them be more effective in the classroom. STAC brings together a group of educators who exemplify the diversity of our system in relation to grade and subject, teaching experience, and regional representation. Subcommittees are formed annually to analyze issues and research critical needs. The Council meets six times each school year and has adopted recommendations, which have been sent to the leadership cabinet for their comment and consideration.



Wakefield High School teacher Laura Stiles and Board of Education Chair Susan Parry consider the comments of another Summit participant during the table discussion about priorities for supporting teachers.



STRATEGIES FOR HIGH SCHOOL REFORM

1 CREATE SMALLER LEARNING COMMUNITIES WITHIN HIGH SCHOOLS

- As a cornerstone to high school redesign, WCPSS has committed itself to personalizing the high school experience for all students through the creation of smaller learning communities (SLC). SLCs are restructured high school environments that emphasize building relationships among teachers and students through the delivery of a rigorous,

relevant curriculum. Students are organized into learning communities, often referred to as houses or academies, based on their common interests and needs. In a similar fashion, teachers work in interdisciplinary teams, connecting their curriculum to the SLC theme or focus.

- The New Schools Project (NSP) has begun awarding grants and providing support to create up to 100 new small high schools across the state, including in Wake County. The schools will serve as models for academically rigorous curriculum to prepare all students for work and college. The New Schools

Project provides planning grants to encourage efforts to start new schools or to convert existing comprehensive schools into one or more discrete small schools within a building. Once the planning phase is complete, NSP will provide implementation grants to



Charlotte Turpin (above), table facilitator and president of Wake NCAE, listens while participants discuss priorities for teaching quality. Molly Casey (right), representative from WakeMed, talks about the challenges teachers face in the classroom.

support a multi-year initiative to establish new models of teaching and learning in each school whose success during the planning stage demonstrates the likelihood of significant impact on reshaping high schools. NSP's essential thrust is straightforward: in order to improve public high schools everywhere, individual schools must be encouraged and assisted to invent and implement more effective means of serving students. for more information visit <http://www.newschoolsproject.org/>.

- In March 2005, business and community leaders met at the Eastern Regional Center in Zebulon to discuss high school reform and smaller learning communities. Hosted by the Zebulon, Knightdale and Wendell Chambers of Commerce and Wake Education Partnership, participants heard about many initiatives currently underway in Wake County, including activities funded by the New Schools Project at East Wake High School, a U.S. Department of Education smaller learning communities grant, and a regional collaborative – the High Five initiative.

2 ALLOW ALL STUDENTS TIME FOR INTERNSHIPS AND APPRENTICESHIPS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY, INCLUDING CAREER AND COLLEGE TRACK STUDENTS

- The Wake County Public School System offers a variety of work-based learning (WBL) opportunities to all high school students. Job Shadowing, also available in middle school, gives the student the opportunity to watch someone work for a half day. Internships and Short-Term Work Experiences are career-track jobs that link what the student is learning in school to what they are learning in the workplace. Apprenticeships combine school work with on-the-job training. Apprenticeships started in high school continue for one or two years after high school. All of these WBL opportunities can occur during or after school hours. For more information, visit http://www.wcpss.net/school_to_career/work_based_learning/.

3 EXPLORE THE CREATION OF A NON-TRADITIONAL HIGH SCHOOL (CAREER DEVELOPMENT, YEAR-ROUND OR OTHER PROGRAM)

- Through a grant from the New Schools Project, the Wake County Public School System will provide nontraditional education experiences for students studying the health sciences at East Wake High School. The Health Sciences Academy (HSA) will function as a distinct, autonomous educational community with HSA students traveling and learning together as a cohort. Three additional academies are in the planning stages. For more information, visit <http://ewhs.wcpss.net/shs/index.php>.
- Career academies are available at high schools across Wake County, including Wake Forest-Rolesville (Construction Technology), Wakefield (Bioscience), Sanderson (Finance), Athens Drive (Medical Science), Apex, (Information Technology), Enloe (Medical Science), Middle Creek (Communication Technology) and Fuquay-Varina (Business Technology). For more information, visit: http://www.wcpss.net/school_to_career/academies/index.html.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

You can read about the 2005 Summit, results from participants, host organizations and a history of past Summits by visiting www.WakeEducationSummit.org.



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SPECIAL THANKS TO

- Audio Visual Services
- Coca-Cola
- Eagle Productions at Enloe High School
- Jill Cone Designs
- Lifetouch National School Studios
- Logan's Nursery

PHOTOS COURTESY OF

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Thanks to WakeMed Health & Hospitals for assistance with design and printing.

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LOOKING AHEAD!

Watch for information about the 2006 Wake Education Summit –
May 11 at the McKimmon Center – as we continue the journey to 2008!