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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**GREAT SCHOOLS IN WAKE LAUNCHES
“LET’S FIND A BETTER WAY” CAMPAIGN**

Raleigh, NC—April 10, 2012—Great Schools in Wake (GSIW) believes that it is time to pause, reflect upon the strengths and weaknesses of the new plan and its predecessor, and develop an alternative that combines the best of all assignment methodologies while considering what our community values in public education.

“The ‘choice’ student assignment plan is taking a toll on our community,” said Yevonne Brannon, Chair, GSIW. “We are calling on the Board of Education to return to the practice of holding open public hearings around the County. We believe that reinvigorating community engagement in a real and meaningful way will allow for the development of a better way of assigning students and create the healthy, vibrant, and sustainable school system that our community deserves.”

Shortcomings of the new assignment plan include:

- Feeder patterns are effectively locking students into schools they don’t necessarily want and locking others out.
- Fewer families received their first choice than expected.
- Families in several neighborhoods participated in the choice process, but received *no placement* for their children.
- Brand new schools were greatly under chosen, while other students were seated at schools that will now be overcrowded.
- Nothing in the choice assignment model prevents the creation of high poverty schools. In fact, several high poverty schools are being created with the plan.

GSIW believes that the values embraced by Wake County’s citizens—student success, choice, proximity and stability—must be re-prioritized in a student assignment plan. Among the recommendations for a better way to assign students:

- Creation of a plan with clear rules that can be easily understood by the public
- Elimination of feeder patterns
- Stability for grade spans (once in a school, a child cannot be reassigned)
- Strategic expansion of the magnet program

- Redefinition of smaller nodes based on 2010 U.S. Census data
- Reestablishment of address-based assignments

GSIW welcomes community input at the Web site created for this purpose: letsfindabetterway.com or via email at: info@letsfindabetterway.com. You may also join the campaign on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/findabetterway>. A copy of the complete brief, “Let’s Find a Better Way: Restoring Well Being to the Wake County Public School System,” can also be found at this Web site.

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About Great Schools in Wake Coalition:

A project of WakeUP Wake County, Great Schools in Wake Coalition (GSIW) is a community coalition of organizations, business leaders, parents and citizen advocates who are working to ensure educational excellence in the Wake County Public School System. GSIW’s mission is to provide accurate information to educate the public about policy initiatives that would impact the quality of education, foster well-informed discussions about critical education issues, and advocate for policies that improve public education in Wake County. For more information on the Coalition or to join, please visit: greatschoolsinswake.org.