



# **The End of Consensus: Diversity, Neighborhoods, and the Politics of Public School Assignments**

*Toby L. Parcel, Andrew J. Taylor*

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One of the nation's fastest growing metropolitan areas, Wake County, North Carolina, added more than a quarter million new residents during the first decade of this century, an increase of almost 45 percent. At the same time, partisanship increasingly dominated local politics, including school board races. Against this backdrop, Toby Parcel and Andrew Taylor consider the ways diversity and neighborhood schools have influenced school assignment policies in Wake County, particularly during 2000-2012, when these policies became controversial locally and a topic of national attention. *The End of Consensus* explores the extraordinary transformation of Wake County during this period, revealing inextricable links between population growth, political ideology, and controversial K-12 education policies.

Drawing on media coverage, in-depth interviews with community leaders, and responses from focus groups, Parcel and Taylor's innovative work combines insights from these sources with findings from a survey of 1,700 county residents. Using a broad range of materials and methods, the authors have produced the definitive story of politics and change in public school assignments in Wake County while demonstrating the importance of these dynamics to cities across the country.

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