

Investing in Solutions

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
& PUBLIC-PRIVATE
PARTNERSHIPS TO ADDRESS
GOAL 2003



A Report on:

Great Expectations in East
Wake County

Readers to Achievers

Incentives for New
Educators

Presented By:



Wake
Education
PARTNERSHIP

2002



INVESTING IN SOLUTIONS

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RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION

Wake Education Partnership expresses appreciation to the many community collaborators leading efforts to ensure that public education in Wake County continues to meet ever-higher standards of performance. Chief among these collaborators are teachers and administrators in the Wake County Public Schools and members of the Wake County Board of Education who have such a willingness to focus on ongoing quality improvement in the public schools in an atmosphere defined by an honest presentation of the facts. Special mention goes to Superintendent Bill McNeal for leading greater openness in the public schools and for forging meaningful ties with the community.

This report and the programs being presented are made possible by a growing list of business, foundation and government partners and donors who recognize the value of strategic investment to enhance public education in Wake County. As our public schools extended the hand of trust to adopt Goal 2003, the community reached back with an unprecedented commitment of leadership and resources. That may be the most powerful lesson of Goal 2003.

Special thanks to all donors to the Annual Fund for Education and leading project sponsors including the BellSouth Foundation, GlaxoSmithKline, SAS, WakeMed, Raleigh Community Hospital, *The News and Observer* and Golden Corral. Other supporters include Bank of America, First Citizens Bank, Wachovia Bank, Prudential Carolinas Realty, Ammons Pittman, Fonville Morisey, Coldwell Banker/Howard Perry and Walston, York Simpson Underwood, Drucker and Falk, Summit Properties, Melrose Apartments, Horne Moving and Storage, Inc., All American Moving & Storage, Inc., Budget/Ryder Truck, Morningstar Storage, Rex Wellness Center, Capital Area YMCA, Time Warner Cable, Cingular Phone & Wireless Services, Carolina Hurricanes, Epi Fundraising, Manpower, Wake Housing Resource Center, Downtown Housing Improvement Center, Belk Department Stores, Cary Towne Center, Crabtree Valley Mall, Haverty's and BeautiControl.

Finally, special appreciation goes to program directors Dr. Cynthia Chamblee with Great Expectations, Ms. Suzanne Metcalf with Readers to Achievers and Ms. Debbie Thompson with the Incentive for New Educators Program. While many community leaders and volunteers deserve recognition, Mr. Richard Urquhart stands out as a real champion for Goal 2003 and for efforts to ensure that all third graders can read.

Thank you,



M. Anthony Habit, Ed.D.
President



Valerie B. Brown, Ph.D.
Vice President for Programs

GOAL 2003 – AN OVERVIEW

“By 2003 95 percent of students will achieve at or above grade level as measured on the North Carolina End-of-Grade tests and as benchmarked in grades three and eight.”¹

“Congratulations are in order not just to the school system, but to all community groups that have been providing extra help to struggling students.”²

Goal 2003 and Change

The 1998 adoption of Wake County’s first-ever measurable goal for improved student achievement in the public schools fundamentally changed the relationship between the community and its schools. Backed by significant community involvement that culminated in the 1998 inaugural Wake Education Summit, the Wake County Board of Education took action to adopt a goal with ownership by key community collaborators as well as the public schools. The goal, that “by 2003 95 percent of students will achieve at or above grade level in reading and mathematics as benchmarked in grades three and eight and as measured by the North Carolina End-of-Grade tests,” marked a new, more vigorous relationship between the public and its schools. For the first time, progress in achieving higher academic standards in Wake County Public Schools became a responsibility shared with the community. This broader ownership for progress in the public schools also initiated a greater degree of openness by school administrators than ever before as key partners sought to understand data about the achievement of different types of students.

Goal 2003 provided both a focal point and a challenge for all of Wake County. This ambitious goal was a focal point because, for the first time, internal public school programs as well as community programs could be tested against the same touchstone, their effect on and alignment with better educational outcomes for students. This alignment enabled school partners, private investors and administrators of public funds to begin to consider how children might best benefit from strategic uses of time and money. In a county defined by hundreds of school and child-linked programs, alignment is no small consideration as literally millions of private and public dollars targeting children are at stake.

Armed with a clearer focus, leaders in the Wake County Public Schools took action to determine if the investment of tax dollars was producing the expected results. Similar to the challenge to community groups, school administrators tested the effectiveness of programs through the department of Evaluation and Research and redirected resources away from less relevant efforts toward existing or new strategies aligned

¹ Wake County School Board Retreat, July 1998.

² *The News and Observer*, August 2, 2002.

with the goal. New efforts created by the district included more intensive support for teacher training and Project Achieve.³

In total, Goal 2003 has resulted in:

- More effective alignment between community programs and improved student outcomes;
- Greater efficiency with the use of tax dollars as programs are more closely scrutinized to determine effectiveness;
- A focal point to mobilize school employees and community members;
- Broader community ownership for their public schools and understanding about challenges confronted by educators; and,
- Lessons about how to improve upon the development of future goals and the roles of policy makers, administrators, teachers and community partners in ensuring success.

Investing in Solutions

This report is not intended to provide a comprehensive examination of the development of Goal 2003, changes within schools or community programs resulting from the goal or even lessons learned. Instead, this document seeks to present three examples of programs initiated by Wake Education Partnership in collaboration with the community and the public schools specifically targeting Goal 2003. Each of these programs sought to:

- Initiate community activities and programs to address one or more aspects of the goal;
- Invest private resources to complement and integrate with the most appropriate use of tax dollars; and,
- Foster leadership within the community that would more effectively enhance student and school achievement.

As a key collaborator with the Wake County Public Schools in the development and adoption of Goal 2003, Wake Education Partnership served primarily as a researcher, facilitator and broker of resources and relationships. Beginning with the 1998 Wake Public Education Community Assessment, the Partnership began to measure public opinion and to involve diverse voices in making recommendations about goals in the public schools. Small workgroups and especially the Standards and Accountability Committee explored ways to focus the community on the urgency that all children learn to read by the end of third grade.

Administrators in the Wake County Public Schools, however, should be credited with openness toward involvement of the community that led to formal adoption of a goal.

³ For more information about Project Achieve, contact Jo Baker, associate superintendent, Wake County Public Schools, at 850-1600.

Members of the superintendent's administrative cabinet recognized the value of both deeply involving the community and shaping a goal that could be easily communicated and powerfully important to the education of children. The Wake County Board of Education built upon the work of administrators and demonstrated remarkable leadership in formally adopting the goal, the first of its kind for Wake County.

The Partnership's Commitment

Immediately following the adoption of Goal 2003, the Partnership convened representatives of the Wake County PTA Council, the Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce, the Cary Chamber of Commerce and the Wake/North Carolina Association of Educators to consider how to involve the entire community in understanding the goal and in taking action. These organizations reached out to many others and soon a community campaign emerged in cooperation with Wake County Public Schools to promote the goal and to engage the community. By 2000, citizens across the county overwhelmingly supported Goal 2003.⁴

The Partnership sought out many community collaborators to address the goal. Beginning in 1998, the Partnership initiated three direct service programs designed to mobilize community support and leverage private resources to strengthen the public schools. They were *Great Expectations*, *Readers to Achievers* and *Incentives for New Educators*. Each initiative offered unique, large-scale support for teachers and students in the Wake County Public Schools.

This report provides a summary of these programs, recognizes the partners who made them possible and provides an insight into the results achieved for the investment by the Partnership and others. While it is impossible to attribute the steady progress by Wake County Public Schools toward Goal 2003 solely to any one of these three programs, evidence is provided that these programs have had a major impact on student achievement.

Progress Toward Goal 2003

Since the adoption of Goal 2003 in 1998, student performance on End-of-Grade tests has increased from an average of 81 percent to nearly 90 percent (89.7 percent) in 2002.⁵ In reading, 88 percent of students scored at or above grade level. Similarly, in math, 91 percent of students scored at or above grade level. The breakdown of scores in each grade in 1998 and 2002 is illustrated in the table on the following page. Progress since the establishment of the 95 percent goal is substantial. The

⁴ Wake Education Partnership. (April, 2000). Citizens' Perception Study: Challenges and Priorities for Wake County Public Schools. Raleigh, NC: M. Anthony Habit.

⁵ Wake County Public School System. (2002, July). 2001-02 End of Grade Test Results (ER Report NO. 02.31).

achievement gap continues to narrow with the percentage of African American students scoring at or above grade level at 72 percent, up from 67 percent.

<u>Grade</u>	1998		2002	
	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Math</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Math</u>
3	79.3	75.4	87.6	87.1
4	80.3	84.1	87.4	94.8
5	84.3	84.0	92.3	93.8
6	78.8	82.7	82.8	90.2
7	80.5	83.7	86.7	90.3
8	86.4	83.2	91.4	88.3

GREAT EXPECTATIONS IN EAST WAKE COUNTY

Mobilizing Community Support for Improved Student Achievement

Summary

Great Expectations, a joint effort of Wake Education Partnership and the Wake County Public Schools, is helping to improve student achievement in eastern Wake County. The program was designed to increase expectations for student achievement by identifying community and school needs, establishing linkages and partnerships to help address those needs, and aligning and securing material and human resources.

Background

In 1999, the Wake County Public School System and Wake Education Partnership determined that the eastern part of Wake County – a mostly rural area that includes the townships of Zebulon, Wendell and Knightdale – was in need of additional intervention and resources. Even though these communities are located within Wake County, families in East Wake derive little benefit from the relative wealth created by the vibrant business climate found in Raleigh and the neighboring Research Triangle Park.

Students in eastern Wake schools are among the poorest in the county. In 1999, approximately 44 percent of the children in eastern Wake elementary schools, 35 percent of the children in the middle schools and 22 percent of the children in the high school received free or reduced-price lunches. Through the school system as a whole, 23 percent of students received free and reduced-price lunches. In addition, the eastern Wake schools were being strained as they tried to accommodate a growing Hispanic population and additional limited English proficiency students.

In addition to poverty, a crisis of expectations also challenged the 7,536 students in the six elementary schools, two middle schools and one high school in eastern Wake County. In 1999, the eastern Wake elementary and middle schools had lower End-of-Grade averages than the county average. One elementary school and one middle school had the highest percentage of students scoring below grade level in Wake County. The percentage of special education students in this area was the highest in the school district, and an average of almost 40 percent of kindergarten children were classified as having moderate needs based on screening for early prevention of school failure. In 1998-99, East Wake High School had a 6.01 percent dropout rate, compared to the school district average of 3.07 percent. SAT scores were among the lowest in Wake County. Finally, the percentage of students scoring below grade level on the End-of-Course exams in 1998-99 exceeded the district average in every area except Algebra 1.

Focus groups conducted with East Wake principals and the East Wake Education Foundation Board of Directors further highlighted the high needs in this area. Wake Education Partnership and the Wake County Public School System, therefore, secured funding for the Great Expectations initiative. Financial backers were BellSouth Foundation, GlaxoSmithKline, East Wake Education Foundation, Wake County Smart Start, Wake Education Partnership and the Wake County Public School System.

Program Overview

Great Expectations was a three-year initiative whose overriding goal was to increase academic expectations for student achievement by strengthening the ability of schools, parents and community leaders to better support and mobilize resources to achieve expectations.

In order to accomplish this goal, Great Expectations helped to assess the needs in eastern Wake, forge relationships and establish linkages between the community and the schools and provide direct support to East Wake schools.

The first step in the initiative was to bring together members of the eastern Wake community to discuss needs and possible solutions to those needs. In August 1999, Great Expectations hosted the East Wake Community Forum. Over 120 businesses, education and community leaders from the towns of Knightdale, Wendell and Zebulon attended. Dr. Jim Surratt, former superintendent of the Wake County Public School System, spoke to the community about the 2003 Goal and the need to establish high expectations for all children. Betsy Thigpen, formerly of Wake County Smart Start; David Lane, formerly of the BellSouth Foundation; Bill Shore, of GlaxoSmithKline; and Maria Spaulding, of Wake County Human Services, also made remarks. The community then participated in roundtable discussions that centered on the topics of community/school involvement, parent/school involvement and early childhood education. The top recommendations included:

- Development of a community resource center where programs and resources could be coordinated;
- Creation of parent education classes and/or workshops;
- Establishment of early childhood education programs and enhancement of parental support;
- Coordination of East Wake programs and resources; and,
- Recruitment and training of volunteers.

In September 1999, Great Expectations hosted focus groups to further explore the types of programs needed in eastern Wake. Representatives from the school system,

Wake Education Partnership, Wake County Human Services, Wake County Smart Start and the East Wake community generated a list of needs that were ranked using the Nominal Group Technique. The most highly rated needs were:

- Quality Preschool Experiences
- After School Programs
- Health Services
- Computer Center
- Recreational Activities
- Parent Education/Training
- Family Resource Center

After the Forum and the focus group, the following committees were established to further explore the issues raised and the recommendations made at the Forum:

Old Carver Early Learning Center

This committee was composed of representatives from the eastern Wake community, Wake County Public School System, Wake County Human Services and Wake County Smart Start. The charge was to develop the concept and design an Early Learning Center that would be housed in the Old Carver Elementary School and to seek funding for the renovation of the building.

Early Childhood Education

Composed of representatives from the eastern Wake community, Wake County Public School System, Wake County Human Services and Wake County Smart Start, this committee identified the early childhood education programs/services available in the eastern Wake community, the children being served by these programs and the children whose needs were not being met. Models of successful early childhood education programs were explored for replication here.

Parental/Community Involvement

Representatives on this committee were members of the eastern Wake community and the East Wake school principals. This committee explored ways to encourage more community participation and support in the schools and school activities. A primary focus was on recruitment of literacy coaches to work with students not yet reading at grade level.

School Success

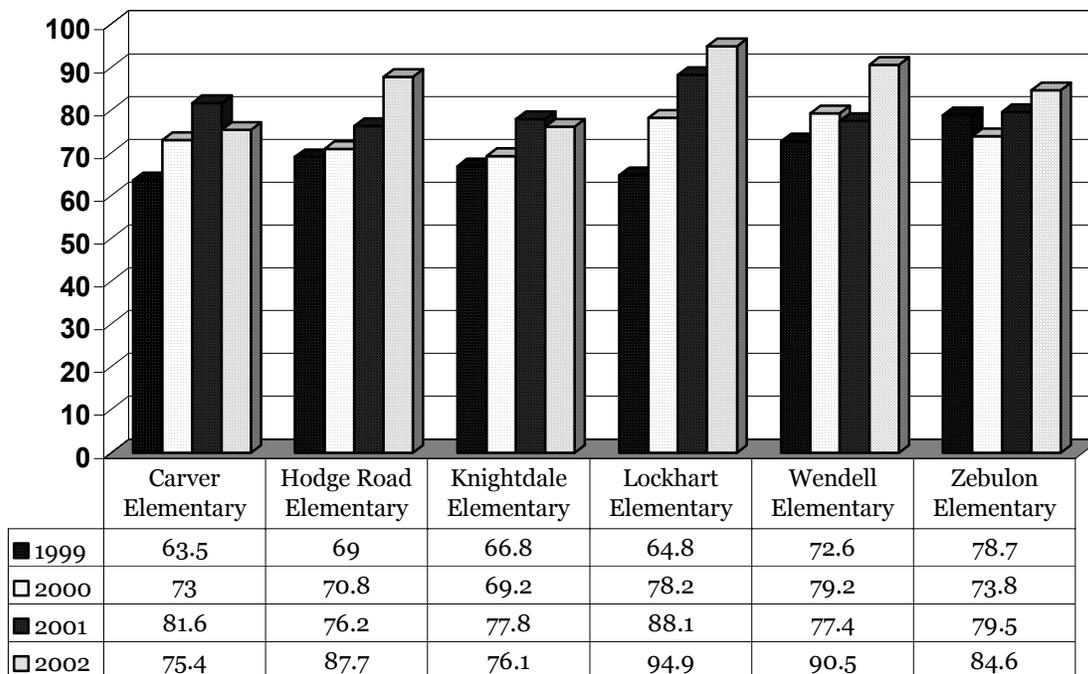
Great Expectations was invited to participate in the East Wake Advisory Council meetings. The council was composed of PTA representatives; the school principals; Danny Barnes, area superintendent; and Kathryn Quigg from the Wake County Board of Education. The advisory council identified ways Great Expectations could support the East Wake schools at the site level. At one of the council meetings, the Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant was discussed and the decision was made to write a proposal for funding for after-school and summer programs.

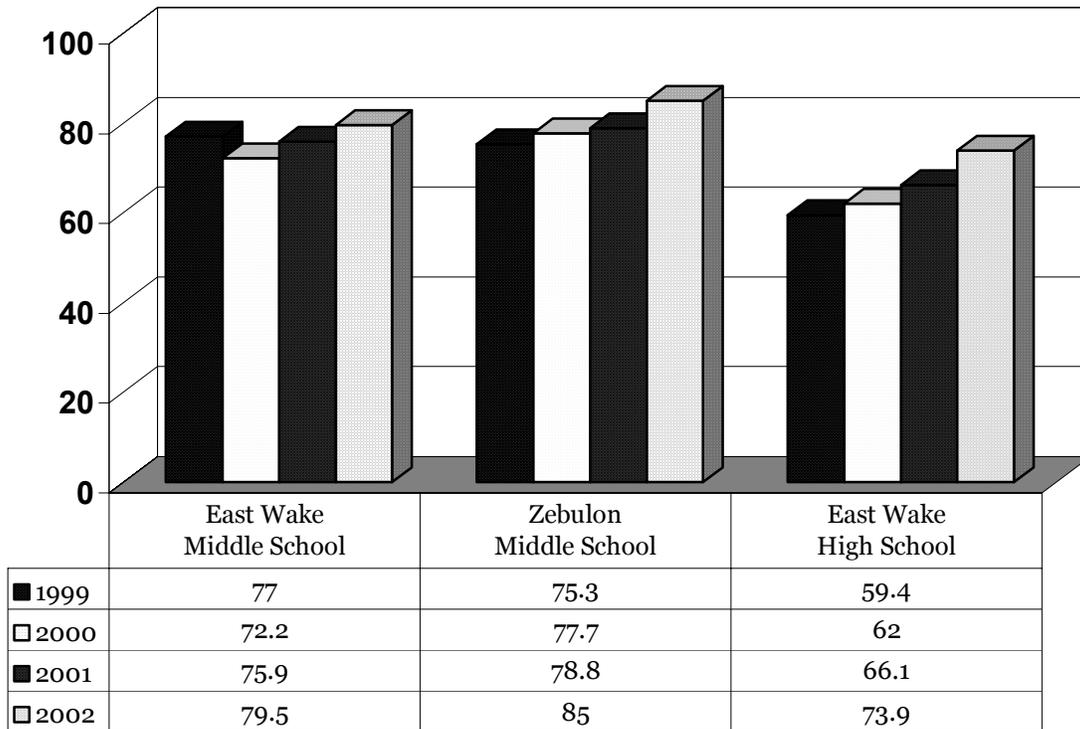
Results

The total investment from the Wake Education Partnership for Great Expectations in East Wake from May 1999 to June 2002 was \$166,524.88. Revenue for the initiative was received from BellSouth Foundation, GlaxoSmithKline, Wake County Smart Start and the Wake County Public School System.

The North Carolina ABC Accountability program data in 2002 indicates that most of the East Wake schools met their expected growth standards set by the state. The schools that met state standards in expected and high growth were Hodge Road, Lockhart and Wendell Elementary schools, East Wake Middle School and East Wake High School. One school, Zebulon Middle School, met the expected growth standard, but did not make high growth. Finally, three of the schools in East Wake did not achieve the expected state growth standards. These schools were Carver, Knightdale and Zebulon Elementary schools. *(See following charts for Performance Composite growth since 1999.)*

Performance Composite Growth Charts for East Wake Schools





In addition to improving test scores, the eastern Wake community has taken an increased interest in supporting area schools. For instance, Knightdale’s mayor started *Education First*, an initiative that helped secure volunteers for the Knightdale schools. In Zebulon, the Woman’s Club adopted volunteer recruitment as one of its primary projects for 2001-02. In addition to recruiting volunteers for the schools, the Zebulon Woman’s Club also served as volunteer coordinator for Zebulon Elementary School. And in Wendell, a new Education Committee was established. While this committee will focus on the needs of the Wendell schools, it will also attempt to form a regional Education Committee with the towns of Knightdale and Zebulon.

Strategies and Interventions

The following outlines some of the strategies and interventions implemented by Great Expectations to address the needs in Eastern Wake County and help accomplish program goals.

Early Childhood Education

- A proposal to secure funding to renovate the Old Carver Elementary School as an Early Learning Center was developed. An initial grant of \$159,298 was received from Wake County Smart Start, and the proposal was submitted to other foundations and corporations. Unfortunately, total funding was never secured and this project was terminated.

- The Partnership for Educational Success' Preschool Action Group developed plans for the Regional Ready To Learn Centers. As part of the Partnership's pilot program, two regional centers were established – one of which was located at Carver Elementary School. The director of Great Expectations (who was a member of the Partnership for Educational Success) worked with a representative from Wake County Human Services to co-direct the implementation of this center.

Parental/Community Involvement

- Great Expectations collaborated with Wake Education Partnership's Readers To Achievers program to recruit and train volunteers for the East Wake schools. Presentations and training sessions were held in area businesses, clubs, civic organizations and churches. In addition, literacy workshops for parents were held in the elementary schools.
- Great Expectations convened a focus group of area ministers to discuss education needs in eastern Wake. At one of the meetings, Superintendent Bill McNeal addressed the group. Great Expectations presented "Parental Involvement" workshops in several East Wake churches and worked with one local church to establish a tutoring program.
- Great Expectations supported the East Wake Education Foundation's *Lights on for Education* initiative, which promotes school involvement and support.
- In collaboration with the East Wake Education Foundation, Great Expectations convened a meeting of eastern Wake youth service providers. From this meeting emerged the development of the *East Wake Coalition of Youth*. The coalition's mission is to identify services and programs needed in eastern Wake County and then act as one voice to secure funding and resources for program implementation. The group also works together to sustain existing programs.
- Great Expectations developed an East Wake Resource Directory that describes resources and programs available in Wake County and the eastern Wake area. The directory was distributed to the East Wake Ready To Learn Center, East Wake Health Clinic, East Wake Education Foundation's Parents As Teachers Program and area school counselors and social workers.

School Improvement and Academic Success

- Great Expectations authored and submitted a grant proposal to the U.S. Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning Centers program and was awarded more than \$2 million to establish after-school and summer programs for at-risk students in four elementary schools. A second 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant was awarded in the amount of \$175,000 per year for four years. This grant allows for expansion of Great Expectations After School and Summer programs to Knightdale Elementary school. The director of Great Expectations currently acts as the program manager for these grants. The grants allow teachers to be hired to provide academic instruction in reading and math and for counselors from the Capital Area YMCA to provide recreational and enrichment activities. Previously, the YMCA did not have a presence in East

Wake. In addition to working with the grant programs, the YMCA now has tuition-based programs in Carver and Hodge Road Elementary Schools.

- The director of Great Expectations serves as a project leader for the Partnership for Educational Success, which employs the Family Advocacy Model when working with families of at-risk students. The Partnership program has been implemented in two East Wake schools with plans to expand to other area schools.
- When the principals identified lack of trained mentors as one of their needs and pointed out that teachers did not want to go to Raleigh for the training, the Director of Great Expectations taught the year-long mentoring and supervision class in the East Wake area.
- The director of Great Expectations also mentored four second-year teachers at East Wake Middle School.
- The director of Great Expectations served as a resource to East Wake administrators and teachers in developing and writing grants to support classroom instruction.

Recommended Next Steps

- Continue to provide training for parents so that they will be able to support their children. During the 2002-03 school year, Great Expectations and Wake County school system's ParentScope program will collaborate to provide additional parent education and parent involvement activities in the eastern Wake area.
- Seek funding for a parent liaison position in each East Wake elementary school. This person will act as a link between the school/teacher and the home and will help the families of at-risk students learn to identify and access needed resources.
- Expand the Partnership for Educational Success to all East Wake schools.
- Recruit additional community organizations willing to promote and coordinate volunteer activities.
- Expand the early childhood education programs/activities to ensure that East Wake children are ready to learn by the time they reach school.
- Provide technical support in grant writing and program development to community organizations and churches that are interested in developing learning/tutoring programs.
- Provide additional incentives in order for the East Wake schools to recruit and retain quality teachers.

READERS TO ACHIEVERS

Recruiting, Training and Placing Volunteers to Assist with Reading

Summary

The Readers to Achievers program is a collaborative effort to recruit, train, place and retain volunteers working with students in the Wake County Public Schools. The goal was to train 2,003 community volunteers to work one-on-one with those students not achieving at grade level. Wake Education Partnership, the Wake County Public School System, Communities in Schools and the Wake County PTA Council exceeded the goal by securing 2,052 volunteers.

Background

To help meet the Wake County Public School System's Goal 2003, it was agreed that students not achieving at grade level should be matched with trained community volunteers for tutoring and mentoring.

In the fall of 1999, Readers to Achievers, a community effort led by staff at Wake Education Partnership, was launched. A community meeting was held and work groups began to pull together a recruitment and communications plan. As the project was coming together, two other organizations — Wake County Public Schools and Communities In Schools — were brought in, eliminating duplication of efforts and allowing for stronger volunteer recruitment. A year later, the Wake County PTA Council joined the partnership, bringing a wealth of volunteers to the program.

Later, Wake Education Partnership's Standards & Accountability Committee took a leadership role in helping to meet the main objective — securing 2,003 volunteers to work with at-risk students. A committee was formed, consisting of representatives from Communities In Schools, the university system, the school system and community-at-large. This group was charged with the following:

- Enhancing the Readers to Achievers program;
- Increasing the number of trained volunteers; and,
- Increasing the number of trainers.

Others also got involved. For example, the mayor of Knightdale created a campaign to recruit volunteers and educate the community about the needs of the schools, students and teachers. This campaign alone successfully recruited and trained more than 100 volunteers. Although several other Wake County municipalities tried to duplicate this effort, they were not as successful.

Program Overview

Wake Education Partnership, Wake County Schools, Communities In Schools and the Wake County PTA Council collaborated on this program, resulting in the creation of one training manual, a streamlined application process and the creation of a central volunteer database. The recruitment of volunteers was a smooth process primarily due to the close working relationship of all four organizations. The following is a description of the unique and valuable contributions of each organization.

Wake Education Partnership

Wake Education Partnership was instrumental in providing the venue through which Readers to Achievers was established. The Partnership also provided funding for a volunteer recruiter charged with recruiting and training 2,003 volunteers by the year 2003. By June 2002, there were 2,052 volunteers recruited and trained. In addition, the Partnership:

- Contributed funds for a volunteer appreciation event;
- Helped update the training manual;
- Provided office space and trained volunteers;
- Worked with the media to promote the effort; and,
- Incorporated the effort into Wake Education Partnership's Standards & Accountability Committee's goals.

Wake County Public School System

Readers to Achievers fell under the umbrella of the Wake County School System's Accelerated Learning Program (ALP). This comprehensive strategy targeted children performing below grade level in elementary and middle schools, offering them up to 22 days of extra instruction.

Wake County Schools supported the volunteer recruitment effort in many ways – at the central office, at school sites and even at the pulpit on Sunday mornings. Toni Cooper was the system's point of contact. She helped put together a group of experts from the school system to create a training manual that was later revised to coincide with Communities In Schools training. In addition, the school system:

- Paid for volunteer background checks;
- Printed training manuals and inserts;
- Contributed funds to a volunteer appreciation event;
- Maintained the volunteer database;
- Coordinated volunteer placement at non-CIS schools; and,
- Hosted training for PTA and school administrators working with volunteers.

Communities in Schools (formerly Community Learning Partners)

Communities In Schools, a volunteer-based organization, brought a wealth of knowledge about recruiting, training and retaining volunteers. The volunteer recruiters worked closely with the Partnership staff to coordinate recruitment efforts

– including identifying methods, identifying potential companies and hosting information sessions. In addition, the organization:

- Developed the training manual;
- Funded a volunteer appreciation event; and,
- Trained new volunteers in the model.

PTA Council

The Wake County PTA Council was instrumental in taking the program to the next step. Through a great network of committed volunteers, volunteer recruiters and coordinators were placed at the majority of elementary and middle schools. This made the placement and retention of volunteers successful.

Results

Under the guidance of Partnership volunteer Joseph Springer, vice-chair of standards and accountability, Readers to Achievers was a tremendous success. For the first time ever, a broad spectrum of community agencies joined the Wake County Schools to collaborate on a targeted effort to support low-performing students. Over the course of three years, Readers to Achievers received financial support from individual contributors, Wake County Public Schools and such area businesses as SAS, WakeMed, Raleigh Community Hospital and *The News and Observer*. The Partnership investment from July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2002 was \$55,130.31. The resulting accomplishments include:

- Recruitment and training of 2,052 volunteers;
- Placement of 1,852 volunteers (2001-02 school year);
- Development of a comprehensive training manual for volunteers that aligns with the Wake schools literacy curriculum;
- Creation of a volunteer database;
- Creation of a cadre of volunteer coordinators at 78 percent of Wake County's schools; and,
- Creation of an aligned and focused recruitment and retention effort for volunteers.

In addition, in February 2001, the Wake County Public School System issued a report on its overall Accelerated Learning Program (ALP), of which Readers to Achievers was one component. The report cited several data points that were directly related to the efforts put forth by the Readers to Achievers program. For example, about one-third of schools using volunteers in their ALP program showed the highest growth among low-performing students.

With the collaborative efforts among several agencies, Wake Education Partnership has met the stated goal by securing 2,052 tutors. The work of ensuring the continued success of this program will be assumed primarily by the public schools. Toni Cooper,

Wake County School's volunteer coordinator, remains in the position of recruiting, training and retaining volunteers for the Readers to Achievers program. The Partnership continues to support the initiative by providing meeting space and lending community support.

Recommended Next Steps

- Create a model to identify a “champion” in each of Wake County’s 12 municipalities who can be successful in securing school volunteers from their respective communities;
- Refine a plan for volunteer retention;
- Train each school contact to train volunteers in their schools by using the supports already in place from the school system and Communities In Schools; and,
- Seek a strong media partner to help tell the story.

INCENTIVES FOR NEW EDUCATORS

Recruiting and Retaining Teachers and Administrators

Summary

In conjunction with the Wake County School System, Wake Education Partnership helped create Incentives for New Educators, a model incentive program designed to recruit and retain teachers and principals. Currently, the incentive packages are distributed to teacher assistants, teachers and administrators when they join the school system.

Background

Three years ago, a national teacher shortage made it difficult for the Wake County Public School System to attract new teachers. With a burgeoning student population, the system estimated that it would need to recruit at least 500 new educators over a five-year period – and retain their services. Because the highest indicator of student success is a strong classroom teacher, recruitment and retention became a significant objective tied to the 2003 Goal. The idea of an incentive package for Wake County educators was suggested at a public forum in 1999.

The incentive program was meant to serve as a model for this and other communities, with an emphasis on making moving more affordable and convenient for teachers to move to Wake County by offering them special discounts, gifts and savings. Such an incentive package also sends an important message to educators – it tells them that businesses and the community value their skills and their commitment to our children.

Nancy Andrews, a relocation specialist and a member of the Wake Education Partnership Board of Directors, headed up the relocation portion of the incentive program. She asked five additional relocation specialists to join her in starting it and also recruited the owners of hotels, apartments and moving companies to participate. The relocation companies each donated \$2,000 in seed money toward the project, which the school system matched.

Area banks also offered special services, and, in time, other discounts were added in the fields of entertainment, health, beauty, phone service, cable television and clothing. A part-time coordinator was hired by Wake Education Partnership to facilitate use of the program. Annual surveys were also conducted to ensure that the program was meeting educators' needs and to make necessary adjustments based on the data.

During the first year, 84 percent of respondents said the coupons were easy to use. At the time of the survey, nearly half of the newly hired educators indicated that they hadn't received the incentive package, which prompted a change in the way it was distributed. Additional surveys found that the incentive packages were appreciated even when they were not used. Others who used the incentives said it made their lives easier. "Moving a thousand miles, selling and buying a house in an unknown territory, and beginning a new job are stressful events in one's life. Without the relocation services ... we would not be as enthusiastic about living here as we are. We thank you for the foresight to offer such a program," one teacher said.

The strength of the incentive program is the expertise of the relocation specialists, who have helped many new employees and candidates by providing them with maps, area demographics and housing information. In this age of Internet technology, candidates still appreciate having a "real" person to talk to about their relocation needs.

Program Overview

In 1999, Wake Education Partnership and the Wake County Public School System offered incentive packages to newly hired teachers for the first time. The incentives included a supplemental advance from the school system and discounts in the areas of banking, hotels, tourism, realty, apartments, moving and storage, health and fitness, cable television, newspapers, cellular phone services, entertainment and employment agency referrals.

The incentives were packaged in a professionally designed and printed brochure, with specific instructions on how to secure the various products. Company logos and descriptions were also included. In most instances, educators were instructed to go directly to the company for discounts or benefits. But to ensure the integrity of the program, there were some instances when the Incentives Coordinator handled distribution. For instance, educators called the coordinator for telephone calling cards and Carolina Hurricanes game tickets.

During the tenure of the program, 49 business partners were recruited, with a majority renewing each year. In all, 3,517 packets were distributed to incoming educators. Businesses also have reported that the incentive packages help them. For instance, three homes have been sold to educators by participating realtors; new hires leased 30 apartments one year and 70 the following year. Service providers also report that the discounts are being used.

In surveys with business partners, many have indicated that they like to participate in the program for the following reasons: (1) they are helping the public schools; (2) there are no upfront costs; and (3) it brings business to their doors.

Incentive partners for 2002 included:

- All American Moving & Storage, Inc.
- Ammons Pittman
- Bank of America
- BeautiControl
- Belk Department Stores
- Budget/Ryder Truck
- Capital Area YMCA
- Carolina Hurricanes
- Cary Towne Center
- Cingular Phone & Wireless Services
- Coldwell Banker/Howard Perry and Walston
- Commercial Printers
- Crabtree Valley Mall
- Downtown Housing Improvement Center
- Drucker and Falk
- Epi Fundraising
- First Citizens Bank
- Fonville Morisey
- Haverty's
- Horne Moving and Storage, Inc.
- Manpower
- Melrose Apartments
- Morningstar Storage
- Prudential Carolinas Realty
- Readable Ink!
- Rex Wellness Center
- Summit Properties
- *The News & Observer* Publishing Company
- Time Warner Cable
- Wachovia Bank
- Wake County Public School System
- Wake Housing Resource Center
- York Simpson Underwood

In addition to creating the incentive program, Wake Education Partnership, the school system and the incentives coordinator also participated in biannual job fairs, attended by more than 1,200 candidates. A discount program for all Wake County educators was also established and put on the school system's website. The incentives coordinator also:

- Assisted with writing a bid proposal to recruit physicians for Wake County Public School System new hire physicals;
- Helped recruit physicians to assist with school system medical screenings;
- Helped write copy for the school system's Human Resources Survival Guide and the application brochure;
- Researched national recruitment initiatives;
- Oversaw and updated Wake Education Partnership's Incentive Program website;
- Manned information booths at the Cary Business Expo and the Wake County School System Administrative Conference to generate publicity about the incentives program;
- Conducted school system focus groups with Kim Hughes, Wake County Teacher of the Year; and,
- Responded to inquiries from other school systems about the incentive program, including San Francisco, CA; Wilson, Alamance, Cumberland, Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Greensboro, Guilford and Moore counties in North Carolina; and Henrico County, VA.

Distribution of the packets seemed to be the biggest challenge. At first, the packets were distributed to new hires by school principals. Surveys indicated the first year that half the new hires had not received the material. The incentive brochures are now mailed with the “new hire” packets by the Wake County Human Resources Department, ensuring that they are received immediately.

Results

Since the program’s inception, Wake Education Partnership contributed \$83,374.09 toward the program, and the school system contributed \$20,000. During the 2002-03 school year, Wake County Public Schools will maintain the incentive program, an effort that will be coordinated by the Human Resources Department. The Partnership will continue to seek business support and provide funding to cover the cost of printing the incentives packet.

Since the program’s inception in 1999, 3,517 new educators have been provided with the incentive package. The breakdown each year is as follows: 945 new teachers in 1999; 1,090 in 2000; 1,230 in 2001; and 252 in 2002. The packet helps create goodwill and also offers valuable financial benefits to teachers who are relocating to Wake County.

All but two businesses involved in the program have continued to renew their sponsorship each year. Surveys of participating businesses indicated that 72 percent felt that the package design was well done and easy to use and that the level of service provided by Wake Education Partnership was excellent.

The number of businesses participating in the incentives program each year is as follows: 21 in 1999; 23 in 2000; 29 in 2001; and 36 in 2002. The number of businesses participating in the discount program for all educators included 42 in 2001, when the program was implemented, and 44 in 2002.

Recommended Next Steps

- Continue to recruit more businesses to participate in the incentives program, such as the Carolina Mudcats, Durham Bulls, Carolina Ballet, Spa Health Clubs, Gold’s Gym, the North Carolina Symphony, Ample & Security Storage, Aaron Rents, daycare centers and major residential developers.
- Streamline information on incentives, so it is easier to access. For instance, the school system should have websites for both the recruitment incentives program and the discount program for all teachers. Potentially, this could also reduce printing costs.
- Create a more substantial retention program that would increase the educator’s sense of professionalism. Perhaps a program on leadership could be offered, as well as scholarships for additional education, sponsorships for sabbaticals and a summer or track-out work program involving area corporations.

- Continue to survey businesses, educators and school system administrators; update the incentive packages on the school system website; and market the program through school administrators, area chamber of commerce and appropriate sources such as BizNet.

CONCLUSION

The mission of Wake Education Partnership is to unite community resources for excellence in public education. Three programs – *Great Expectations*, *Readers to Achievers* and the *Incentives for New Wake County Public School Educators* – clearly demonstrate what can be achieved when the community is engaged in this process and private and public partnerships are forged. Adoption of clear, measurable goals for the improvement of student achievement enhances the effectiveness of partnerships with the public schools and strengthens ties and mutual accountability for results.

Since 1998, the Partnership invested \$305,049.28 directly in these three programs and countless dollars represented in the hundreds of hours provided by staff to guide the program designs, to create collaboration, to recruit volunteers and to monitor and report on accomplishment toward objectives. The return on this investment and the funds leveraged by others can be found in the hundreds of community members and organizations that now accept an active role in ensuring that all children succeed.

In East Wake County, leadership by the East Wake Education Foundation and the mayors of Wendell, Knightdale and Zebulon continues to build upon the early collaboration of Great Expectations. Great Expectations has also secured two federal grants totaling \$2.7 million, which will allow the Wake County Public Schools and the Eastern Wake County communities to continue to work together toward student success.

Readers to Achievers exceeded its volunteer recruitment goal, bringing in 2,053 volunteers to work with students not yet reading at grade level. The program received a major boost with the involvement of Communities in Schools and the Wake County PTA Council. It is now poised for success through the efforts of the Wake County Public Schools' volunteer coordinator.

Finally, the incentives program will continue to recognize and reward new educators under the direction of the school system's Human Resources Department. Because the highest indicator of student success is a strong classroom teacher, this program will continue to be a significant objective. Subsequent to the initiation of the incentive program, the Partnership has launched the Wake Task Force on Teaching Excellence to sustain and deepen work to foster excellence among teachers in Wake County Public Schools.

Working together, we can help the Wake County School System reach its goal of having 95 percent of its third- and eighth-grade students reading at or above grade level by 2003. Community engagement and public and private partnerships will continue to remain key elements on the road to success.

WAKE EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP AN OVERVIEW

Our Mission

Uniting Community Resources for Excellence in Public Education

As a community-based public school advocacy organization, Wake Education Partnership seeks to leverage leadership and private resources to strengthen our public schools. In addition to fostering action-oriented community involvement in the Wake County Public Schools, the Partnership seeks to leverage the investment of private resources and leadership to ensure the greatest possible impact in every school. Specifically, Wake Education Partnership targets efforts to strengthen the achievement of our children by actively participating as an advocate, convener, coordinator and facilitator of community involvement in the public schools.

From many voices and interests, the Partnership seeks to bring forth a shared vision for the future of our schools and concrete steps to get there. To this end, the recommendations of parents, school and civic leaders and business people have been gathered to develop our priorities during the next year.

The Partnership:

- Supports high standards for all students;
- Mobilizes community support for a world-class standard for school technology;
- Creates action-oriented partnerships;
- Informs citizens about important school issues and needs;
- Assists with recruitment of the best teachers and principals; and,
- Provides private resources to allow public education to thrive.

The Partnership's Vision

Our community places excellence in public education as a top priority. All members of the community repeat this commitment. All of our public schools offer challenging instruction utilizing appropriate technology in a safe, inviting atmosphere. Our children celebrate their diversity. They are problem solvers and assume responsibility for their own learning under the guidance of parents/guardians and well-trained, committed teachers.

ADDENDA

Great Expectations in East Wake County

I. Committees

Carver Early Learning Center

Nell Barnes, Learning Together
Mary Castleberry, principal, Carver Elementary School
Carolyn Crowder, Triangle Family Services
Linda Johnson, East Wake Education Foundation
Charles Kronberg, Project Enlightenment
Lisa Markland, Zebulon town clerk
Gary McConkey, Knightdale town manager
Dave Moore, Wake County Human Services
Mary Perry, East Wake community volunteer
Hannah Poteat, Wake County Smart Start
Elizabeth Santana, Wake County Smart Start
Therese Scott, Wake County Community Revitalization
William Thurston, East Wake minister
Willi Webb, Wake County Public School System

Early Childhood Education

Linda Carothers, Project Enlightenment
Lorraine Dixon, East Wake Daycare Center owner/operator
Susan Hocutt, Wake County Human Services
Lewis Liles, Zebulon Elementary principal, retired
Linda Pace, Wake County Human Services
Nancy Pippin, Wake County Public School System
Elizabeth Santana, Wake County Smart Start
Judy Williams, principal, Hodge Road Elementary School

Parental/Community Involvement

Theresa Allmon, Wendell Chamber of Commerce
Jennifer Bryan, Knightdale Chamber of Commerce
Mike Chappell, principal, Zebulon Elementary School
Brenda Chatham, principal East Wake Middle School
John Wall, Principal, Zebulon Middle School

East Wake parents:

Otis Agnew
Scott Bass
Toni Blackwell
Carol Debnam

Byron Harris
Misty Lewis-Baker
Lori Millberg
Teresa Piner
Sandy Richardson
John Shaw

East Wake Ministers Task Team

Alphonza Fullwood
Jack Glasgow
Edward Holloway
Laura Johnson
James Lee
Lenwood Long
Tyrone Martin
Karen Petersen
Judi Smith
Rudolph Tripp

II. Collaborating Organizations

East Wake Education Foundation
Knightdale Chamber of Commerce
Project Enlightenment
Wake County Human Services
Wake County Public School System
Wake Education Partnership
Wake County Smart Start
Wendell Chamber of Commerce
Zebulon Chamber of Commerce

III. Funders

BellSouth Foundation
GlaxoSmithKline
Wake County Public School System
Wake County Smart Start
Wake Education Partnership

Readers to Achievers

I. Committees

Diana Bader, Wake County PTA Council
Antowonna Blount, Community Learning Partners
Becky Brady, Wake County PTA Council
Valerie Brown, Wake Education Partnership
Sharon Collins, Wake County Public Schools
Toni Cooper, Wake County Public Schools
Joyce Gardner, Wake County Public Schools
Karen Gloden, Wake County Public Schools
Sarah Lawrence, Wake County Public Schools
Halima Leak, Community Learning Partners
Paula Lipford, Wake County PTA Council
April Love, Wake County Public Schools
Suzanne Metcalf, program coordinator
Judy Peede, Wake County Public Schools
Classy Preston, Community Learning Partners
Willie Webb, Wake County Public Schools
Judy Williams, Wake County Public Schools
LuAnn Yarborough, Community Learning Partners

II. Collaborating Organizations

Communities In Schools
Wake County PTA Council
Wake County Public School System
Wake Education Partnership

III. Funders

Raleigh Community Hospital
SAS
The News and Observer
Wake County Public School System
Wake Education Partnership
WakeMed

Incentives for New Educators

I. Committees

Nancy Andrews, board member, Wake Education Partnership
Valerie Brown, Wake Education Partnership
Pat Day, Ammons Pittman
Nancy Harner, Prudential Carolina
Diane Kent-Parker, Wake County Public Schools
Carolyn Lynch, Coldwell Banker/Howard Perry & Walston
Camille Mims, Fonville Morisey
Toni Patterson, Wake County Public Schools
Debbie Thompson, Incentives coordinator
Amy Walker, Manpower
Karen Williams, York Simpson Underwood

II. Collaborating Organizations

Wake County Public School System
Wake Education Partnership

III. Funders

Ammons Pittman
Coldwell Banker/Howard Perry & Walston
Fonville Morisey
Prudential
York Simpson Underwood
Wake County Public School System
Wake Education Partnership
Thirty-four area businesses that participated in the incentive package



Wake
Education
PARTNERSHIP

www.wakedpartnership.org