



Introduction

Good morning, my name is George Griffin. I am the chair of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools Board of Education. I have served on the Board since 2021 and previously served as vice chair. The voters of Chapel Hill and Carrboro recently elected me to serve a second term on the Board.

I became a member of the Board of Education because I fundamentally believe that public education is the foundation of our democracy. I am deeply invested in the success of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools (CHCCS) as a community member, former teacher, father, and grandfather. My wife and I have lived in Chapel Hill for 45 years. I used to teach special education in the district. Both of my now adult children attended public schools in the district from kindergarten through 12th grade. While my kids were in school, I was an active PTSA member, and I have fond memories of building a playground at my kids' elementary school. I have three grandchildren, and my oldest attends a public school in a nearby district. The younger two will follow in their brother's footsteps as soon as they are old enough to start kindergarten.

Professional Background

Professionally, I have been involved in education for over 50 years. My first teaching position was at the Wright School, which is a state residential mental health school that serves children with behavioral disabilities. I became a professor at a local college and then was the Program Director for the Duke Day Hospital for Youth at Duke University Medical Center. I directed a statewide program for "difficult to serve" Exceptional Children at the NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) for several years. I returned to the classroom as a special education teacher in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools, then became an assistant principal in the Wake County Public School System, and later a principal in Durham Public Schools. I was a professor for several years in the School of Education at North Carolina Central University and then returned to positions as a principal and district administrator in the Alamance-Burlington

School System. After forty years in public education, I served for 10 years as a school district Lead Evaluator, conducting accreditation reviews throughout the United States, and in ten foreign countries.

I was licensed to teach in the following areas: Behaviorally/Emotionally Disabled; Cross Categorical; Learning Disabled; and Mentally Disabled. Additionally, I held Principal and Exceptional Children Program Administrator licenses.

The North Carolina Council of Administrators of Special Education honored me with their “Special Friend Award.” The North Carolina Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders awarded me their “Indirect Services Award.”

I have served as a State Hearing Review Officer for the North Carolina State Board of Education. I have been a Visiting Assistant Professor at NC State University, UNC Chapel Hill, and the University of British Columbia. I have presented on a variety of topics, including student achievement, students with learning disabilities, and behavior management.

I graduated from Duke University with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and a master’s degree in education with a concentration in Special Education. I earned my PhD in Special Education from UNC Chapel Hill.

Major Board Accomplishments and Priorities

For years, CHCCS has been one of the top performing school districts in our state. We serve approximately 11,000 students across 20 different schools. In the most recent district profile available on NCDPI’s School Report Cards website, CHCCS performed at very high levels on all metrics. CHCCS has a four-year graduation rate of 94% compared to the state average of 87%. Students exceed state averages on nearly all end-of-grade tests. English Learners (ELs) have a proficiency rate of 31% compared to the state average of 27%. None of our schools are considered “low performing.”

I am also proud of the progress the district has made since I joined the Board in 2021. As a direct outcome of a major Curriculum Audit, the district has implemented a significant Curriculum and Instructional Management Plan. This plan ensures that every student will receive a high-quality education regardless of grade-level, school assignment, teacher assignment, or course subject. Plan implementation also includes a thorough assessment of the effective use of technology for instruction. Last year, voters passed a \$175 million bond referendum, which will allow us to replace three aging

schools with new school buildings and provide upgrades to other schools. We also implemented a new 4X4 Block Schedule at all our high schools, which will align the high schools with community college schedules, afford students an opportunity to take eight classes per year instead of seven, and reduce students' academic load to four classes at a time. Students will also be able to take classes at another high school if a course is not offered at their own school.

Compliance with The Parents Bill of Rights

In CHCCS, we deeply respect and value our parents. We rely on parental involvement to ensure that our students are always supported. As a school district, parents are critical to our mission, and we could not succeed without active, involved parents who are committed to the success of our schools. We are constantly working to strengthen partnerships with parents and to encourage parents to participate in their child's education.

Allow me to affirm that I am a law-abiding citizen, and I believe in the rule of law. As I taught my children years ago, and now my grandchildren, in our democracy we can advocate for laws to change, but we are bound to follow them until they do. Otherwise, our democracy cannot function.

To my knowledge, Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools has always been, and continues to be, in compliance with the law-including the Parents Bill of Rights. In recent public comments that were shared widely on social media, I referred to board discussions that occurred at the time the Parents Bill of Rights passed and went into effect. After the law's passage, the Board of Education received significant input from parents and community members, which led to thoughtful and vigorous discussion. In January 2024, the Board voted 7-0 to adopt policies implementing most of the Parents Bill of Rights and directed the administration to develop written procedures and guidance for staff to follow with regard to the two remaining portions of the Parents Bill of Rights that were not covered by these policies. Consistent with the Board's direction, the administration developed detailed, nuanced, mandatory guidance that complied with the law and remains in effect today. These procedures have been provided to the Committee in response to its request for documents.

We have also provided the Committee with a copy of Policy Code: 3540 Comprehensive Health Education Program. As required by the Parents Bill of Rights, this policy prohibits instruction on gender identity, sexual activity, and sexuality in the health

education curriculum in kindergarten through fourth grade, regardless of whether the information is provided by school personnel or third parties.

The Board's Commitment to Nondiscrimination

Our district's nondiscrimination policy flatly prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, religion, national origin, gender or any other classification protected by state or federal law. Consistent with that policy, my expectation is that we will follow the law and that we will never discriminate against anyone.

In light of a recent Supreme Court decision and subsequent guidance, the district has reviewed a variety of programs and processes to ensure continued compliance with all applicable non-discrimination laws. Our work in that space continues, as we strive to ensure that all programs and activities within the district are legally compliant and that we meet the needs of our students and community.

Academically, CHCCS students are encouraged to discover and explore their passions through our various programs and rigorous academic options taught by an exceptional team of highly qualified educators. Our curriculum is consistent with state standards and complies with state and federal law.