

1. Why are you running for school board and why do you think you should be elected? I am running to provide a teacher's voice on the school board, I have a proven track record of improving the educational experience for students, staff, parents, and community members. If elected, District 2 voters will have a representative who welcomes them, listens to them, and works to make policies that represent the hope and promise of a strong, reliable public school system.
2. What is your background in education?
 - a. I attended Richland One schools in South Carolina from 1st through 12th grade.
 - b. I am a proud graduate of UNCG in 2008 with a BA in Dance Education and a minor in Communication Studies.
 - c. I was primarily a Dance Educator in Winston Salem/Forsyth County Schools from 2008-2017. I also taught in-school-suspension (ISS). I was a leader in technology integration, nominated for Teacher of the Year, and recognized for Equity in Teaching.
 - d. I taught in Guilford County Schools from 2017-2021, at Southwest High School. I was the Guilford County Lead Dance Teacher, leader of the Freshman Focus department, and recognized for Racial Equity and Growth-Mindset in teaching,
 - e. In 2020, I founded a non-profit to support teachers called The Teacher's Edge. When analyzing the needs of teachers in the fall I determined that the greatest need was qualified subs. Since September 21, 2021, I have completed more than 50 sub jobs in Guilford County Schools, some days as the only sub in a building with 10 or more teachers out.
 - f. I graduated from Gardner Webb University in July 2021 with an MA in Teacher Leadership, Curriculum, and Instruction. My research centered mainly around curriculum integration, teacher preparation, and closing the gaps in diversity in the teacher workforce.
3. What, in your opinion, are the biggest issues that face schools and children in Guilford County?
 - a. **Staffing** - The current crisis, which the pandemic has accelerated, is not a new one. Guilford County is rich with resources in our teachers, staff, and community and all we have to do is tap in, but fear and "otherness" has prevailed here for so long that we find an abundance of potential helpers standing around the edge watching and commenting while our teachers and students are drowning right in front of them. The de-professionalism of teachers, the workload expected of our classified employees, and the noise of private industries wanting in on our education dollars must be addressed. Guilford County School board only has so much power, but what power we have to galvanize and unify our community we should absolutely be utilizing.
 - b. **Nutrition** - Research and common sense shows that malnourished children do not learn. While we have many groups working to address the hunger

plaguing Guilford County, school meals are abundant but rarely have the right nutritional value for learning. State contracts around nutrition make this difficult to address, but I am ready to take our message to Raleigh. Our students cannot depend on Rice Krispy treats for breakfast. We live in an agricultural state and we should be able to use the food we grow here to feed our children.

- c. **Communication - GCS is a large district with so many constituents and stakeholders. The fact is that this is a difficult problem to address, but I feel that we have the creative capacity in our district to figure out 21st century techniques for streamlining communication with parents, staff, students, and the community.**
4. **What are your thoughts on critical race theory? What about teaching African-American history in schools?**
 - a. **African-American History is US History, World History, Geography, Math, Language Arts, Science, and all of the arts. The presence of African influence in the diaspora cannot be ignored and must be celebrated.**
 - b. **When it comes to CRT, I support the acknowledgement that racism exists in many of our systems, including education. We should never shy away from allowing our students to think critically about the world that they live in and will one day lead.**
5. **What about LGBTQ+ rights in schools? My classroom has always been a safe space for LGBTQ+ students. I am against any form of discrimination anywhere. Discrimination is a mental health issue and I would challenge anyone who is seeking public office to explain how they support the exclusion of any children in any capacity.**
6. **If you were elected to the board, what changes/solutions would you push for?**
 - a. **Teacher empowerment - When the teachers who are on the ground, equipped with the knowledge of their students and communities are not empowered to teach responsively we are going to continue to fail. No teacher should be silenced when it comes to providing a safe and rigorous education. As I said before, we have some of the best teacher preparation programs in the nation, right here in Guilford County. Those teachers should never consider moving to a more supportive and rewarding district. We should have teachers lining up to teach here and we should have other districts begging to come learn from us! We can do this by opening the communication lines, listening to our teaching professionals, and involving teachers in the decisions we make, which ultimately impact their daily lives.**
 - b. **Safe and healthy students - All students should expect reliable transportation, state of the art schools, and staff who have all the tools to prepare them for an ever-changing world. We must address the transportation crisis in GCS immediately and plan for long term sustainability.**
 - c. **Community support - Public education is a public service. Whether a person has a child in public school, owns a business in Guilford County, or**

participates in a civic organization, we all need to be knowledgeable and involved. We all share the responsibility to invest in growth and innovation. We all share the burden of solving poverty in our community. We should all replace hate and otherness with curiosity and imagination for a better way of operating. Opening our doors, in a safe way, to volunteers and helpers is one way for the public to learn more about the needs at each school.

7. What are your thoughts on the Jan. 6 insurrection?
 - a. **I will never condone violence as a method of problem-solving. I certainly believe in the free elections that our country was founded on and I am running this year in trust that our community will allow all voters to make the choices that they feel are best.**
 - b. **As a teacher, who was teaching in that moment, I knew that the events of January 6 would lead students to question the level of democracy and civil discourse in our nation. Our students are so smart and engaged in a way that I did not have access to at their age. However, remembering my own experience on 9/11, I was horrified to think that after 20 years of terrorism threats and preparation, we were watching our own citizens attacking our people with such disregard for human life and democratic process.**
8. Anything else you'd like to mention?
 - a. **From a former student, Genesis F. - "As a former student of Amanda Cook, I can say that she aided in the growing and independence of so many kids growing up. Words cannot describe how amazing, uplifting, positive, and radiant she can be. As I was her student in multiple grades and schools, I have grown right by her side and have been inspired by her in so many ways. If you want anyone to truly care about a child's education then you're looking at the right person. As an educator, mother, friend, and sometimes step-in-parent for kids you will get the most genuine response." I share this quote because it encompasses everything that I entered the teaching profession to accomplish. I live a life of connection, authenticity, and honesty; a life dedicated to good work and lifelong learning. I love courageously, creatively, and with a lot of fun. I lead with open communication and education to impact the life of individuals and society.**
 - b. **My students will recognize this quote from Mother Theresa which I display everywhere I go, "Go out into the world today and love the people you meet. Let your presence light a fire in the hearts of others."**