



WAKE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

RESOLUTION EXPRESSING BOARD COMMITMENT TO VOLUNTARY DESEGREGATION

WHEREAS, the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS), which was created in 1976 through the merger of the county and city school systems, has as its mission to significantly increase achievement for all students by providing a world-class education that equips students with the knowledge and expertise to become successful, productive citizens;

WHEREAS, the core beliefs of the WCPSS are:

- Every student is uniquely capable and deserves to be challenged and engaged in relevant, rigorous, and meaningful learning each day.
- Every student is expected to learn, grow, and succeed while we will eliminate the ability to predict achievement based on socioeconomic status, race, and ethnicity.
- Well-supported, highly effective, and dedicated principals, teachers, and staff are essential to success for all students.
- The Board of Education, superintendent, and all staff, while sustaining best practices, will promote and support a culture of continuous improvement, risk-taking, and innovation that results in a high-performing organization focused on student achievement.
- The Board of Education, superintendent, and all staff value a diverse school community that is inviting, respectful, inclusive, flexible, and supportive.
- The Wake County residents value a strong public school system and will partner to provide the support and resources to fully realize our shared vision, accomplish the mission, and sustain our core beliefs.

WHEREAS, the student population in WCPSS is culturally, geographically, economically, racially, and ethnically diverse, and this diversity is a valuable resource for teaching students to live and thrive within a global community;

WHEREAS, starting in 1982, WCPSS created magnet schools as schools of choice to support voluntary desegregation, lessen racial and minority isolation, and support the following goals:

- Filling underused schools and empty classrooms,
- Alleviating growth and overcrowding issues in the expanding suburbs,
- Expanding educational opportunities and choice in Wake County,
- Promoting program innovations to foster system-wide improvements,
- Providing more parental participation through a program of optional school choices, and
- Providing a long-range plan for student assignment and facility use;

WHEREAS, in the same timeframe, the U.S. Congress enacted the Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP), under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which was predicated on Congressional findings that:

- Magnet schools are a significant part of the Nation's effort to achieve voluntary desegregation in our Nation's schools;
- These efforts help ensure equal educational opportunities for all students;
- Magnet schools offer a wide range of distinctive programs that have served as models for school improvement efforts;

WHEREAS, on September 1, 2015, the WCPSS Board of Education unanimously approved Magnet Principles stating that: “WCPSS Magnet Programs are an important and critical mechanism helping to:

- Reduce high concentrations of poverty , and
- Promote diverse populations, and
- Maximize use of school facilities, and
- Provide innovative and/or expanded educational opportunities:”

WHEREAS, the WCPSS magnet schools have been an effective tool in enhancing diversity, reducing minority group isolation, enhancing curricular offerings and managing school capacity and seat utilization:

WHEREAS, on September 15, 2015, the WCPSS Board of Education unanimously approved the identification and selection of four schools for inclusion in the proposal to the Magnet Schools Assistance program: Athens Drive High School, East Millbrook Middle School, Powell Elementary School, and Reedy Creek Middle School;

WHEREAS, student assignment parameters, curriculum enhancement programs, calendar choice options, and application schools will play a critical role in developing and maintaining a system of healthy schools throughout the county that supports student achievement, equity and diversity;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, WCPSS continues its commitment to maximize student achievement for all students, mitigate the effects of socioeconomic stratification, and reduce minority group isolation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that to achieve these goals, the Wake County Board of Education reaffirms a commitment to having district-wide policies and procedures that support voluntary desegregation and authorizes and endorses the application to the United States Department of Education for a Magnet Schools Assistance Program grant to enhance the programs offered to increase diversity and reduce minority isolation of students.

Adopted this the 17th day of May 2016.

Thomas C. Benton, Chair, Wake County Board of Education

Dr. James G. Merrill, Superintendent
Wake County Public School System