



Wake County Demographics Growth and Diversity

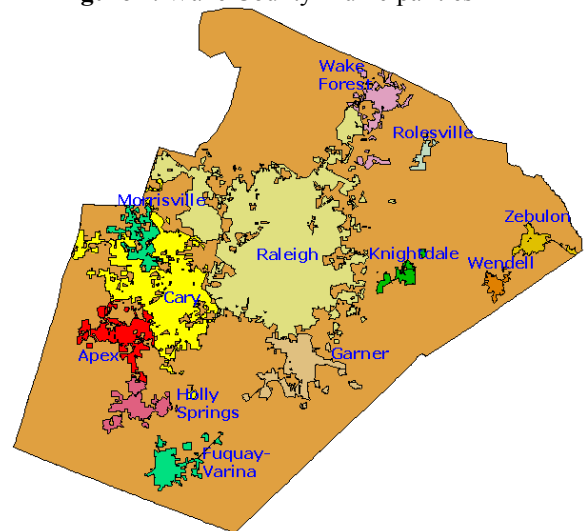
The face of North Carolina is changing, and Wake County is no exception. It is becoming more urban, more prosperous, and more racially, ethnically and socio-economically diverse. This change brings a number of challenges, but also success. While academically Wake County public schools are doing quite well, rapid growth puts considerable strain on available resources.

Growth

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, between 1990 and 2000 Wake County added 204,466 residents to grow to 627,846 – 458,642 lived in the 12 municipalities and 169,204 in unincorporated areas (Figure 1). This made Wake County the fastest growing county in North Carolina. It was ranked first out of the 100 NC counties, and the 22nd among the 3,141 counties nationwide by the absolute number of residents added.

Typically, Wake County adds about 20,000 people per year. Approximately 37% of the increase is from the natural birth-death cycle, 37% is from internal migration (within US), and 26% is from international migration. About 4,000 of the 20,000 newcomers are school age children. Wake County Public Schools System (WCPSS) needs to provide for about 4,000-5,000 additional students every year, and also ensure that these seats are available in a “Healthy Schooling Environment.”

Figure 1. Wake County Municipalities



On July 1, 2004 Wake County had 719,520 residents. By 2020 the county is expected to have more than 1.1 million people. Over 180,000 will be in the WCPSS. Growth is projected to occur throughout the county with the greatest increases in western and southern Wake County, east of Raleigh and along the US 1- US 401 corridors. The historical and projected growth in the Wake County population as a whole (of which the student population is about 14-17%, depending on the municipality), and the corresponding growth in the WCPSS student population are shown in Figure 2.

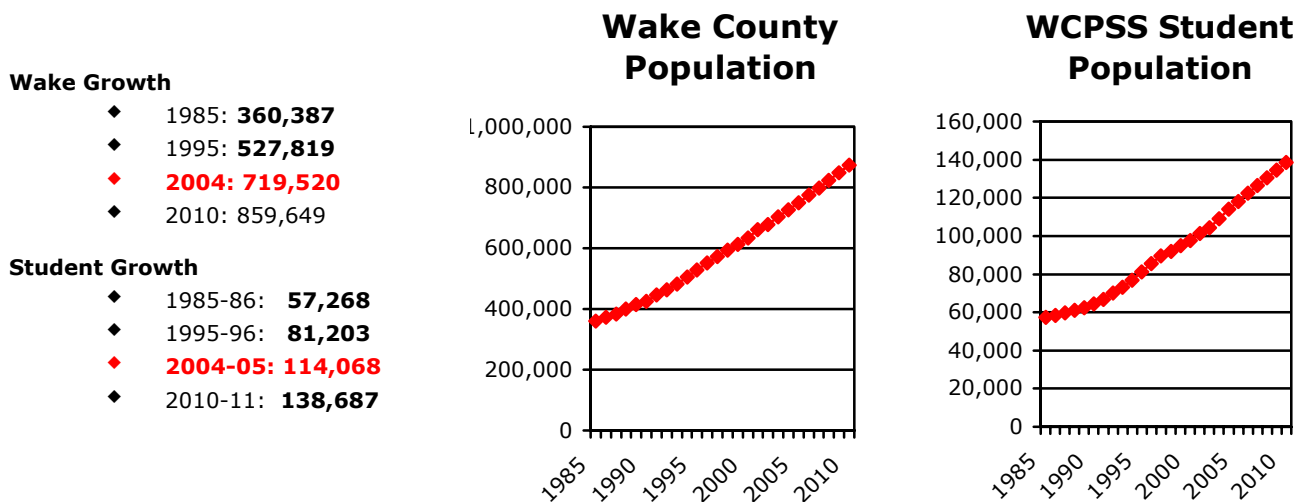


Figure 2. The historical and projected growth in the Wake County population and WCPSS student population

Wake County Public School System: Long-Term Enrollment Projections

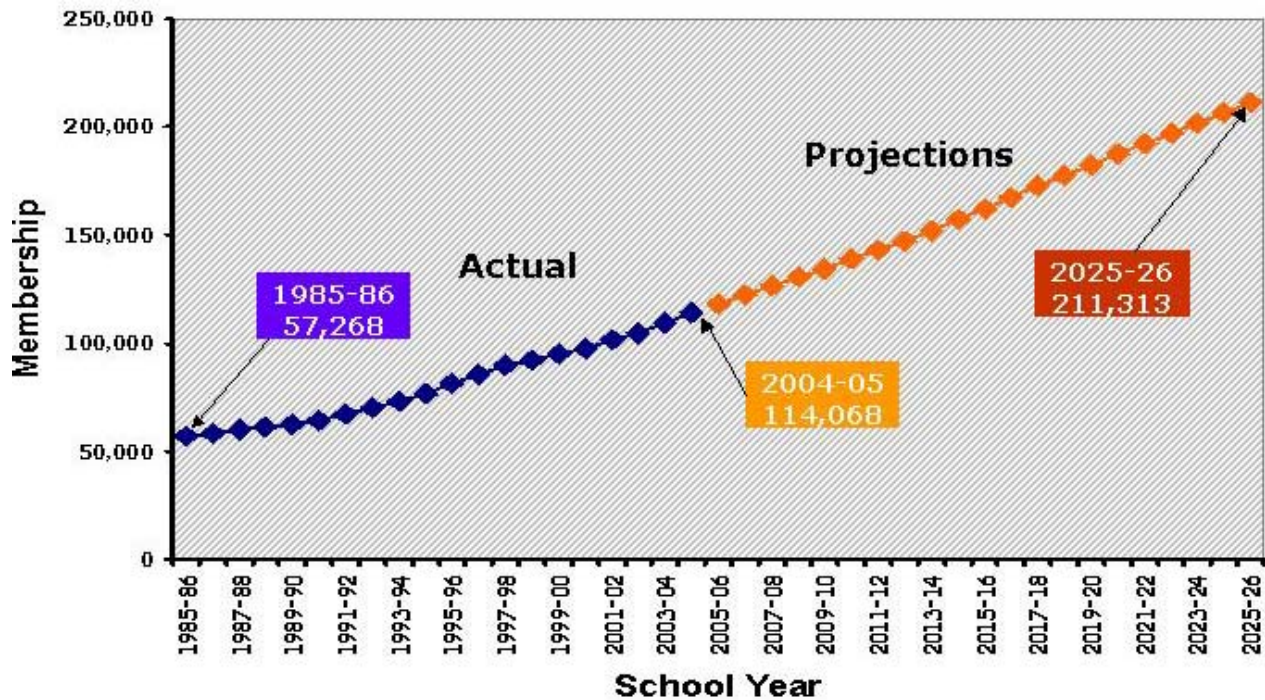


Figure 3. Wake County Public School System actual and projected enrollment

Figure 3 shows the student enrollment growth trends. In 2025, the WCPSS is expected to have about 200,000 students. High growth in the 2000’s was in part due to high immigration and in part due the number of births in Wake County. It appears that the growth rate may continue in the next 5 to 10 year. However, this trend may change due to socio-economic and other changes. Therefore long-term projections (5+ years) need to be re-visited on a periodic basis to account for changes in trends.

Current Schools (2004-05)

Currently, there are 132 public schools in Wake County with enrollment of 114,068 students.

Table 1. Wake County Public Schools, 2004-05

School Type	Number of Schools	20th Day Enrollment	Average Enrollment per School	Campus Capacity (Permanent plus Mobile)	Number of Mobile Classrooms	Crowding Percent
Elementary	84	54,731	651	52,575	402	104.1%
Middle	28	26,647	952	27,670	120	96.3%
High	17	32,351	1,903	33,589	179	96.3%
Special/Optional	3	339	113	418	8	81.1%
TOTAL	132	114,068	NA	114,252	709	99.8%.

Rapid growth of the County is demanding on the WCPSS resources. A number of WCPSS schools operate at or above their nominal capacity. Typically, this means about 10% or more above their nominal capacity. Current permanent school building structures have capacity for 97,528 students. To accommodate the difference between this and the current population of 114,068 students, WCPSS operates 709 mobile classrooms, at the crowding percent of 99.8%. The number of elementary, middle, high, and special/optional schools with their 20th day public school enrollment and campus capacity is shown in Table 1.

Ethnic and Racial Diversity

Table 2 and Figure 4 illustrate racial and ethnic mix and trends in the WCPSS. The point to note is that we are becoming more diverse. The largest growth (percentage-wise) has been observed for Hispanics/Latinos, Multi-Racial and Asians. In general, the shift in the demographics of the WCPSS student population follows national, state and county population trends.

Table 2. WCPSS Race and Ethnicity, Comparison of School Years 1987-'78 and 2004-'05

Year	White		Black or African American		American Indian and Alaska Native		Hispanic or Latino Origin		Asian and Pacific Islander		Multi-Racial		Total
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
1987-88	42,084	70.5%	15,963	26.7%	113	0.2%	295	0.5%	1,232	2.1%	0	0.0%	59,687
2004-05	64,868	56.9%	30,785	27.0%	308	0.3%	9,388	8.2%	5,100	4.5%	3,619	3.2%	114,068

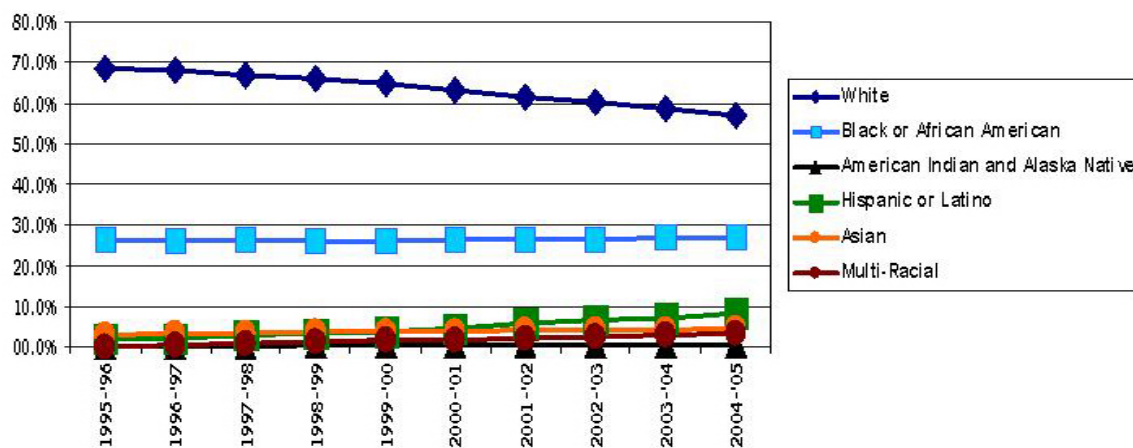


Figure 4. WCPSS Race & Ethnicity Percent Growth, 1987-2004

Please note that the WCPSS (and generally school systems nationwide) register Hispanic/Latino students as a race. However, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, Hispanic/Latino population is regarded as an ethnic group with origins from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Spain, the Spanish-speaking countries of Central or South America, the Caribbean, or those identifying themselves generally as Spanish, Spanish-American, Hispanic, Latino, etc. Hispanic/Latino population may be of any race.

Language Spoken at Home

International immigration contributes significantly to growth of Wake County population. This increases language diversity in the county. For example, in 1990, only 5.7% of Wake residents 5 years or older spoke a language other than English at home. In 2000, that number has increased to 12.2 percent.

This obviously has practical WCPSS implications in the area of cultural issues, English as a Second Language (ESL) education, and similar. For example, about 5% of WCPSS students take ESL. The Table 3 shows current ESL distribution by race and ethnicity (October 2004). The Table 4 shows the historic (maximum number of children served during a year) and projected numbers of WCPSS ESL students.

Table 3. ESL Students by Race and Ethnicity, 2004-'05

English as a Second Language Students by Race				
	STUDENTS BY RACE	ESL STUDENTS BY RACE	ESL PERCENT BY RACE	ESL PERCENT OF TOTAL ESL STUDENTS
ASIAN	5,100	625	12.2%	11.3%
BLACK	30,785	338	1.1%	6.1%
AM. INDIAN	308	2	0.6%	0.3%
HISPANIC/LATINO	9,388	4,240	45.1%	77.1%
WHITE	64,868	250	0.4%	4.5%
MULTI-RACIAL	3,619	41	1.1%	0.7%
TOTAL	114,068	5,496	4.8%	100.0%

Table 4. ESL Historic and Projected, 2001-2007

School Year	ESL Students
2001-'02	4,003
2002-'03	4,417
2003-'04	5,104
2004-'05	5,594
2005-'06	6,152
2006-'07	6,744
2007-'08	7,321

Socio-Economic Diversity

There are many factors that influence Wake County student population. A number of them can be classified as socio-economic. For example, Wake County is becoming more affluent, more educated, and older. It is also becoming more crowded and more urban. Therefore, its residents may now have a different point of view about education of their own children, and about education in general, than they had 10 years ago.

One of the most important factors is income. Figure 5 illustrates the distribution of population by income. Dark green areas represent households that in 1999 earned less than the county median household income of \$54,988. Clear areas represent the households that earned more than the median value. Clustering is obvious.

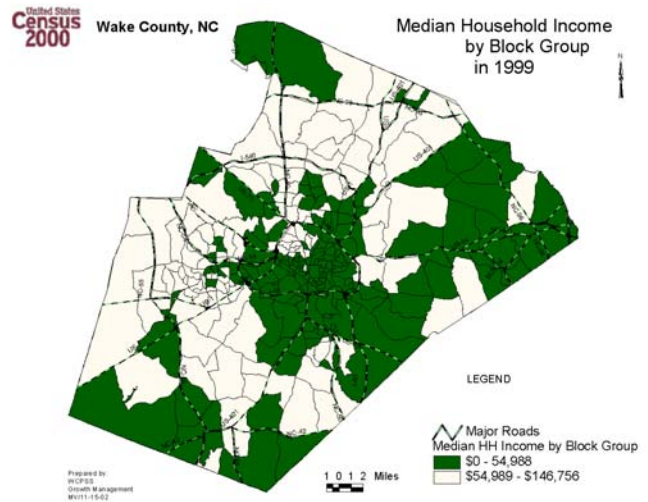


Figure 5. The 1999 Distribution of Median Household Income

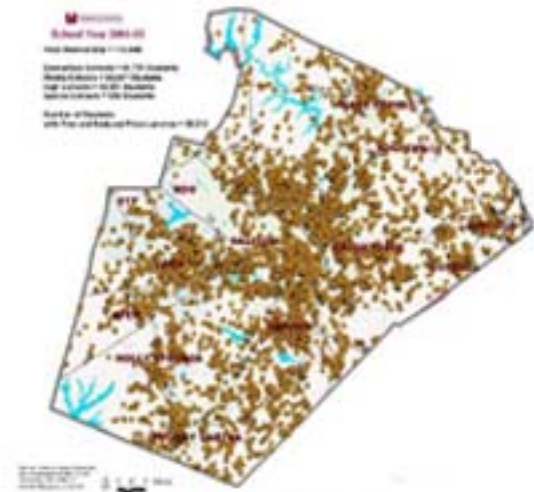


Figure 6. Distribution of F&R Students, 2002

Figure 6 shows the 2004-05 distribution (by residency node) of students eligible for Free and Reduced (F&R) price lunch. We see that the student density roughly corresponds to the distribution by income level.

The tables at the bottom of the page provide more information about F&R. Table 5 shows current F&R distribution by race and ethnicity. Table 6 shows the historic and projected numbers of WCPSS F&R students

\$162,900) – where can young couples with children afford to buy a house? Household size is **UP** (2.46 persons per household in 1990 vs. 2.51 persons per household in 2000); Median age is **UP** (1990: 31.3 yrs vs. 2000: 32.9 yrs) – aging population? Education level is **UP** - population with associate or higher degree (1990: 44% vs. 2000: 52%) – rising expectations? The number of families below poverty level is **DOWN** (1990: 5.5% vs. 2000: 4.9%) –making progress.

Other interesting facts about Wake County socio-economic trends: Household income is **UP** (1990: \$36,222 vs. 2000: \$54,989 - parents have more options); Median house value is **UP** (1990: \$96,800 vs. 2000:

Table 5. F&R Students by Race and Ethnicity, 2004-'05

Free and Reduced Price Lunch Students, 2004-05				
	STUDENTS BY RACE	F&R STUDENTS BY RACE	F&R PERCENT BY RACE	F&R PERCENT OF TOTAL STUDENTS
ASIAN	5,100	680	13.2%	2.2%
BLACK	30,785	17,450	56.2%	57.6%
INDIAN	308	89	29.1%	0.3%
HISPANIC/LATINO	9,388	6,512	67.9%	21.5%
WHITE	64,868	4,486	6.9%	14.8%
MULTI-RACIAL	3,619	1,095	29.9%	3.6%
TOTAL	114,068	30,312	26.5%	100.0%

Table 6. F&R Historic and Projected, 2001-06

School Year	F&R Students
2001-'02	21,751
2002-'03	22,945
2003-'04	26,492
2004-'05	30,312
2005-'06	31,368
2006-'07	32,525

Planned Schools

To keep up with the dramatic enrollment growth, 5 new schools will be opened in 2005, and another 12 by 2008.

Figure 7 shows the location of the existing and already planned public schools in Wake County.

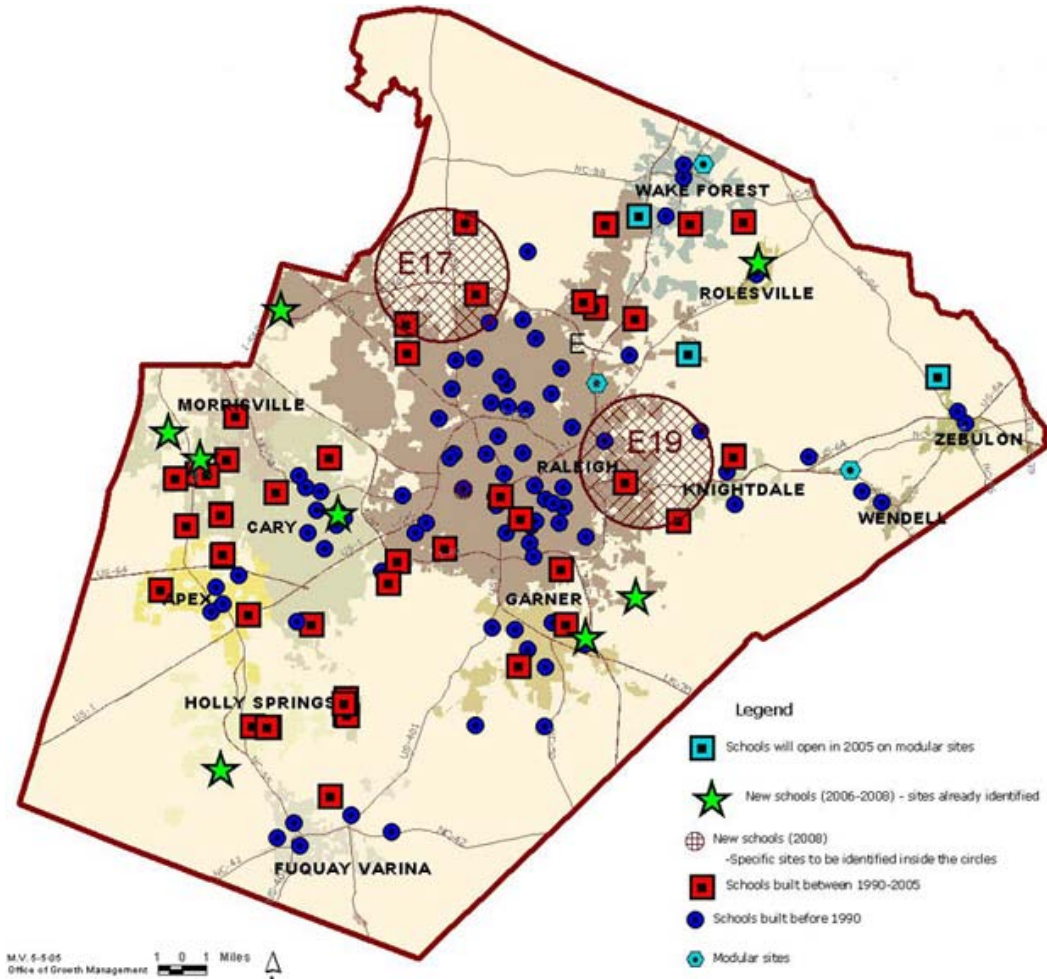


Figure 7. Locations of existing and planned public schools.

Other Education Systems in Wake County

As Wake County changes, there are more options and alternatives for its residents and children. In addition to the traditional public school system, there are three other education systems in Wake County: Although in 1990s, all three systems have experienced significant growth, both in Wake County and in the State of North Carolina, that trend has slightly reversed in recent years. In 2003 (Figure 8), these three systems contributed 16.73% of the total enrollment: private schools with a share of 9.9% (12,951 students in 53 schools), charter schools with 2.6% (3,443 students in 13 schools), and home schooling with 4.1% (5,374 students in 2,641 schools).

However, even under ambitious assumptions about the growth of these three schooling sectors (it may grow to 20% by the year 2020), traditional public school sector will still have to take care of the bulk of the projected enrollment growth.

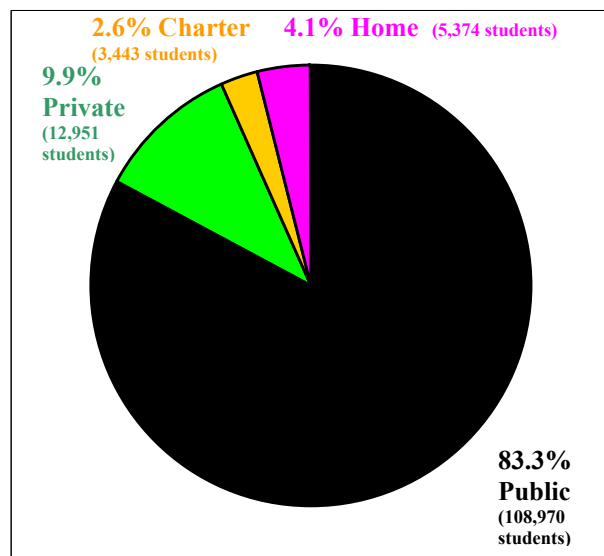


Figure 8. The 2003 distribution of enrollment by Wake County school systems.

Distance Analysis and Assignment

Growth of the WCPSS requires student assignment policies designed to accommodate new schools and maintenance of existing facilities while maintaining a healthy academic environment. This brings inevitable concerns about attendance **choice**, and about **distance** travel. Analysis of distances traveled by students is an integral part of the reassignment process. Figure 9 illustrates distance travel for Middle Creek Elementary School. Each green dot represents a student going to that school. Most come from areas close to the school. Table 7 shows that system-wide, 77% of the students are assigned to a base school, 86% of them live within 5 miles of the school they are assigned to. Students attending a school by choice, such as those going to magnet and year-round schools, or transfers who use their own transportation, tend to travel further than “by assignment” students.

Figure 9. Example of Distance Analysis

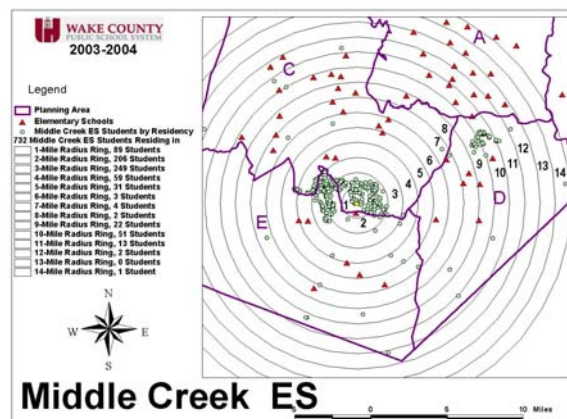


Table 7. Distance Analysis, 2003-04

Students Attending School	Number of Students	Percent of Total	Students living within 5 miles of the school they attend	Number of Students	Percent of Total
By Assignment	83,883	77.3%	By Assignment	71,769	85.6%
By Choice	24,702	22.7%	By Choice	13,699	55.5%
Total	108,585	100.0%	Total	85,468	78.7%

Table 8. Reassignment Plan Trends, 1994-2003

School Year	20th Day Membership	Total Reassigned	New Schools	Total % Reassigned
2003-2004	108,970	2,355	2	2.16%
2002-2003	104,373	4,157	3	3.98%
2001-2002	101,397	2,385	0	1.37%
2000-2001	97,853	3,651	5	3.74%
1999-2000	95,018	5,055	7	5.32%
1998-1999	92,038	3,193	2	3.47%
1997-1998	89,548	1,696	3	1.89%
1996-1997	85,539	2,320	5	2.71%
1995-1996	81,203	3,603	3	4.40%
1994-1995	76,731	-	0	0.00%

Reassignment Trends

WCPSS adds about 4,000 new students each year. Because WCPSS operates at capacity, it is not surprising that re-assignment reflects that growth. Table 8 shows the number and percentage of students reassigned each year, and increases in WCPSS capacity (new schools). We see that re-assignment corresponds to the number of new schools opened.

ABCs Accountability Plan and Dropout Rate

One of the most important aspects is how well WCPSS does its job of educating students. In 2002-03, Wake's scores on the state tests and the SAT exam were at their highest point ever. A record 97% of WCPSS schools met either high growth or expected growth standards: 72% of schools met “High Growth” standards, 25% of schools met “Expected Growth” standards, 2% of schools did not meet the Expected Growth standard but showed adequate performance, and no school was designated as “Low Performing”. Furthermore, in 2002-03, a record 90% of WCPSS schools were designated as either Schools of Excellence or Schools of Distinction. Finally, the rate of students dropping out of the Wake County Public School System fell to 2.40 percent, lower than other metropolitan school systems in the state and the lowest rate for Wake County in more than a decade.

Summary

The Triangle continues to offer the lifestyle, the climate, the work, the business and educational opportunities that attract people to it and get them excited. This means that both the overall population and the student population will continue to grow. A very large fraction of the school-age children will be WCPSS students. WCPSS needs to be ready to accept them and offer them a healthy education environment, to proactively locate new schools where they can meet the demands of that growth, and in a manner that contributes to orderly and smart management of the growth.