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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

IS THE BOARD OF EDUCATION ALLOWING BULLYING?

Board Committee Ignores Parents Asking for Stability in Student Assignment

Raleigh, NC—December 1, 2010—In spite of overwhelming parent input calling **stability** in student assignment the number one priority, Wake County School Board member John Tedesco allowed three community representatives to propose the reassignment of upwards of 6,000 students next year.

The three representatives —appointed by Tedesco, Chair Ron Margiotta, and member Deborah Prickett—came armed with a lengthy list of reassignments, mainly affecting families living in Southeast Raleigh, under the guise of moving students on the basis of their proximity to a school. At least one member’s recommendations would actually move students *from* East Garner Middle School, their closest school, going against the assignment criteria of stability and proximity approved by the Board majority as part of the new Policy 6200 in May 2010.

“Bullying involves an imbalance of power or strength, and that’s just what continues to happen in Wake County’s student assignment,” said Yevonne Brannon, Chair, Great Schools in Wake Coalition. “Low-income children, those whose families have little sway or influence over this Board, are losing out, and in this case, being reassigned without any parent input.”

Other parent priorities voiced at four November community engagement meetings to help plan for the final year of a three year assignment plan included: avoiding the creation of high poverty schools; ensuring schools are not severely under-enrolled; creating feeder patterns for student stability; and reducing reassignments to encourage stability in student assignment. Assignment stability also was a major campaign plank of the four Board of Education members elected in 2009, including Mr. Tedesco, Ms. Prickett, and members Debra Goldman and Chris Malone.

“The Board majority continues to operate under a mantra of ‘divide, demonize, and demoralize,” said Brannon. “The three-year assignment plan was implemented to provide greater stability in assignment and allow the Board of Education to focus on

improving student achievement. Instead, they are politicizing student assignment at the expense of the children they were elected to serve. We need a Board that will unite our citizens, focus on student needs and parental input—and not simply bully the community with misbegotten ideas that serve a political agenda.”

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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: greatschoolsinline.org.