

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Public Forum Will Address Eastern Wake County's Lagging Schools
Schools assignment plan creating high-poverty schools in Knightdale, Wendell and Zebulon

May 10, 2012—Eastern Wake County residents, parents and community leaders concerned about the region's lagging schools will come together to advocate for area students on Thursday, May 17 from 7:00 – 8:30 pm at Knightdale Town Hall.

Recent analysis has shown that since the end of diversity-based school assignment, the percentage of free and reduced lunch students in eastern Wake schools has dramatically increased. Students in Knightdale, Wendell and Zebulon trail their western Wake peers in student achievement, access to early education, course selection and other education resources.

"The student assignment plan has created a desert of high-poverty schools in eastern Wake County," said Toshiba Rice, founder of Track My Steps, a non-profit education organization that is organizing the event. "By concentrating economically disadvantaged students in one area of the county, the school system relegates all students in the eastern part of the county to a second-class education."

As poverty increases from west to east in Wake County, students are more likely to score poorly on End of Grade tests, participate less in advanced placement classes, and have lower graduation rates and SAT scores. In addition, there is no consistency in student discipline from school to school.

The town hall meeting, "The State of Education in Eastern Wake County," will address these challenges, focusing on the roles that parents, community and business leaders, and state and county education officials can play in improving Eastern Wake schools. Education attorneys from Advocates for Children's Services, a project of Legal Aid of NC, will help parents and students understand their rights, and public school administrators for middle and high school will share the impact of course availability on preparing students for college and careers.

"Eastern Wake is at a crossroads," said Rice, herself a Knightdale parent. "We need to come together with our teachers and administrators to figure out how to fix our schools and be fair to all children."

All parents in eastern Wake County and other interested citizens are invited to attend. The Knightdale Town Hall is located at 950 Steeple Square Court.

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About Track My Steps

Track My Steps is a nonprofit organization that supports and promotes high-quality education for North Carolina students. We believe that all North Carolina children have the right to a high-quality education, regardless of income, race, ethnicity or residence. Track My Steps works to close the racial and economic achievement gaps that keep all children from attaining the same high levels of success.

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Editor's Note: This press release makes use of data from the following sources:

"Mapping Poverty Level and Test Grades in Wake Schools." Will Huntsberry, *Raleigh Public Record*, March 15, 2012, <http://www.raleighpublicrecord.org/news/2012/03/15/correlation-between-wake-county-schools-poverty-level-and-test-grades/>

"Student Achievement in WCPSS, 2010-2011." WCPSS Evaluation & Research Department, Wake County Public School System, August 15, 2011, <http://www.wcpss.net/evaluation-research/reports/2011/achievement2011.pdf>

"Expecting Success." Presentation by Steve Parrott and Tim Simmons, Wake Education Partnership, January 26, 2012, <http://www.wakeedpartnership.org/resources/Knightdale%20100%20Jan%202012.pdf>

"Free and Reduced-Price Lunch Program Participation by School, 2011-2012." Wake County Public School System, http://www.wcpss.net/demographics/special-need/FRPL_%202011_12_BySchool.pdf

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