

## **Wake County School Cost Understanding and Analysis**

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**Purpose of Comparison Analysis:** To address questions raised by both the Wake County Board of Commissioners, Wake County Board of Education, Blue Ribbon Committee and the community at-large on the costs of Wake County Schools

**Consultant Assistance:** DeJong & Associates and subconsultant to DeJong: Summit Consulting Services

**Scope of Comparison:** National and North Carolina Counties

### **The Definition, Expression and Comparison of Cost (Elementary, Middle and High Schools):**

- Construction Costs: Comparison of typical, direct project-related costs for standard, competitively bid new facility projects. The costs are primarily the construction contract value(s) on a project.
- Program Costs: Comparison of key elements of WCPSS Capital Program Planning Assumptions that drive that size and numbers of schools
- School Site Size: Comparison of amount of land usage and drivers for site size

### **Data Gathering, Review and Analysis:**

- Challenges: Gathering proper and comparable information from other school systems
- Data Normalization: Application of consistent cost definitions to establish “apples to apples” data for relevant comparisons
- Data Categorization: Small, defined groups to allow for specific cost comparison and understanding (i.e., square footage brackets, campus configuration, predominant construction systems, as well as other design standards and programmatic inclusions)

### **Findings and Presentation:**

- Presentation Model: Develop a template for presenting result prior to data gathering
- Cost Data: Express comparisons as a dollar-per-square-foot cost by school type (elementary, middle and high)
- Program Costs: Express comparisons in terms of square foot or acreage requirements depending on the particular program element
- Site Size: Express comparisons as acreage requirements