Deon Clark answers for TCB (Oct. 2022)

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

I am running for the Board of Education District 4 because I believe in the power of public education to change life outcomes for children. I am grateful to our dedicated teachers and staff who every day give their very best to support our students and families.

2. What is your background in education?

I have had the opportunity to serve our schools in various capacities, including as President and VP of my children's PTA, community advocate on various educational issues, boards and committees assigned by Guilford County Schools, including the re-opening of schools task force.

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

Our students, teachers and staff are facing various issues, including learning loss, teacher and staff shortages, safety concerns and ongoing mental health challenges. When elected, I will work alongside my colleagues to address each of those issues. We must work together and put politics aside. Our schools need us more than ever. We must do what is best for children.

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

We must continue our long-standing tradition of learning from our past (the good and the bad), so that future generations will be better versions of us. Some politicians will use scare tactics to try and divide us along racial lines. Schools should be a place where we come together.

5. What about LGBTQ+ rights in schools?

As a member of the Board of Education, I will serve all children regardless of their gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, or national origin. What is special about public education is that we welcome all children. We do not close the door to anybody.

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?

Book banning efforts are scare tactics that politicians and extremist groups are using to create division in our communities. Our public schools should not be about politics but about our children and their future.

7. What are the biggest differences between you and your opponent?

I am deeply invested in our schools and committed to our shared future together. As a member of the Board of Education, I will work to ensure our students have qualified teachers, our schools are safe and welcoming places, and our buildings are fully operational. My opponent's voting record shows she opposes these basic commitments.

My opponent did not support the school bonds to fix our crumbling school buildings, including the renovation and construction of 34 schools across the county designed for today's learning environment. She also opposed $363+ million in safety and technology upgrades for ALL schools as well as repairs for failing roofs, HVAC systems and plumbing.

Additionally, my opponent has opposed multiple budget recommendations that included pay raises for teachers and classified staff. She also believes in book banning, which creates division in our community and puts emotional burdens on teachers.

8. If you are elected to the board, what changes/solutions would you push for?

My top priorities include addressing learning loss, recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers and staff, making our schools safer, investing in mental health support and expanding Career and Technical Education programs.

GCS has already made significant progress toward academic recovery through its high-dosage tutoring and summer enrichment programs. I support those efforts. I am also deeply committed to addressing our facility needs by being good stewards and forward-thinking when investing the $1.7 billion in school bonds.

As a parent, safety and security are a top priority for me. I will work with my colleagues on the Board and GCS staff to ensure the over $363+ million included in the school bonds for safety and technology upgrades is used appropriately.