

Demetria Carter responses (Oct. 2022)

Good afternoon!

In response to your questions, I provide the following.

Since my initial responses in March 2022, I have talked with and listened to parents, members of the Guilford County community, and have read more on issues facing Guilford County schools. My responses today are entirely consistent with my March 2022 responses, even if they are more expansive.

1. Why are you running for school board and why do you think you should be reelected?

There are three reasons why I am running:

First, I believe parents (or legal guardians) are the child's first teachers and, therefore, they need to continue to be involved in the education of their child. This involvement means having open and transparent access to curricula, lesson plans, and teaching materials. I want to make sure tools such as "PowerSchool" and "Canvas" are being consistently used throughout the district and that parents know how to use these tools. When I am elected to the Board, I would like to form a "parents' council", if not in each district, then at the Board level to ensure parents are kept informed and to obtain their input/concerns when the Board makes decisions affecting their children.

Second, I believe the current Board has failed students within Guilford County schools system for a long time now. As of the end of 2019, thirty-five out of 117 graded schools in Guilford County were classified by the State of North Carolina as "low performance" or "recurring low performance" schools. As of the end of 2021, these thirty-five schools became fifty-nine schools. This is unacceptable! I want the opportunity to change our schools around to ensure 100% of them are high-performance schools. This requires a focus or refocus on ensuring our students excel academically.

Third, I believe the current Board has allowed critical race theory, gender identity, transgenderism, and politics to be addressed, discussed within schools and promoted to students without knowledge or approval of parents (or legal guardians). I believe critical race theory is a pernicious fraud perpetrated upon impressionable students. No teacher should be allowed to engage in racism of any kind in a classroom. Moreover, I do not believe any teacher within any GC school is qualified to talk with any student about his or her sexuality and whether "he" should be a "she" or vice versa. This is unacceptable! I want to change this!

2. What is your background in education?

I do not have a background in the field of education. However, I have extensive experience working for governmental entities. I have a business degree from George Mason University and a *juris doctorate* degree from Duke University School of Law. I officially retired at the end of 2019, having worked for the Federal Government and for companies with contracts with the Government for approximately forty (40) plus years. In terms of Federal employment, I started off as a low-level clerk typist with the Department of Transportation and in 2016 was the Director, Acquisition Policy, with the Department of Commerce. In between, I have held several non-managerial and managerial positions, including positions as an attorney, first in 1982 with the Department of the Navy, and the last with the Department of Health and Human Services in 1999. As an attorney for the Federal Government, I practiced administrative and Federal contract law. I believe my experience as an attorney with the Federal Government will benefit the Board of Education in making well-informed decisions.

3. Going into the new school year, what are the biggest issues that face schools and children in Guilford County?

I believe there are three major issues facing Guilford County schools and students:

- (i) Making up significant student learning loss within a reasonable span of time.
- (ii) Achieving excellent academic performances from Black and Brown students, who, for a substantial number of years, have lagged behind White and Asian students, and who, on average, have consistently failed to break the 50% proficiency mark in both English and mathematics.
- (iii) Turning around fifty-nine “low performance” and “recurring low performance” schools—many of them having been classified as such for at least five years.

A board that has overseen many of these issues grow without being able to stop them from becoming more serious or to turn them around should not be given another opportunity to fail again..

4. What are your thoughts on critical race theory? What about teaching African-American history in schools?

As a Black woman, and also as noted above, I find critical race theory a fraud perpetrated upon impressionable young students by White and Black educators who should know better. I can only repeat what I wrote in my March 2022 response to this question:

“I am the anti-CRT candidate. I am against any teaching theory, practice, or methodology that pits students in one ethnic group against students in another ethnic group. Our schools should never become breeding grounds for radical activism. I am the anti-anti-racism candidate. I do not believe that anyone can honestly fight racism with more racism. I do not now nor will I ever equate CRT with the teaching of African-American history in this country. I am in favor of teaching all of the history of this country—the good, the bad, and the ugly—for all three have been and continue to be present as this country and its people have grown and continue to grow in their hearts and in their beliefs over the centuries. The teaching of CRT is hate-based whereas the teaching of African-American history is of unbelievable achievements in the face of overwhelming odds. It is a truly uplifting story that needs to be told, and not just on the “History Channel.” It is a history of which all Americans can be proud. But, the story of African-Americans is not theirs alone. It is also the story of other ethnic groups who helped—including the giving of their own lives in that struggle to overcome. Our students deserve better—much better than what they are currently getting.”

As to the teaching of African American history, I am all for it! But let’s teach the good and bad of that history, too! In this regard, please note that the College Board, in collaboration with Tuskegee University and the University of Notre Dame, has pre-piloted a program for “Advance Placement African American Studies” that will be moved into sixty high schools across the nation for the 2024-2025 school year for continued piloting. The class will be “interdisciplinary” meaning students will not just learn history, but “also geography, literature, art, music, politics, and film” to provide a comprehensive view of the African American experience. According to College Board senior vice president Trevor Packer, the hope is that the AP African American Studies will introduce a new generation of students to the “...rich, cultural, artistic, and political contributions of African Americans.” According to one teacher, these studies are not about “critical race theory.” There is no set curriculum yet, so students will not be able to earn college credit.

5. What about LGBTQ+ rights in schools?

Every student, teacher, administrator, and other staff who fall within one of the categories of persons within this group of persons is entitled to respect and dignity for

simply being a human being, with the exception of pedophiles. LGBTQ+ (with the exception of pedophiles) individuals also have the right to be safe and secure within schools and to partake in all events sponsored or promoted by schools on a fair basis. Notwithstanding this, the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals do not and should not triumph over the rights of others when it comes to respect, dignity, privacy, safety, advancement, and security. In other words, for one group—those who are transgendered women—their rights do not triumph over the rights of biological girls and women. We must find a way to ensure the rights of both are fairly and safely treated.

6. In the past year, we've seen an unprecedented wave of book bannings by schools and school boards. What are your thoughts on that?

First, let me state that I reject the premise of your question. As far as I have read or heard, there have been no books “banned” within this country or within Guilford County. Neither this country nor Guilford County is Nazi-Germany-like where the Government required books to be burned in public squares. Many parents, as well as myself, want schools to “restrict access” to certain books to students of a certain age or grade level. “Book banning” and “restricting access” are two concepts that are not equal in meaning and cannot be made to be equal in meaning. No school board should want a book that is sexually, racially, or otherwise inappropriate for students of a young and certain age to read or see. Some children are incapable of absorbing disturbing images or read sexually explicit language. Parents are the arbiter of whether their child is ready for certain reading material.

7. If you were reelected to the board, what changes/solutions would you push for?

When I am elected to the Board, I will spearhead and/or support:

1. Advancing the rights of GCS parents to be involved in their child’s education, to include open and transparent curricula, lesson plans, and teaching materials. I intend to spearhead a parent advisory council to collaborate with parents, teachers, and administrators.
2. Educating students and providing opportunities and resources for them to excel academically at each grade level. Every child can learn! We need a school board that believes and acts on its belief that 100% of its students can learn to read proficiently at each grade level, regardless of skin tone.
3. Ensuring schools are neutral places of learning. All politics must be eliminated from our schools. In addition, no teacher, principal or Board member is qualified to diagnose and/or treat gender dysphoria and therefore discussions

of gender identity, preferred pronouns and gender-affirming care should not be propagated in school.

4. Ensuring schools are safe places for all students, teachers, and staff. Let us take a hard look at discipline, privacy, and violence in GC schools, and draft policies that protect everyone. GCS needs to develop a culture where respect and discipline are valued and enforced rather than issues being swept under the rug just to make the district look better in the public eye.

8. Anything else you'd like to mention?

Yes! I intend to have an "open-door policy" for teachers and staff to voice their genuine concerns, ideas, accomplishments, etc. without judgment or repercussions. I value GC educators and employees and want to ensure everyone has an opportunity to be heard.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your questions! I hope to receive a fair retelling of my positions on issues, as stated above.