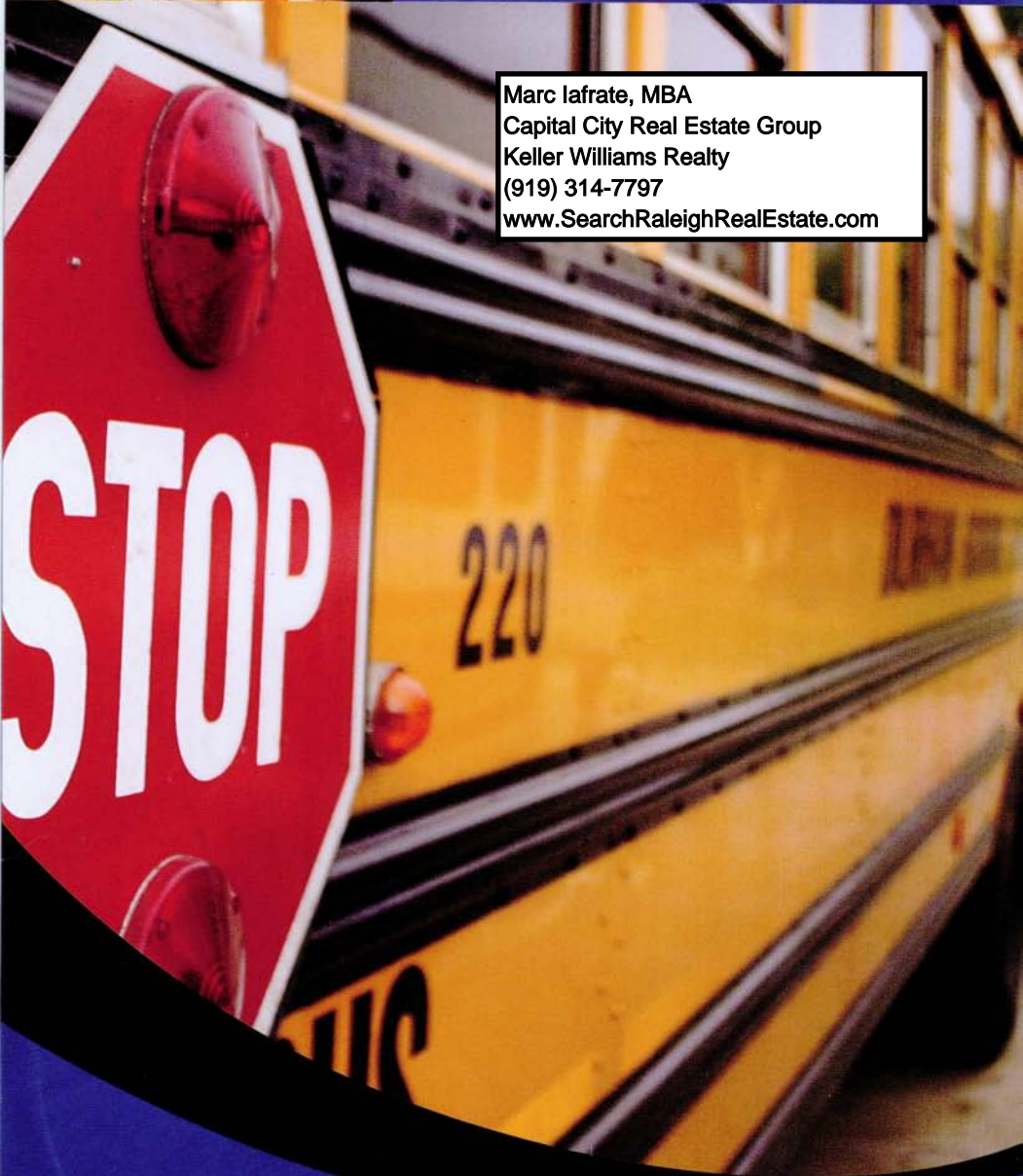


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RALEIGH REGIONAL
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REALTORS® COMMITMENT

When deciding where to live, nothing is more important than knowing your new home will be part of a vibrant and safe community. This is especially true if your family contains school aged children. As parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, REALTORS® understand this, and want to help families get the facts.

As REALTORS® who live and work in the communities we serve – and small business owners who succeed and fail by the power of referrals, we are committed to helping our clients get to know and understand their new community. The quality of our public school system is one of the greatest components of the quality of life that brings thousands of people to Wake County each year.

REALTORS® are uniquely positioned, usually as the first point of contact with a potential newcomer to Wake County, to begin to educate prospective homebuyers. The Raleigh Regional Association of REALTORS® recognizes this opportunity, and has developed this educational brochure for REALTORS® to share with clients. We also strongly suggest that potential newcomers visit the Wake County Public School Welcome Center at 3600 Wake Forest Road in Raleigh. Additionally, the Wake County Public School System website, www.wcps.net, is a wealth of information providing schedules, articles, school scores, locations, forms, and much more.

Which schools are best?

“Best” can mean different things to different parents; it can be more valuable to ask, “What is your definition of a good school?” Test scores are an important measure of a school’s success in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, but parents may also be interested in graduation rates, suspension rates, staff turnover rates, or even the number of teachers holding advanced degrees.

Unlike smaller municipal districts found in many parts of the nation, most North Carolina counties have a single county-wide school district. Educational expectations do not change when you drive across the town line, and core educational offerings are similar across the county (with magnet programs offering additional enhancements to the standard curriculum). All WCPSS schools are working toward

the same aggressive academic goal: that by 2014, 100 percent of students will graduate on time, prepared to compete globally, and that all students will achieve high academic growth.

What are the test scores? Where can I find them?

WCPSS’s Department of Evaluation and Research has a website that provides full reports about our schools, programs, and student outcomes. You can find links there to school report cards (overviews of test scores and other information for individual schools) and other academic information. A little time on the Evaluation and Research website can provide the context behind the test scores, giving parents deeper information about the schools and school system.

www.wcpss.net/evaluation-research/

Are there neighborhood schools? (Will my child be able to walk to school? If not, how far could they be bused?)

It's important to remember that our schools are a countywide system serving the twelve municipalities of Wake County. While the vast majority of our students attend a school that is within five miles of their home, there are many additional educational opportunities that may lead students to attend other schools. There are many program choices such as Magnet schools, parental choices including calendar options, and school capacity/overcrowding issues that could influence where a child attends school. Roughly 78 percent of our students attend their base school, with the remainder attending magnet or calendar option schools. Of those who attend their base school, 85.6 percent attend a school within five miles of their home.

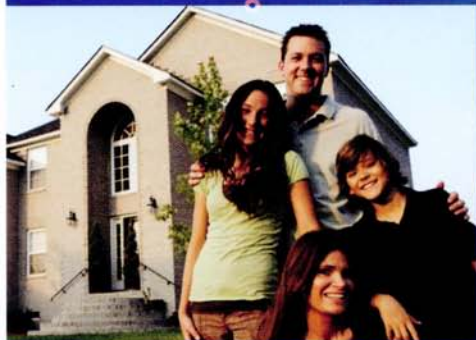
Why do assignments change so often?

The Wake County Board of Education just adopted for the first time ever a multi-year student assignment plan intended to provide parents more predictability in student assignment over the next three years. On average, fewer than five percent of students are reassigned to a different school each year, many of whom are assigned to a school closer to home than their previous school. But reassignment is an inevitable side effect of Wake County's population growth. Even in the current economic downturn, the Raleigh-Cary area is the fastest growing major metropolitan area in the nation. Each time a new school is opened, reassignment is needed to bring students to the school and to relieve crowding at overpopulated schools. In deciding how to fill those



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new schools and then make the best use of space in older schools, the school board has directed WCPSS to take into account travel distance, year-to-year assignment stability, keeping neighborhoods together, and avoiding concentrations of high poverty in schools. The goal is for every school, regardless of location, to be an effective learning environment in which parents can be confident.



What choices in schools are available?

The Wake County Public School System is known nationally for the choices provided in its magnet school program. More than thirty magnet schools provide enhanced opportunities for students while making the best use of our facilities. Magnet programs are free of charge and no testing or portfolio is required. In addition to our magnet choices, families can also apply to attend a school with a different calendar, either a traditional calendar or year-round calendar, depending on their base school assignment.



Could we end up with a child in year round and a child in traditional school?

Occasionally, siblings may find themselves on different schedules, although WCPSS works to avoid that situation. Because parents can apply for traditional calendar schools or year-round schools, they can usually get their children on the same calendar if desired. The most common case of different calendars occurs when the family is attending year-round schools and then the oldest child reaches high school; none of our high schools utilize a year-round schedule.



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How do schools in Wake County rank nationally?

WCPSS is one of the strongest large school districts in the nation and state. WCPSS students scored 54 points higher than the national average, and 76 points higher than the state average, on the 2008 SAT. WCPSS bucks a national trend by having high student participation in the SAT *and* high performance. The Class of 2008 earned more than \$46.78 million in scholarships and had more than 1,200 National Honor Society graduates.

Because all North Carolina schools are tested the same way, it's easier to directly compare WCPSS to the rest of the state. 78.8 percent of our students graduated on time last year,

about nine percentage points ahead of the state average. Three out of four of our students taking Advanced Placement exams for college credit passed, compared to roughly half of the students in North Carolina. Our elementary and middle school students were nine percentage points ahead of the rest of the state in reading and seven points ahead in math on End-of-Grade testing, and our high school students were almost nine points ahead on End-of-Course exams. We still have a distance to travel to meet our goals, but our students are among the most accomplished in the state and nation.

For more information about the Wake County Public School System, visit www.wcpss.net.

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