



WAKE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Work Session

PRECIS

SUBJECT/TOPIC

STUDENT ASSIGNMENT UPDATE AND DISCUSSION

DEPARTMENT, BOARD/STAFF LIAISON(S), AND ANY PRESENTERS FROM OUTSIDE THE DISTRICT

Board Members, Student Assignment Task Force, and Judy Pepler, Chief Transformation Officer

BACKGROUND

- Board members will discuss designating a group of key staff to analyze data regarding the choice assignment plan.
- Board members will discuss assignment priorities for displaced magnet students.
- Board members will discuss transportation issues related to the choice assignment plan.
- Discussion regarding a choice plan parent survey.
- Data analysis discussion regarding the number of AG students accepted to Ligon & Carnage for 6th grade.
- Data analysis discussion regarding the number of students currently assigned to schools outside of their proximity area according to prior SES policies.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

To be Determined.

SAVINGS

None.

NEXT STEPS / RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff will be prepared to discuss and engage in discussion and will seek direction from the Board.



Monitoring and Evaluation Data Team – Student Assignment Plan

Judy Pepler – Chief Transformation Officer

Lisa Grillo – Assistant Superintendent for Special Education

Marvin Connelly – Assistant Superintendent, Student Support Services

Beth Cochran – Senior Director, Magnet Programs

Brad McMillen – Senior Director, Data and Accountability

Laura Evans – Senior Director, Office of Student Assignment

A proposed timeline of reports to the Board will be presented at the work session.

Board of Education Work Session – January 10th, 2012
Student Assignment Task Force

Questions Generated at Board of Education Work Session on January 3rd, 2012

- 5) **How is the district preparing to assist families that do not have transportation based on their pre-assignments for middle and high school, specific to rising 6th and 9th graders that are pre-assigned to the approved feeder pattern school?**

Answer: Options are provided below for consideration by the Board.

Background:

The number of students rising into 6th grade that have been pre-assigned to a middle school without transportation based on the approved feeder patterns is approximately 600. These students are currently eligible for school district transportation for the 2011-12 school year.

The number of students rising into 9th grade that have been pre-assigned to a high school without transportation based on the approved feeder patterns is approximately 550. These students are currently eligible for school district transportation for the 2011-12 school year.

Students are pre-assigned to their middle/high school based on the approved feeder patterns for their elementary school. In the event that the feeder pattern school is not on their proximity choice list, students may not be able to receive school district transportation to their feeder middle/high school. Many of these areas will have older students that are eligible to grandfather, thus transportation may already be available for some of these students for the 2012-13 school year. Specific details regarding the availability this transportation will be available following the completion of the choice selection process.

Criteria:

- Option 1: Provide Transportation using the following as options, in no particular order:
 - For all students for 3 years as part of the implementation cycle
 - Grandfathered students for 2012-13 Transition Grades only
 - Grandfathered students plus siblings until older student ages out
 - By student until they all age out
- Option 2: Priority during selection, in no particular order:
 - Run their requests first – separate
 - Add Priority 1a (seat these students immediately after siblings) for 2012-13 only
 - Add Priority 1a (seat these students immediately after siblings) for all years
 - Add Priority 1a (seat these students immediately after siblings) for 3 years
 - Add Priority 0 (seat these students prior to siblings) for x years
- Option 3: Follow plan as approved

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Board review the identified options and provide a recommendation.

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Questions Generated at Board of Education Work Session on January 3rd, 2012

7) What is the operational impact of applying set asides?

Answer: Setting aside seats at regional choice schools will increase the probability that students in low-performing nodes will be seated at regional choice schools.

Background:

The following information was provided to the Board during the work session on January 3rd, 2012.

Impact:

Students that reside in low-performing nodes, including neighborhoods near group 1 magnet elementary schools, which request a regional choice school, are given 4th priority during the selection process for this type of request. While this priority does not guarantee that these requests will be accommodated, it does give students in low-performing nodes a higher priority for selection into seats at regional choice schools. If the district identifies a set number/percentage of seats at each school by grade level, the district would put in place measures to ensure that even if the regional choice schools are over-chosen by students that qualify for priorities #1-#3, that seats are available for students that qualify for priority #4. In addition, the district would be restricting the total number of seats available to students that qualify for priorities #1-#3 in the event that the regional choice school is over-chosen by siblings and proximity students.

Relevant Data:

- *According to our analysis, approximately 750-800 Kindergarten students whose closest school is a Group 1 magnet elementary school will not have access to a seat in those schools each year. This is in part due to the fact that there are more students living near Group 1 magnet elementary schools than those schools can possibly hold, and in part due to the seat allocations required to operate the magnet program.*
- *Initial analysis shows sufficient capacity at the schools on the choice lists for students who live nearest a group 1 magnet without setting aside seats.*
- *In order to ensure that each student could be seated at one of the other schools on their choice lists, 8% of the seats in each of those schools would need to be set aside for these "structurally displaced" students.*
- *In order to further ensure that each student could be seated specifically in a "high-performing" regional choice school if they requested it during the choice process, then the percentage set aside for those schools would have to be around 15%, since only about half of the other schools on their choice list meet the criteria for regional choice schools.*
- *Another option would be to set aside around 10% of seats in regional choice schools and around 6% in the other schools on their choice list. This would open up seats in regional choice schools for around 2/3 of the structurally displaced students, and about 1/3 would end up being seated in the other schools on their choice list.*

Criteria:

See attached.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends that if the Board implements a "set aside" at high-performing regional choice schools, that the value of 15% of seats be utilized as the target.

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8) What is the impact of moving achievement up in the priorities (i.e. moving priority 4 into the second position on the priority list)?

Answer: Moving the priority could have a negative impact if there are no controls in place. Set asides are a more efficient and effective method in prioritizing student achievement.

Background:

Student achievement is currently priority 4, behind sibling and proximity priorities. The Board asked that staff review the implications of moving this priority into the second position on the priority list.

Criteria:

Because the effect of any selection priority is dependent upon how people actually choose, there's no way to forecast exactly how it will play out.

- If we assume students in lower-performing nodes overwhelmingly list high-performing schools as their first-choice schools:
 - Under this scenario, students from lower-performing nodes will distribute themselves almost exclusively into the high-performing schools on their list. Since approximately 1/3 of the kindergarten students in the district reside in nodes designated as "low-performing", this would mean that those students would occupy a large portion of the seats in those high-performing schools. The other schools on their choice list would then have almost none of those students unless they got in via the sibling priority. Based on our simulation in June, however, it is unlikely that this type of scenario would actually happen.
- If we assume students in lower-performing nodes overwhelmingly list their closest (i.e., non-high-performing) schools as their first choice schools:
 - Since in many cases the closest school to each student's address is not the high-performing option, the switching of the achievement priorities with the proximity priorities would have little to no effect on actual student assignments in this scenario (compared to leaving them as they are). Students who qualify for the sibling and proximity priorities would still be seated first anyway in this scenario because the students in the lower-performing nodes would essentially "lose" their priority for those seats if they did not rank those schools first, while students living close to the school did rank those schools first. The information we got from the test drive simulation in June suggested that proximity was the #1 driver in how parents chose schools, although our outreach efforts are focused on helping parents see the value in selecting a high-performing schools.

These examples illustrate how selection priorities serve as a fairly blunt "control" mechanism in a choice plan. The order in which they are stated can sometimes have less of an effect than might be imagined because (a) they only come into play when a school receives more applications than it has seats, and (b) their effects, even under those conditions, are dependent on how people distribute their choices across the schools on their choice list, which can't really be known until after they've chosen.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends maintaining the current order of selection priorities.