



*I advise and enjoin those who direct the paper in the tomorrows never to advocate any cause for personal profit or preferment. I would wish it always to be "the tocsin" and to devote itself to the policies of equality and justice to the underprivileged. If the paper should at any time be the voice of self-interest or become the spokesman of privilege or selfishness it would be untrue to its history.*

— from the will of Josephus Daniels, Editor and Publisher 1894-1942

## Incentive to integrate

**Breaking from past patterns, the Wake education board is offering developers the incentive of neighborhood schools to create diverse communities. It's a healthy way to bring about school integration.**

**W**ake County's Board of Education has hit on a strategy that could give the county something it has been missing of late: communities that reflect a healthy racial balance and that also are served by their own neighborhood schools.

The idea is getting its first test near fast-growing Apex. Officials and developers there plan a variety of new housing styles and prices, and the board has promised them a school in return. The hope is that enough children of both races will come from the area to produce a school diverse enough to avoid busing.

The board's stance departs from its past record of tending to build schools near new subdivisions that are generally white and affluent, then scrambling to maintain integration by busing children in from older neighborhoods. Gary Orfield, a Harvard professor and expert on school desegregation, convinced the board last fall that it did not have to continue passively accommodating the very forces that have made school integration such a challenge to maintain.

Admittedly, though, this is only one experiment in a county that has a long way to go. And it would be even better if the mixed housing styles planned for Apex were closer together in cohesive neighborhoods. As it is, traditional government policies and the practices of developers have conditioned residents across this county, and many others, to believe that their property values and security depend on all their neighbors having houses in

about the same style and price range.

The result often is rigidly stratified, racially exclusive enclaves, like those in Cary, where much of Wake's growth is occurring. Cary of late has shown an unfortunate disdain for affordable housing, most recently rejecting a plan for 22 homes, costing around \$80,000 each, at a site near downtown.

Newer housing around the town — in neighborhoods like Preston and Lochmere — tends to be in the luxury range. That's one reason Cary's black population is a mere 5 percent, compared to 21 percent in the county overall. Given that pattern, the only way schools there can be kept within the school system's racial balance guidelines is to bus children from Raleigh — not an ideal long-term strategy.

A lack of diverse housing not only works against school integration but against the interests of communities in general. Such places don't have enough room for all the kinds of people it takes to keep a community going. For example, it's becoming increasingly difficult for the people who teach Cary's kids, police its streets and clean and fix its homes to live there.

The Wake school board's new approach offers a strong, positive incentive for communities to change their ways. Success will depend on local officials' willingness to speak out on how children and their parents are enriched by contact between people of all races and incomes and how racial and economic isolation ultimately damages society.