

Opinions

Wake County school board back on track

Second-most represented county at Elon will see changes to district structure

Well, they've done it. Finally, the school board is making a change and turning back to maintaining one of the best school districts in the country.



Kate Riley
Guest Columnist

From those of who thrived under the unique policies of nearby Wake County school system, thank you to residents for voting, and thank you for voting sensibly.

Two years ago, Republicans were voted into the Wake County school board, creating a 5-4 majority against the Democrats. And throughout the past two years, this Republican majority pushed for major changes, one of the biggest of them regarding the school system's diversity policy and busing system.

This new majority wanted to redistrict students so they would attend their base school. In essence, this would segregate schools again in order to save money on busing and reduce students' commute time. But the community did not agree.

There was a two-year fight against this policy. I know, because I was a part of it. There were rallies and meetings. There were Facebook events and flyers made. There was a desire to keep the diversity policy that we had known and loved, and we weren't going to go down without a fight.

This story was heard all over the nation, in sources as diverse as the Los Angeles Times and the Huffington Post. Stephen Colbert also featured a segment about the district on his show on Comedy Central.

My high school, Enloe, has had a reputation for being one of the best public high schools in the state for quite a while. Its magnet program, which offers a special, more academically rigorous curriculum, buses in hundreds of students from all around Wake County, which creates for a very diverse student body. My elementary and middle schools

were both structured in the same way. All three are great schools placed in poorer areas in Raleigh to have greater diversity, not just in race, but also in religious beliefs and socio-economic status.

I understand the meaning of diversity and its importance. One of my best friends growing up was black, and my prom date was Indian. But what does it matter? That was normal for me. It was normal for students who were lucky enough to attend one of these incredibly diverse schools. And this valuable learning experience was almost taken away from current and future students of Wake County.

To me, there was nothing greater in my secondary educational experience than the people that I had the honor of interacting with. Being a knowledgeable, global citizen is something that I know Elon aims for, and it is something every school should strive for by bringing diversity directly into the classroom. With 323 students from Wake County currently enrolled at Elon, according to the Fall 2011 Registrar Report, it is obvious that this issue impacts our students.

This is the second largest number of students from a county at Elon. Understanding and accepting diversity shouldn't be optional — it is a concept that each person and student should automatically be surrounded by, and a classroom is a great place to begin.

No student should be deprived of an education, and the best education starts with the understanding of the world around you, understanding the people around you. So again, I thank you Wake County. You have known the consequences of depriving students of the valuable lessons of acceptance and open mindedness, and voted for a change.

And now, with the majority reversed once more, it seems clear that residents of Wake County realize the benefit of this unique system and want to see it restored and preserved for years to come.

Pendulum staff sounds off on Wake County school board

"This past year proved how important it is to vote. I am so thankful I got the education that I did and got to receive it in such a diverse environment. I hope future generations get too as well."

-Rebecca Smith



"Diversity is something that we don't talk enough about. Even though we were in danger of losing it during the last election, I'm glad it's part of the conversation now."

-Christopher Bosak

"When I went to high school, I remember diversity being one of the best parts about it. It was an invaluable experience and one people don't appreciate enough."

-Ashley Fahey



"Two years ago when the Republican majority won, I didn't vote. I've spent the last two years feeling guilty that I didn't make my voice heard. Now, I vote in every single election."

-Lauren Ramsdell

CATE LESOURD | Graphics Editor

THE SWING

Former Wake County students talk about the recent school board election and reflect on how their high school prepared them for Elon.

<http://bit.ly/theswing4>

MORE ONLINE

Pendulum staff members and residents of Wake County explain the recent election and what it means for their former schools on this week's Topics, the opinions podcast.

http://bit.ly/EPTopics11_14



School board members John Tedesco, Chris Malone and Heather Losurdo watch poll results on election night. Losurdo, who was backed by the Republican Party, lost to Democrat Kevin Hill. Democrats now hold a 5-4 majority over Republicans on the board.

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Letters to the Editor

According to a tweet from Madison Taylor, editor of the Times-News in Burlington, an Alamance County Commissioner left him "a long message detailing why he thinks @elonpendulum and #elon are obsessed with sex" after last week's edition.

The Pendulum is in, what I believe to be, a unique position where its readers are equal parts college students and members of the community. It operates as the only Elon-focused newspaper in the area, and partly because of this The Pendulum conducts itself with the utmost professionalism. On the flipside, this stylistic preference means the writing is not as dynamic or daring as other papers, and the admirable task of reporting to a community just beyond Elon's brick paths means that the paper typically shies away from very controversial subjects, even if they are of the utmost interest (and importance) to the undergraduate population—like sex and sexuality.

Elon students aren't obsessed with sex anymore than any other 18 to 22 year olds. Pretending students aren't having sex is ridiculous. Not addressing the issues associated with sexuality—especially safety and orientation—is irresponsible.

The two stories that ran in last week's issue were not vulgar. They were professional and of the utmost importance. If The Pendulum did not cover the poster incident or bring to light the issues surrounding consent and drinking, this publication would not be doing its job.

Despite the discomfort community members may feel seeing sex on the front page, The Pendulum must disseminate vital information. Even if that information is about bumping uglies.

- Alexa Johnson
Class of 2012

The following was written in response to "Elon has no plans to become 'in-network' health care provider" in the Nov. 10 edition.

I wanted to comment on the in-network health care provider article concerning the Health Center. How would getting approved for insurance affect the Health Center?

Will it make the service better quality, add less mistakes? Then, the doctors would have to be sure, and there would be no room to make mistakes. Also, would there be less complaints?

I have heard one person have a positive comment on the Health Center. Why aren't the negative opinions more widely published?

- Rebecca Cummings
Class of 2014