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September 30, 2010

Dr. Mark Elgart
President /CEO
AdvancED
2520 Northwinds Parkway, Suite 600
Alpharetta, GA 30009

Re: Response to July 28, 2010 letter

Dear Dr. Elgart:

I am responding to your request for information in connection with the complaint filed against the Wake County Public School System by the NAACP. I have enclosed extensive materials in response to the request. An explanation of the materials, corresponding to the list of items in your letter, follows below.

1. Board policies adopted since December 1, 2009.

A copy of the policies is enclosed.

2. A copy of the transition plan to the Community Based Assignment Plan

The Board has not yet adopted a transition plan. Enclosed is a draft response from Central Office staff to the Board's Directive for Community-Based School Assignments. The draft was presented to the Board at its Committee of the Whole on June 15, 2010, for information. The draft outlines proposed actions for staff to support the Board's directive and a proposed timeline for actions by staff, the Assignment Committee and the Board.

3. A description of the process used to develop the transition plan.

Enclosed is a description of the process followed by staff in developing the draft plan described above.

4. The process and criteria used to select Assignment Committee members and a description of their qualifications.

The Board of Education unanimously approved the creation of the Student Assignment Advisory Committee on January 5, 2010. The committee is comprised of three board members appointed by the chair and nine community members, one from each board member district. The community members were selected based upon the recommendation of their respective board members. The committee chair made an effort to ensure that the

community members represented a broad range of backgrounds. The community members include individuals who had served on a previous student assignment committee, retired educators, parents and business and community leaders.

Members of the Growth and Planning Department provide technical and administrative support to the committee. In addition, the committee has received presentations from two external experts who have experience with student assignment plan development, Dr. Michael Alves and Dr. Atila Abdulkadiroglu of Duke University.

5. Information considered in reaching the decision to adopt a community-based assignment plan.

There is no one set of information considered by board members in deciding to shift to a community-based assignment plan – the information varies by the members who voted in favor of this change. Four of the members who approved the change had just been elected by large margins in campaigns where changing the student assignment plan was a core issue. Thus, it is fair to say that information coming from “stakeholders” who were dissatisfied with the prior student assignment plan was a factor for some board members. Certainly personal experience was also a factor for many board members who are parents or grandparents of students in the school system. Student performance and financial information were also considered by board members.

The core beliefs underlying the change to a community-based student assignment plan are reflected in the enclosed “Resolution Establishing Board Directive for Community Based School Assignments” adopted by the Board on March 1, 2010. The resolution outlines the Board’s beliefs and commitments, including a commitment to the highest educational results for all children regardless of race, creed, economic status or nationality and the use of objective, data-driven decision making; and a belief that all stakeholders benefit from a strong sense of community and that stability and continuity play a critical role in the positive development and support of children, families and communities.

The Board’s resolution recognizes that a new plan will require 9-15 months to develop and will require input from stakeholders, staff and planning and zoning officials. The resolution also identifies key features to be included in the plan, including a multi-year transition; respect for the community and institutional history while being innovative and mindful of future growth; a commitment to a high quality education for all children; logical feeder patterns for schools and school and calendar options for families; effective and efficient use of facilities and other resources; and better alignment of internal management systems.

The Student Assignment Committee is undertaking the task of developing a proposed plan within the parameters established by the Board. The Committee is reviewing and will consider a wide range of information and data pertaining to student performance, resource utilization, transition options and other relevant matters. The Committee is also seeking and reviewing ongoing input from stakeholders and will schedule seven public hearings across the district in January and February 2011 to receive feedback from the public.

6. A copy of policies concerning the powers and authority of the Superintendent, administration and Board.

A copy of the policies is enclosed.

7. A description of the seat voucher system for Board meetings.

A description of the system is enclosed.

8. A copy of the Parent Survey

A copy of the survey results is enclosed.

9. Copies of contracts between WCPSS and the Civitas Institute.

The district does not have any contracts with the Civitas Institute. A copy of the Board meeting materials in which Civitas was approved for providing Board training is enclosed.

10. Copies of contracts between WCPSS and Thomas Farr.

A copy of the contracts is enclosed.

11. Copies of information regarding the financial impact of the Board Resolution on Calendar Choices.

Two documents are enclosed. The first, Information for Consideration by the Board Of Education Related to Possible Calendar Changes for 2010-11, was presented to the Board by the Growth and Planning Department on January 5, 2010. The second document, Four-Track Year-Round School Capacity and Utilization in WCPSS, was presented on March 2. In part these records show the under-utilization of many year-round schools at the time of the report.

12. Copies of records relating to the Rolesville High School site selection.

A copy of relevant records is attached.

Please feel free to contact my office if you have any questions about these materials.

Sincerely,



Donna M. Hargens, Ed.D.
Interim Superintendent

C: Members, Board of Education
Ann Majestic, Board Attorney