

Khem Irby responses (Oct. 2022)

- 1. Why are you running for school board and why do you think you should be reelected?** I am running for re-election to keep the momentum with our new superintendent. I have built strong relationships with the Greensboro and High Point communities. My experience of over 20 years as an education advocate working with superintendents, teachers, parents, and other elected officials is crucial to the ongoing education recovery due to the pandemic.
- 2. What is your background in education?** Prior to my election I was an ACES teacher at Pearce Elementary for four years. I also substituted where I witnessed first hand the disparities and the commitment of educators to excellence for their students.
- 3. Going into the new school year, what are the biggest issues that face schools and children in Guilford County?** We must continue to deploy proven safety and wellness protocols that ensure healthy learning environments, recruit and support educators with resources to address learning deficits, paying for the bond and continue the projects outlined in the Facilities Master Plan.
- 4. What are your thoughts on critical race theory?** I do not subscribe to the political rhetoric which has co-opted Culturally Responsive Teaching which teaches respect for all cultures which reaffirms students in who they are. **What about teaching African-American history in schools?** I was taught African-American history in elementary school. It showed us some of the greatness and what we contributed to America. African-American history is ancient history and it all cannot be told but it is an ongoing journey and discovery of truth. Teachers also must be given the proper training to teach accurately with care and not limited to the month of February.
- 5. What about LGBTQ+ rights in schools?** The LGBTQ+ community cannot continue to be targeted by those who cannot expand their human understanding. Students and families who identify must be protected and be able to be in their dignity. Our district culture is inclusive and students continue to lead with strong perspective and voice. I see students and staff supporting their LGBTQ+ peers without reservation.
- 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?** I have always been interested in why we would exert energy in these efforts. There was a time when my ancestors were denied the right to read. My mother is an avid reader so books, the library, encyclopedias, magazines, comic books, newspapers were always available. Information is extremely important. Book banning shows a lack of tolerance for other thoughts that you may not agree with. As parents we must guide our children in partnership with educators. Lifelong learners, college and career ready students will not ban books.

7. **If you were reelected to the board, what changes/solutions would you push for?** I will continue supporting the superintendent and a budget that reflects our goal of providing an excellent education, and closing resource gaps. It is important to continue collaborating with local and state government partners to address inequities in education. It is important to continue closing our communication gaps to families and community. There is a need to strengthen relationships with our immigrant and exceptional children families.

8. **Anything else you'd like to mention?** If public schools are going to provide an education that will transform life outcomes in Guilford County, everyone must have buy-in. We cannot ignore the enormous wealth opportunity gaps amongst us. We must make a conscious decision to care enough and let's vote for people who share this vision and not political rhetoric that will continue to leave many in poverty. The educational system is only one factor, so ending the pipeline must become a priority.