

Journal 21
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People Powered-Purpose Driven

Hello, I'm Del Burns, superintendent of the Wake County Public School System.

We're taking some time to look at the four strategic directives that drive our focus in the Wake County Public School System. Over the past couple of weeks we covered our highest priority-- learning and teaching for all children. Our second strategic directive is closely tied to our first: to retain, recruit and train high quality employees at every level.

While we have access to instructional materials, new technology and attractive facilities they are only some of the tools that we use. They are simply a means to our end. "Things" don't teach children or feed them lunch or keep the computers running or manage building programs. "Things" won't close the achievement gap. People will. That is why over and over again I talk about the Wake County Public School System being a people-powered and purpose-driven organization.

It is the personal connection between an adult and child that creates learning from teaching. It is our people behind the scenes that make the business systems and support functions work that allow our teachers to focus on your child's education.

This is why we made retaining and recruiting our second strategic directive. There will be no learning and teaching, if we do not have the high quality employees we need at every level of the organization. I want you to notice the word order because it is important that retain comes before recruit. It is more cost effective to keep good employees than to recruit new ones. We value our experienced, veteran employees who can share what they've learned with our newer colleagues. That is why as any business manager can tell you, it costs less in terms of lost productivity and results to retain employees than to recruit new ones.

The third piece of this focus is training. Training and professional development are important keys to retaining quality employees, as well as getting new employees up and running quickly. Ask yourself this question. What if anything, do you do now the same way that you did it 10 years ago? It is the same for education. The landscape of education is continually changing and today, we are teaching more effectively than ever before.

In order for our teachers and staff to develop and change as the needs of our children and our society change, we must find ways to keep training and retraining our employees. They've been doing this by working in new and exciting ways, sharing what works best and finding solutions to problems as they emerge. This is definitely true for our classroom teachers who have been working in Professional Development Teams, but also for support and central services staff.

New research and technology has reshaped how we teach our children and how we support their learning. There are greater expectations on our school system, whether from higher testing standards, increased global competition, or most importantly from Wake County parents and citizens. We will achieve our goal of preparing your child for a bright and successful future by preparing ourselves and keeping the best employees, giving them the best training and support we can.

Next week we'll talk about some of the specifics about what we're doing to support the most important resource in educating and supporting your children on their journey to graduation: the human resource. Thanks, and I look forward to talking to you again soon.