

September 2005

Dear Parents, Guardians, Teachers, and Students:

There's no more important relationship to the academic success of our children than that between families and schools. When we are aligned in our expectations, reinforcing each others' best efforts, and keeping our children's needs at the forefront, we build the trust and *synergy* that spur children to find their interests, stretch their boundaries, and reach their full potential.

The success of the Wake County Public School System is built on many building blocks - nearly 30 years of courageous decision-making, the intent to leave no child behind before it was fashionable, and the setting of high standards. But the foundation under those blocks has been a community, led by parents and supported by civic visionaries, that has demanded that Wake County's schools be not only good but *great*.

Are we a great school system? With more than 90 percent of our students at or above grade level on End-of-Course tests, with record-high SAT scores, with WCPSS students better prepared than their peers for success in UNC-system universities, the signs are promising. But a truly great school system looks for new challenges, identifies deficiencies, and continuously improves.

Thanks to PTA leadership, we have convened the Superintendent's Parent Advisory Council. Modeled after the Superintendent's Teacher Advisory Council, this is a high-level group of parents that comes together as a hard-working group to not only identify problems, but to make a serious effort to find solutions. I am pleased that this group will be able to help me in the coming year.

But parental involvement is important at all levels, not just at the top. Volunteerism is vital in building a can-do environment that surrounds an entire school and its children, regardless of each child's heritage or circumstance. And parents must be leaders at home, inspiring their children to learn. That means monitoring whether your child has done his or her homework -- but it also means taking an active interest in learning yourself, modeling the intellectual curiosity that you hope your child will take into future studies, future careers, and the future generations -- that *your children* will in turn lead.

By your involvement in PTA, you are helping to build that future generation. You are making an educational legacy. Thank you for everything that you have done, and are preparing to do, for the children of Wake County.

Sincerely,

Bill McNeal