

House Select Committee on Oversight and Reform Hearing, December 10, 2025

Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools

Former Board of Education Chairman George Griffin

Superintendent Rodney Trice

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:00:01](#) ...meeting to order. To our Sergeant at Arms—Michael Galloway, David Leighton, Reggie Sills—thank you for being here today. We appreciate you guys.

[00:00:06](#) I've got a prepared opening statement. It's going to be a little lengthy, so, I just ask that you bear with me. Members of this committee and the so-called leadership of Chapel Hill-Carrboro school district sitting before us, make no mistake, you're not here today because of a misunderstanding.

[00:00:22](#) You're here today because you chose to wage war against the law. You chose to deceive the public, and now you're here because you got caught. And I'll be honest—for the next two hours, it's going to be uncomfortable because you deserve to be uncomfortable. You failed in your duty, and worse, you failed the families that trusted you.

[00:00:41](#) Let's start with the facts because they are not disputed. On January 18, 2024, your school board sat in your boardroom and voted unanimously to rip out two key parts of Senate Bill 49—the Parents' Bill of Rights. You removed the requirement to notify parents if their child changes their name or pronouns. You removed the K-4 ban on instruction in gender identity and sexuality. You looked the law in the face and said, "We're not doing it."

[00:01:13](#) Mr. Griffin, your exact words at that January 18 meeting were on camera: "My recommendation is we do not comply with the law, and we say so cleanly." Let's call that what it is. Defiance. It wasn't about process. It was about power. You didn't like the law, so, you acted like it didn't apply to you.

[00:01:36](#) And you weren't subtle about it. Board member [Rani] Dasi called for minimum compliance, which means non-compliance. You deleted parts of the Parents' Bill of Rights you didn't like for your public website. You published a weak staff guidance memo instead of a formal board policy just so you could dodge accountability. This wasn't passive resistance. It was a coordinated middle finger to this legislature and to every parent in your district.

[00:02:06](#) Let me remind you of something: No one in North Carolina is above the law, especially not a public official who holds the trust of our children. And let's be clear what you were protecting by breaking the law: you were not standing up for

safety; you weren't standing up for kindness; you were protecting an agenda—an ideological campaign dressed up as education.

00:02:32

Let's take a look at what it really meant inside your schools. Your own former equity specialist, Elizabeth Vail, and one of your elementary teachers, Tequila Powell, wrote a chapter of a book titled, "We Make Some Woke Kids," while being employed by you. Not, "We'll Help Them Read." Not, "We'll Teach Them to Think." No, "We Make Some Woke Kids."

00:02:54

In that chapter, your staff said they used Critical Race Theory to reshape your curriculum. They taught eight-year-olds that white supremacy, systemic racism, and the unequal distribution of rights and resources...and bragged about it. They said they were using CRT to build racial literacy in a predominantly white, southern town. They were not educating, they were indoctrinating.

00:03:23

We found materials in your school where third graders were being taught to see the world as an oppressor versus oppressed. We saw teacher toolkits about activism, lessons portraying police's threats, and books recommended to elementary students titled "Santa's Husband," "It Isn't Rude to Be Nude," and, "These are My Eyes, This is My Nose, This is My Vulva, These are My Toes." You even ran a Black Lives Matter at School campaign in elementary classrooms.

00:03:56

Meanwhile, math scores; flat. Reading scores; failing. Basic literacy and numeracy; nowhere to be found. You replace academics with activism. And the ones who suffer the most—vulnerable kids in your system, children who came to school to learn—are left confused and divided. That's not the worst of it. Because you weren't just indoctrinating, you were grooming. Yes, I said it, grooming.

00:04:23

You promoted sample pronoun surveys for kids without telling their parents. You pushed gender support plans that included a checkbox to exclude parents. You encouraged secret transitions, hidden identities, and private meetings all behind parents' backs. You told teachers it was okay to affirm a child's gender identity at school without ever notifying the parents. It's not education, that's an abuse of power. It's betrayal. And yes, it is grooming behavior.

00:04:58

And then when we started investigating, what did you do? You panicked. You hid pages. You locked down lesson databases. You scrubbed your LGBTQ teacher resources. Your attorney tried to pretend that books in the library weren't curriculum. Let's be honest, that wasn't legal advice, it's a coverup. And that was damage control. You knew what was wrong, and instead of fixing it, you tried to hide it.

00:05:23

And to be crystal clear: this committee sees through what you did. Parents see what you did. And we're not buying what you're selling, so, let's stop pretending about this as a brave stand because you're no martyr. You're school officials who chose politics over students. You choose secrets over trust. You chose to defy the law. And worse, you chose to do it at the expense of children.

00:05:48

I want everyone watching to understand what's really at stake here. This isn't about George Griffin or some school board playing hero. This is about the little girl who came home scared because she was exposed to graphic nudity in second grade. It's about an email we saw from a mother who only found out her child had changed names months after, when their eighth-grade diploma arrived home. It's about kids who are still struggling to read and being dragged into debates they can't possibly understand.

00:06:17

That's who we're here to protect. That's who SB 49 was passed to protect. Governor Cooper not only vetoed this bill but sided with the they/them activists to insert gender ideology into our public schools and to hide it from parents. And what did this General Assembly do? We doubled down and sided with parents to protect the children. And that's who we're going to keep protecting, no matter how loud the activists get.

00:06:44

To both of you, your days of playing fast and loose with the law are over. And to every other district listening today: If you think about copying them, don't. If you hide your curriculum, push gender politics on little kids, or cut parents out of the loop, you will end up here next. Parents have rights. Children are not pawns. Teachers just want to teach. And the law, it's not optional. And let me assure you, the people of this state are done asking nicely.

00:07:16

I ask you both to stand, put your left hand on the Bible, and raise your right hand.

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00:07:25 Stand, sir. Do you affirm or swear that the testimony you give here today is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God? Have a seat.

00:07:33 We'll start with you, Mr. Griffin. You said on January 18, 2024, at your school board meeting on camera that "My recommendation is we do not comply with the law and we say it cleanly." That's not a slip-up. That's a declaration of war against the law. I'm asking you, what made you believe that you had the authority to override that statute, and are you now the legislature?

Dr. Griffin: 00:08:08 Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. We have followed the law and are in compliance with the law, beginning with our board meeting that night.

Rep. Jones, Chair: 00:08:24 So, you say you are in compliance?

Dr. Griffin: 00:08:26 Yes, sir.

Rep. Jones, Chair: 00:08:27 You intentionally stripped two core provisions from SB 49—parent notification and the K-4 gender instruction ban. Why did you remove them?

Dr. Griffin: 00:08:27 I'm sorry. Sometimes I have difficulty hearing. Wear a hearing aid.

Rep. Jones, Chair: 00:08:27 I'll be loud. You didn't miss a deadline or get confused, correct?

Dr. Griffin: 00:08:27 We did miss a deadline?

Rep. Jones, Chair: 00:08:27 I said, "You didn't miss a deadline?"

Dr. Griffin: 00:08:27 No.

Rep. Jones, Chair: 00:08:33 Okay. You intentionally stripped two core provisions from SB 49—the parent notification and the K-4 gender instruction ban. Why did you remove them?

Dr. Griffin: 00:09:07 We didn't include the pronoun clause in our policy that night, but we directed our staff to write written guidance, and that is consistent with the law.

Rep. Jones, Chair: 00:09:20 No. Why did you remove them? Why did you remove them—the two core provisions that you openly stated—

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Dr. Griffin: [00:09:27](#) The board voted unanimously to remove it because we thought it targeted a group of students.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:09:36](#) What gives you the right to gut a passed law?

Dr. Griffin: [00:09:39](#) What did we not like?

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:09:41](#) I said, "What gives you the right to gut a law?".

Dr. Griffin: [00:09:44](#) We didn't want... We complied with the law.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:09:48](#) No, you did not. You gutted two provisions. What gave you the right to gut those two provisions of the law?

Dr. Griffin: [00:09:53](#) Our understanding was that the board was to direct the staff to develop procedures that are in compliance with the law, and that's what we did.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:10:02](#) Did you consult with legal authority before the vote, yes or no?

Dr. Griffin: [00:10:12](#) I'm sorry?

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:10:14](#) Did you consult with any legal authority before that vote, yes or no?

Dr. Griffin: [00:10:21](#) Board member consultations with attorneys are considered privileged.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:10:25](#) I didn't ask you if they were privileged. I just asked you if you consulted. It's just a yes or no. Did you consult with an attorney?

Dr. Griffin: [00:10:32](#) I don't recall consulting with an attorney about that before the-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:10:35](#) So, that's no?

Dr. Griffin: [00:10:36](#) -board meeting.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:10:37](#) That's a no?

Dr. Griffin: [00:10:38](#) That's a no.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:10:40](#) Then you knowingly broke the law without any legal cover. Why shouldn't that disqualify you from office?

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Dr. Griffin: [00:10:47](#) We followed the law that night and have followed it since that time.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:10:53](#) You have not.

[00:10:54](#) Mr. Trice, you carried out this illegal policy. Did you ever warn the board that this was unlawful?

Dr. Trice: [00:11:01](#) Beginning in September of '23, we've outlined guidance concerning SB 49 that followed the law as written. So, in my capacity at the time, there was never a discussion around whether or not to follow the law. From our very earliest professional development, working with staff, all the training was aligned with following the law as written.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:11:34](#) But it wasn't. Did you warn them that they were not following the law? Yes or no?

Dr. Trice: [00:11:41](#) The question is whether or not we felt like we were following the law. We felt like we-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:11:48](#) I'm not talking about your feelings.

Dr. Trice: [00:11:48](#) We felt like we were following the law because we've used the law to outline the policy that we then published to our staff. Beginning in 2023 is when we first considered the law and how it plays out in our school district, and never once did the guidance not follow the law.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:12:08](#) At the meeting, clearly recorded, it says that night your board says, "We're not going to follow the law." It's what the board meeting said. So, it's a yes or no. Did you ever warn the board that they were unlawful?

Dr. Trice: [00:12:24](#) I did not warn the board about anything.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:12:27](#) Why should anyone trust your leadership again if you're not advising them to follow the law?

Dr. Trice: [00:12:32](#) As I mentioned, beginning in 2023, which was before the 2024 meeting, our practice and policy with respect to SB 49 was already in place before the board's discussion. Our guidance was directly aligned with the law.

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Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:12:52](#) I'll try to be loud for you, Mr. Griffin. During the meetings, you wouldn't even call SB 49 a law. You referred to it as something as "in law" and said, "It wasn't palatable." Are you still unwilling right now under oath to acknowledge that SB 49 is binding North Carolina law and that Chapel Hill-Carrboro must follow it?

Dr. Griffin: [00:13:14](#) During that board meeting, we had a long and nuanced discussion about Senate Bill 49, and by the end of the night, we voted to follow the law. And yes, we do follow the law now. We have since that night, and we'll continue to follow the law.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:13:34](#) I want you to acknowledge so it can be memorialized. I want you to say that you will follow SB 49, the Chapel Hill-Carrboro school district will adhere to SB 49, the law.

Dr. Griffin: [00:13:45](#) We do adhere to SB 49 and the law, and we will continue to do that.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:13:52](#) Mr. Trice, while you were deputy superintendent for systemic equity engagement, your own equity staff co-authored a book titled, "We Make Some Woke Kids." They bragged about injecting Critical Race Theory into elementary schools. Did you approve that message?

Dr. Trice: [00:14:07](#) I'm not familiar with that book.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:14:10](#) You're not familiar with the book?

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:14:17](#) Ok. Is making woke kids in your district the mission now?

Dr. Trice: [00:14:20](#) I'm sorry, what do-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:14:21](#) Is making woke kids in your district the mission now?

Dr. Trice: [00:14:25](#) I'm not sure what you mean by "making woke kids." I mean-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:14:28](#) I'm going by what's printed right there in your manuals what your teachers have written. Is that a mission of the district to make woke kids?

Dr. Trice: [00:14:37](#) Our mission-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:14:37](#) You've got a chapter of the book that your employees wrote. Is that a mission of the school system?

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Dr. Trice: [00:14:41](#) The mission of our-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:14:41](#) It's yes or no.

Dr. Trice: [00:14:42](#) The mission of our school system is to educate kids at a high level and create learning environments where they feel affirmed and loved. I'm not sure what you mean by "making woke kids" and-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:14:53](#) I'm sure you don't. How do you justify teaching eight-year-olds that they are privileged or oppressed based on skin color?

Dr. Trice: [00:15:01](#) We don't teach children that they're privileged or oppressed as part of the standard course of study in North Carolina.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:15:11](#) Mr. Trice, I want to talk to you about a few recommended books that your district suggests that K-4 students read. First, [holds up book] "Santa's Husband." This book tells "the story of Santa, his husband, and their life at the North Pole. And I want to assure everyone this is the true story of Mr. and Mr. Claus." Is this approved?

Dr. Trice: [00:15:34](#) I-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:15:36](#) Is this what you're telling the children to read? Is this okay in your guidance?

Dr. Trice: [00:15:42](#) I'm not aware that that book is in our-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:15:43](#) You're the superintendent. You're not aware of what's going on in your school system?

Dr. Trice: [00:15:46](#) I'm-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:15:46](#) You don't know what's printed?

Dr. Trice: [00:15:48](#) I'm-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:15:48](#) It's trash. [Tosses book backward.] That's what good that is. Here's a great one here [holds up book], "These are My Eyes, This is My Nose, This is My Vulva, These are My Toes." I'm going to read a passage for you out of it. This is for your school. "Some boys have a penis, but not all boys do. So, always use your manners, 'May I ask what I can call you?'". This is damn trash, pure trash [tosses book] you're putting to these children.

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Dr. Trice: [00:16:15](#) And again, here we go, "It isn't Rude to be Nude," for four-year-olds, approved by your district. [hold up book] I hope you all can see what these children, four-year-olds, are looking at. Nude photos. [Tosses book] Freaking trash. Do you think it's appropriate for four-year-olds to be exposed to naked men and women and soft porn?

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:16:42](#) No, it's not appropriate that students are exposed to porn, but I don't have any knowledge that those books are part-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:16:48](#) Then why are these recommended in your school district?

Dr. Trice: [00:16:51](#) I have no knowledge-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:16:51](#) It's on your page.

Dr. Trice: [00:16:51](#) I have no knowledge that those books are recommended in our school district.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:16:53](#) We got a video we'll play you. Just stand by. Cue the video, please.

Dr. Trice: [00:17:32](#) Well, it appears that that links to a third-party organization. Certainly, we provide resource... If I understand correctly, you clicked on a link that was off of our website.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:17:43](#) On your own website.

Dr. Trice: [00:17:44](#) Right. We do provide resources for parents to have conversations with their students about these issues.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:17:55](#) You're telling me that you're a superintendent, and it's okay for four-year-olds to be exposed.

Dr. Trice: [00:18:02](#) No, I'm not telling you that. What I said is-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:18:04](#) [inaudible 00:18:07]?

Dr. Trice: [00:18:07](#) As I mentioned, those are books that appear to be linked to a third-party website.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:18:11](#) On your website.

Dr. Trice: [00:18:12](#) Right. And we don't approve all content that is linked off of our website. It's our attempt to work with parents and provide-

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Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:18:19](#) [inaudible 00:18:20].

Dr. Trice: [00:18:20](#) Right.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:18:23](#) [inaudible 00:18:23]. Is this because you didn't want to stop this kind of indoctrination?

Dr. Trice: [00:18:30](#) I did not say that.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:18:36](#) We could continue rolling videos, but I guess we won't.

[00:18:38](#) Mr. Griffin, you claim this was about protecting LGBTQ students. I'm going to ask you, protecting them from whom? Their parents?

Dr. Griffin: [00:18:48](#) I'm sorry, would you repeat that?

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:18:50](#) You claimed it was about protecting LGBTQ students. I'm asking you, protecting them from whom? Their parents?

Dr. Griffin: [00:18:58](#) No, sir. We believe in including parents in every decision affecting their kids. They're the most important players in the room.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:19:06](#) You've been looping parents out. In your thought, as a teacher equality specialist hired by the district, do they know better than the parents of these children?

Dr. Griffin: [00:19:21](#) The parents always know what's best for their children.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:19:25](#) Not by what you all are proposing. Not by your actions, not by what you've done. You've hidden from parents. You've lied to parents. It's in black and white, we can keep sharing as much as you want to share.

[00:19:39](#) Mr. Trice, why do you think it's okay to place a wedge between parents and child and make it much harder to take a wait-and-see approach? Because as a parent states, your decision, in quote, "has real consequences."

Dr. Trice: [00:19:56](#) Where's that letter at? I'm sorry, what's the question?

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:20:00](#) Why don't I do this? This is a letter. We redacted the names. Let's put it up on the screen. Put this letter up, from one of your parents to you.

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Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:20:09](#) To all the board members.

[00:20:10](#) "Dear school board members, as the parent of a trans-identified kid, I was shocked to find my child's chosen name on their eighth-grade diploma and on PowerSchool. We are supportive of our child and their exploration, but the school's hyper-affirmative approach actually places a wedge between parent and child and makes it much harder to take a wait-and-see approach. With the sharp rise of girls who identify as trans boys and the readiness of medical professionals to direct them to gender clinics where physicians are willing to, and even eager to, begin transitioning kids who might be just exploring identity, all in the name of affirmation, this issue has real consequences. Please help keep parents in the loop so we can support our children and also have important discussions in homes."

[00:21:01](#) Sounds like to me that a parent wasn't notified. They had to find out on their own. What do you think?

[00:21:13](#) What do you think, sir?

Dr. Trice: [00:21:14](#) Oh, I'm sorry. Yeah, parents are essential partners, and as we stated, it's important that we follow the law as written. This is the first time that I've seen this email. It appears that it was written to the board, so, prior to today, I had no knowledge of it.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:21:35](#) Okay. For both of you, do you deny that encouraging faculty and administrators and children to keep secrets from parents about gender identity is a clear violation of the law and is grooming behavior?

Dr. Trice: [00:21:49](#) Yes. Parents have to be consulted before name and pronoun changes are approved.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:21:54](#) We've just seen a letter directed to your school board where that was not taking place, so, is it now?

Dr. Trice: [00:22:02](#) As I mentioned, prior to today, I had no knowledge of that. It's certainly something that I would want to look into as superintendent. As was mentioned at the top of our conversation, it's essential that we follow the law as written in SB 49.

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Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:22:16](#) Being superintendent, you sure don't know a lot. But anyway.

Can you show us data, hard numbers that your equality programs have raised test scores, improved the literacy, or closed achievement gaps?

Dr. Trice: [00:22:28](#) Certainly. We have a long history of working to close opportunity gaps and achievement gaps in our school district. Between the years of '23-'24, we increase third grade reading, particularly among African American students by 10%. Does that mean that we don't have more work to do? Certainly we do, just as many districts do across North Carolina and the country.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:22:54](#) Why are all your economically distressed students performing below the state average?

Dr. Trice: [00:22:59](#) As I mentioned, that's a challenge and something we're working toward as a school district.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:23:04](#) Maybe if you quit teaching woke ideology, and [teach] reading and math, maybe that would help, you think?

Dr. Trice: [00:23:09](#) I'm not sure what you mean by woke ideology, but certainly-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:23:12](#) I know you don't.

Dr. Trice: [00:23:13](#) ... reading and math are important.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:23:14](#) Will you commit right now under oath to a full and permanent compliance with SB 49, including parental notification of the K-4 instruction ban in policy?

Dr. Trice: [00:23:23](#) Yes. I always, as a superintendent, commit to following the law. I took an oath to such and will do so.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:23:28](#) So, on record, you will comply in full with SB 49?

Dr. Trice: [00:23:34](#) As superintendent of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools, I will follow the law as written.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:23:42](#) What's your concrete plan starting now to undo the damage that you've done?

Dr. Trice: [00:23:47](#) I'm sorry. I don't really understand the question in terms of damage. I have not-

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Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:23:52](#) You're going to rip out indoctrination?

Dr. Trice: [00:23:55](#) I don't understand the question.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:23:57](#) What part don't you understand? I'm sorry.

Dr. Trice: [00:23:59](#) You said-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:23:59](#) A lot of things I can make you do, make you understand is not one.

Dr. Trice: [00:24:00](#) You-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:24:01](#) You know that y'all have been indoctrinating children. Will it stop today? Will you take that out and we just do curriculum? Reading, writing, and arithmetic. Take the indoctrination out. Quit trying to make minions of these children. Will you commit today to stop it?

Dr. Trice: [00:24:14](#) I will commit to teaching the North Carolina Standard Course of Study in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:24:19](#) Are you going to bring parents back into fold up-front before decisions are made about their children?

Dr. Trice: [00:24:23](#) Parents have always been involved-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:24:29](#) They have, and we've seen that in writing.

Dr. Trice: [00:24:29](#) -with the education of their children.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:24:29](#) What changes are happening right now in your school district to comply?

Dr. Trice: [00:24:32](#) As I mentioned at the top of my conversation, since 2023, we've always complied with SB 49, as was written in the policy documents that was submitted to the committee and also distributed widely among principals and staff.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:24:47](#) I'll come back.

[00:24:48](#) Representative Schietzelt, you're recognized for a series of questions.

Rep. Schietzelt: [00:24:52](#) Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's hard to know where to start. I've heard over and over and over, "We follow the law, we follow the law, we follow the law," but for the last two years... Is it Dr. Griffin?

Dr. Griffin: [00:25:11](#) Yes, sir.

Rep. Schietzelt: [00:25:12](#) For the last couple of years, we've heard over and over from your own mouth, "We will not follow the law." In January 2024, at the school board meeting, you said publicly, "My recommendation is that we not comply with the law. We're going to stop here. Pending litigation we'll reconsider, but we find it discriminatory." And recently, you told voters repeatedly that the provisions were discriminatory, and you bragged that your board told the General Assembly, "No thanks. We're not doing this."

[00:25:47](#) You called the statutory task of implementing Senate Bill 49—the Parents' Bill of Rights—ludicrous, and you boasted that your district was the only one willing to defy the law. You've called the Parents' Bill of Rights a lot of things, but one thing I haven't heard you say directly is whether you believe the Parents' Bill of Rights is unconstitutional and unlawful. So, let's start there. Do you believe Senate Bill 49—the Parents' Bill of Rights—as it is written, is facially constitutional?

Dr. Griffin: [00:26:21](#) Sir, I'm not an attorney, but the comments that I made recently that you were referring to actually referred back to our long discussion in January of 2024. And when all was said and done, at the end of the day, we voted to comply with the law. We did have a lot of nuanced discussion at the board meetings and about this topic in our community. It's an important topic to a lot of people in the local community.

Rep. Schietzelt: [00:26:50](#) With all due respect, Doctor, I speak bureaucrat-ese very well as an attorney. And I've got nothing but bureaucratic, flimsy language out of both of you today. You say over and over, "We follow the law." So, let me ask a more direct question. When you say we are following the law, do you mean you are following the provisions of Senate Bill 49 as they are written? Or do you mean we are following the provisions of Senate Bill 49 excising the ones that we believe to be unconstitutional or otherwise unlawful?

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Dr. Griffin: [00:27:29](#) We are following it as they are written in Senate Bill 49, 100%. We've been in compliance since then, and we're in compliance today fully, not-

Rep. Schietzelt: [00:27:40](#) That is demonstrably untrue. I can sit here. I can even take my glasses off. I can still read that email. And there are other examples throughout the record that we have before us. A UNC study by Epic where people in your school district are flouting non-compliance, saying that they are affirming name and identity changes for students without notifying parents, that they're reading inappropriate materials for children under the guise of it not being instruction. You mean to tell me you believe that is complying with the law?

Dr. Griffin: [00:28:25](#) I can say with 100% certainty that we as a district are complying with the law. I can also add-

Rep. Schietzelt: [00:28:33](#) I can tell you with 100% certainty that you are not, Doctor. And it is offensive for someone to come before this body and say, "We are complying with the law," when there are videos, there are documents, there is a mountain of evidence that you are not, and you are making no effort to try to. So, I'm going to ask you one more time. Do you believe that the provisions of Senate Bill 49 as they are written are constitutional? That is a yes or no question.

Dr. Griffin: [00:29:14](#) I really can't. Again, I'm not an attorney.

Rep. Schietzelt: [00:29:17](#) If you can't answer that, then your duty under the oath that you took is to follow the law, not to try to find ways to circumvent it, which is what you have been trying to do now for years.

Dr. Griffin: [00:29:32](#) Well, I can assure you, and I'm repeating myself, but we are in compliance with the law and have been.

Rep. Schietzelt: [00:29:41](#) Isn't that just the theme of today? We're all just repeating ourselves. The advantage that we have on this side of the dais is that we have the evidence. There are receipts that you're not responding to and you refuse to respond to. All you do is repeat the same line, "We are following the law." When this study came out, the Epic study, where staff members in your district talk about how they are not complying with the law—how they are concealing from parents' name and identity changes—did you, your board, launch any sort of investigation into compliance with the Parents' Bill of Rights?

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Dr. Griffin: [00:30:23](#) I've been on the board for four years, and the question you're asking, none of these issues have come before the board.

Rep. Schietzelt: [00:30:30](#) Okay. So, either then-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:30:32](#) Representative Schietzelt, hold on. Mr. Griffin, I'm going to direct you as chairman to answer the questions with a yes or no and quit going all around. Give the gentleman the courtesy. He's brought you here today to get some answers. Please answer the members, Republican, Democrat, whoever's asking, please answer and quit skating. Representative Schietzelt, you're ready.

Rep. Schietzelt: [00:30:51](#) Same question. Did you, the board, direct anyone to investigate these claims of people brazenly defying the law?

Dr. Griffin: [00:31:02](#) Sir, these claims are not ones that have come to us. So, there's no way we could have directed it.

Rep. Schietzelt: [00:31:11](#) Did you, as the chair of the board at the time, ever consider whether your comments that "We will not comply with the law? We are telling the General Assembly, no." We are going to gin up, these are not your words, these are my words, we're going to gin up a constitutional crisis by refusing to comply with the law and comply with our oath. Ultimately, you sit here and you tell us, "We're complying with the law," but did you ever think that maybe your words as a leader of that school district might encourage the people who work underneath your supervision not to comply with the law?

Dr. Griffin: [00:31:50](#) When we began today, I was hoping to have an opportunity to make an opening statement and part of it was going to be to apologize-

Rep. Schietzelt: [00:31:57](#) You've made a lot of opening statements over the last two years, Dr. Griffin. Please answer my question.

Dr. Griffin: [00:32:00](#) -to apologize for any misunderstanding that my comments may have caused.

Rep. Schietzelt: [00:32:09](#) I don't think that's good enough. Right now, I believe we have a crisis on our hands because we have a school district that is openly defying and flouting the law. Mr. Chair, I don't have any further questions.

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Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:32:24](#) Representative McNeely, you are recognized for a series of questions.

Rep. McNeely: [00:32:27](#) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Griffin, Mr. Trice. I guess going back to that meeting where you all had an open vote to basically defy Senate Bill 49, I guess my question is, what gave you the thought and the audacity that you could choose to defy a law that we passed here in this legislature?

Dr. Griffin: [00:32:56](#) Are you directing that to me?

Rep. McNeely: [00:32:57](#) You'll be fine to answer, either one of you, but you're the one that made the comment and placed the vote. So, what gave you the audacity to think you could choose to write the law your way, not that our way?

Dr. Griffin: [00:33:06](#) So, that evening we actually enacted seven parts of the bill, all the parts of the bill, except for in putting in policy the one clause on pronouns. And it was our understanding that the board should direct staff to develop written guidance for that issue, and that's what we did. And in our judgment that is in complete compliance with the law, and that's where we left things at the end of the night.

Rep. McNeely: [00:33:35](#) So, you thought the law that we gave you was a multiple choice. You could kind of choose what you liked and what you didn't. Is that what you're telling me?

Dr. Griffin: [00:33:41](#) Our understanding of the law was we were to direct the staff to develop procedures, to implement the law.

Rep. McNeely: [00:33:48](#) See, I think you all maybe wrote something, but your mindset and what you told the staff-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:33:55](#) Representative McNeely, if you would suspend one second, I think we've got something to help answer your question.

Rep. McNeely: [00:33:59](#) Okay.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:33:59](#) Roll that footage if you would, sir. And you'll be recognized just as soon as the video's over.

Rep. McNeely: [00:34:06](#) Thank you, sir. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think I've seen this movie before.

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Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:34:35](#) Oh, it's a good one.

Rep. McNeely: [00:34:47](#) There we go.

[Video] Dr. Griffin: [00:34:58](#) Well, I'll just put it out there. My recommendation is that we not comply with the law and that we say so cleanly when it comes to these two parts about the pronoun passage and the identity gender discussion and we develop some statement that says we're complying with Parents' Rights Law up until this point, and we're going to stop here. Our system works appropriately and well for our students the way we've been doing it and pending legal or litigation or something down the road, we'll reconsider this, but we find it to be discriminatory or something like that. So, I wonder if there's any... and I'm going open up for the board members to share your thoughts or questions and if... Well, we'll see. Is there any energy for-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:35:51](#) Before you start, for fairness, Mr. Griffin, was that you on the video saying for you, your school system to not comply, was that you?

Dr. Griffin: [00:36:00](#) Yes.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:36:02](#) Okay. Representative McNeely, you're recognized for follow-up.

Rep. McNeely: [00:36:04](#) All right. So, I'm back to it. What audacity became about you that made you feel like you could do this? Did you not take an oath for the office that you hold? I know I did, and in that oath, it talked about the constitution. It talked about the laws of the state of North Carolina. Did you take that oath?

Dr. Griffin: [00:36:23](#) I took an oath, yes.

Rep. McNeely: [00:36:24](#) Did you believe it?

Dr. Griffin: [00:36:26](#) Yes, sir.

Rep. McNeely: [00:36:26](#) Did you hear what it said?

Dr. Griffin: [00:36:28](#) Yes, sir.

Rep. McNeely: [00:36:31](#) Well, I don't think you paid attention real close then, did you?

Dr. Griffin: [00:36:35](#) At the end of the evening, after that long discussion, we took action that is compliant with the law.

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Rep. McNeely: [00:36:44](#) No, you played around with the law, but you didn't take action to comply with it. And you've done a lot of word service today, but I haven't seen a lot of faith or any action from your words that prove what's going on, because I see everything else that's going on in your system besides what you're telling us today. Do you totally believe that you all are in line with the provisions of this law and that you all are enacting them today? You tell me that.

Dr. Griffin: [00:37:10](#) Yes, we are in compliance with the law, and we have been since then.

Rep. McNeely: [00:37:15](#) Sir, I could call you a lot of things right now. We're going to skip that part. Here's what I want to know. Just exactly what is y'all's fund balance at the Chapel Hill-Carrboro school system right now. Are you all fairly well off? I haven't really looked at your finances. How are you all financially?

Dr. Trice: [00:37:32](#) So, certainly we've had some difficulties over the last couple of years financially, primarily due to declining student enrollment. I believe our fund balance, the audited fund balance at the end of '24-'25 was around \$300,000.

Rep. McNeely: [00:37:48](#) Okay. So, y'all don't have the money to be able to educate these kids with your own money. You're going to need some help, aren't you? You're going to need state funds, aren't you?

Dr. Trice: [00:37:57](#) Certainly. We need state funds to help educate our kids at a high level.

Rep. McNeely: [00:38:02](#) Well, there's a darn good chance you may not get them. Now, I don't know how you're going to educate your kids without any money. Maybe you all are going to do volunteer work over there. I'm not sure. But I will tell you this, because of y'all, there's going to be legislation that comes and it's going to be pretty tough because we're not going to put up with rogue school systems who have no money and will not comply with the laws of this state. Do you understand what I said there? Shake your head yes if you don't want to say yes.

Dr. Trice: [00:38:32](#) I certainly understand what you're saying.

Rep. McNeely: [00:38:37](#) And the reason this is going to happen is because of y'all, Chapel Hill-Carrboro School System. So, if anybody asks, why did it get like this? Make sure that y'all tell them. "Well, I guess it

was us. I guess we are the ones that caused the problem. I guess we're the ones that started this." We try to make the laws where they're kind of hopefully abided by, but I guess we can put "shall" instead of "if," which looks like what we're going to have to do.

[00:39:09](#)

I suggest you all need to go home and do some house cleaning, some serious house cleaning, because you may be telling us one thing, but you're not doing it, and we can prove it time and time again. You all took an oath right there a little bit ago, put your hand on the Bible. To me, that means a lot. Maybe to y'all it doesn't, but I don't think you've been truthful at all today. Not one bit. That's all I have, sir.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:39:31](#)

Representative Cervania, you're recognized.

Rep. Cervania: [00:39:35](#)

Thank you, Chair. Outside my time for questioning, may I have a point of clarification with chair, please?

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:39:43](#)

I'm sorry.

Rep. Cervania: [00:39:44](#)

Outside my time to question, may I have extra time to ask you as chair some questions for point of clarification?

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:39:53](#)

Ask your questions, and we'll get there when we get there. We're time constrained. If you want to ask questions, I'd do it now.

Rep. Cervania: [00:39:58](#)

Okay. Point of clarification. As my leader, respectfully, I would have loved to have all this evidence first to be successful as equal members of this committee and hopefully next time-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:40:13](#)

You were presented that on Friday.

Rep. Cervania: [00:40:15](#)

The videos, this email without the names of the person of respondents-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:40:20](#)

That was not for this. This is something that I dug up and found and just shared today, but you were given everything that everyone else was, Representative.

Rep. Cervania: [00:40:26](#)

All right. Well, I would love to share in our decision-making in that and-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:40:30](#)

I'd ask my questions because you're losing your time.

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Rep. Cervania: [00:40:32](#) Thank you, sir. I wanted to ask, you were summoned here because of certain criteria. I'm going to just say a couple of things and ask a couple of things. I know you expressed through the video your viewpoint when it came to this law, but can you alone make a decision on how the school board and the school system runs the school system?

Dr. Griffin: [00:40:57](#) No, ma'am. All school board decisions are made by the board as a whole.

Rep. Cervania: [00:41:01](#) Yes, sir. So, then you had mentioned just... but I want clarification. You made a vote that night, correct?

Dr. Griffin: [00:41:08](#) Correct.

Rep. Cervania: [00:41:09](#) And was the vote to comply with the law?

Dr. Griffin: [00:41:14](#) Yes.

Rep. Cervania: [00:41:14](#) Thank you, sir. Also, I wanted to clarify, I could not find any word of indoctrination on your website. I could not find the reading list for make kids woke, any words of CRT, white supremacy, oppression, and that "Santa's Husband." When I had seen in Chair's post about that book, I wanted to know, too, but I couldn't find any reading list. I only found your summer reading list. Can you provide me that information?

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:41:52](#) Representative.

Rep. Cervania: [00:41:53](#) Yes, sir.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:41:53](#) We're going to do it one more time so you can see it comes directly from their website so you can follow. Okay?

Rep. Cervania: [00:41:59](#) Yes, sir. Thank you. And I want my minute still-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:42:01](#) Isaac, cue that up, please.

Rep. Cervania: [00:42:03](#) -to ask questions. Thank you, sir.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:42:07](#) And this will not go against your time.

Rep. Cervania: [00:42:09](#) Okay. Thank you.

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Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:42:16](#) And keep in mind, Representative, they have scrubbed their website since they've been called out. So, the website is different now. That may be why you couldn't find it. We went back to get it where they were defying the law, but we'll share that with you so you can see it right now.

Rep. Cervania: [00:42:27](#) So, this is from Wayback [Machine]?

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:42:29](#) No, this isn't way back. This is from just a few weeks ago from where they've been called out.

Rep. Cervania: [00:42:33](#) Okay. So, can we follow it, sir, Chair, from where you had-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:42:39](#) Okay, so, you're on their website now, okay? And you see right there where they're circling, "Try more gender expansive books about bodies." We like. This is the link from their website.

Rep. Cervania: [00:42:50](#) May I have the URL so I can pull it up from-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:42:54](#) That will be provided to you, but not right now. Ask your questions.

Rep. Cervania: [00:42:58](#) Okay. Thank you, sir. Thank you, Chair. So, is it true that this was pulled off when it was made aware that there was concern, or was it never on your website?

Dr. Trice: [00:43:13](#) I don't believe that's on our website. I believe it's a link to a third-party resource from our website. But again, this is the first time that I've seen this website in question.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:43:26](#) All right. Stand by one second. Representative Cervania, now this is the website previous.

Rep. Cervania: [00:43:32](#) Okay. What's the URL because I-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:43:33](#) This is the website previous to the letter we sent them, which is just weeks ago.

Rep. Cervania: [00:43:37](#) Yes, sir.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:43:38](#) Flip to the next one. This is after they scrubbed it after they got caught. It's amazing the timing when they wanted to change their website. You may continue with your line of questions.

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Rep. Cervania: [00:43:48](#) So, you were open to, if there was concern to change your website, but you, again, aware of clarity, you weren't aware that that led to that website, correct?

Dr. Trice: [00:44:02](#) I wasn't aware of any changes to our website. In fact, I'm not aware that we removed any resources from our website.

Rep. Cervania: [00:44:17](#) Okay.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:44:17](#) I'm going to interject. Mr. Superintendent, if you're not aware of who's changing websites, then who gave the order to change the website?

Dr. Trice: [00:44:26](#) Well, we have a lot of pages on our websites that are updated frequently. As I mentioned-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:44:32](#) I mean, this is awfully coincidental, don't you think?

Dr. Trice: [00:44:35](#) I wasn't aware of the link to the documents or the books that you were referring to.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:44:40](#) So as superintendent, you're not aware of what's being put out there?

Dr. Trice: [00:44:46](#) Not on every-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:44:48](#) Yes or no?

Dr. Trice: [00:44:48](#) Not on every-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:44:48](#) Yes or no?

Dr. Trice: [00:44:48](#) I'm not aware-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:44:48](#) Yes or no. Are you aware or not of what's being put out of your school district? Yes or no.

Dr. Trice: [00:44:55](#) As I mentioned-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:44:56](#) I'm asking for an answer, a yes or no.

Dr. Trice: [00:44:58](#) We have a lot of pages on our website.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:45:00](#) That's a no. Continue your question, Representative Cervania.

Rep. Cervania: [00:45:03](#) Chair, I would like with your cooperation to receive an IT change request, if there was a change, to see the follow flow and-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:45:13](#) Absolutely. Provide that to the representative, gentlemen.

Rep. Echevarria: [00:45:19](#) And to the whole group?

Rep. Cervania: [00:45:20](#) And to the whole group. This is for all of us to make sure that we have the right information to make the right decisions for our children in your school district. So, I'd also like to see that there's any wording of indoctrination, DEI, any of this, because I couldn't find it in your values and beliefs or anywhere like that.

[00:45:43](#) But it is very clear to me that you're one of the top, if not the top school district when it comes to outcomes for children. I know all of our school districts, including Iredell, including Forsyth, including ours, even in Wake County, have problems with funding when it comes to really fully educating our students. So, I understand that you would have a fund balance, it's challenging, especially since we're not providing you the constitutional requirement of providing funding for you to have the most successful students.

[00:46:15](#) So, the other thing I wanted to also ask too is, I want to receive any of the emails that were provided here, like the little girl who is scared. We don't want any children to be scared coming from schools and the copy of the transgender commentary because there's no recipient or sender of those. If we could be provided those from your school district so we can see it's official from you all, that would be very good. And then also-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:46:47](#) Sorry, I'm going to interrupt you so everyone could take a look at the screen. You were mentioning that you couldn't find that, so, there you go. "We make some woke kids using Critical Race Theory to revolutionize the elementary curriculum by those folks." And if you look down, Elizabeth Vail was an instructional equity specialist from '22 to '24 and taught there for nine years. I don't need to read it all. You guys can do that. So, it was another thing that got scrubbed, but we wanted to be able to share that with the whole group. You're recognized for one additional question because your time's coming up.

Rep. Cervania: [00:47:14](#) So, a lot of this that was provided—I've done research in education and public health—are you required if you have somebody going through a PhD or a master's program and are

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authors to get approval from your school district in any of their research or publication work?

Dr. Trice: [00:47:35](#) If they're doing research within the district, certainly there's an approval process. But prior to today, I wasn't aware of this, I don't know if it's a book or an article, but it looks like three people have collaborated on an article or a book that certainly doesn't need our permission if they want to do that as private citizens. I mean, they have every right to do so, but this is not a part of our curriculum.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:48:01](#) Will you denounce it right now?

Dr. Trice: [00:48:03](#) I'm sorry. I've not read any of this.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:48:07](#) Will you denounce what this states then in a school district? Will you denounce it?

Dr. Trice: [00:48:11](#) I don't know what this means, sir.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:48:13](#) Of course you don't.

Rep. Cervania: [00:48:14](#) This is America, and Chair, we don't often agree, but we are part of the same organization. And I respect that if you put something out on social media, if I put out something social media, or if I write a book, I probably wrote a book that you don't agree with, but that doesn't mean that you can renounce any of the work that I do professionally to help the people of North Carolina or our country. So, I respect you, Chair, and you put out things that I don't agree with, but I would never renounce you as a person to be able to put out your viewpoint or your leadership. And this is probably the same with these gentlemen.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:48:55](#) Your time's up. Representative Echevarria.

Rep. Echevarria: [00:48:59](#) Thank you, Mr. Chair. I originally had a whole list of questions. However, I'm-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:49:05](#) You're recognized for a list of questions.

Rep. Echevarria: [00:49:07](#) Thank you. I'm not confident that you're going to answer because so far, it's like you didn't come to really testify and be transparent, you came to survive. And I don't know what it's like

to be in your seat, so, I'm going to leave that alone. But I do have some questions regarding, "We Make Some Woke Kids."

00:49:32

Now, when they made that statement, they were referring to your school district, to your elementary schools. That statement, if you haven't seen the video, if you haven't read the books that we've read, the Critical Race Theory book, I encourage you to read it because they made that statement about Chapel Hill-Carrboro Schools. Now, I was going to ask you who "we" is, because I think that it's an affront to this committee, one, that we're here talking about whether or not you're going to adhere to a law that was passed by the General Assembly, but I think most importantly, we're talking about an affront to parents. As a father, I'm personally offended by the email that I read earlier that there would be any school district in the state of North Carolina that would attempt to allow my child or any child to live an alternate life at school, while not informing the parents that there is a real perhaps mental issue or otherwise going on. Now, every time parental rights come up, we get into this battle of custody. I want you to understand that historically, only Karl Marx agrees that you're a part of raising kids. The rest of us who don't ascribe to those types of teachings believe that we're responsible for the direction of our children, and that's how the Parental Bill of Rights came to be.

00:51:08

I encourage you to make a big shift because the truth is, when you're telling elementary-aged students about whiteness and white supremacy, I'm pretty certain that there's a lot of parents who would disagree that that's a conversation that should be had at school. I'm pretty certain that when elementary-aged children outside of the situation of abuse are exploring things sexually, I'm pretty certain that parents should be a part of that conversation. Now, I find it problematic because each one of these representatives up here represents approximately 90,000 people. For your initial statement at that school board meeting to be, "We're not going to follow it. I don't think we should follow it," you are an elected member of a school board, and you swore an oath and then stood up there and defied it.

00:52:12

I just find that tremendously problematic that when I look at your school records, you're putting a lot of effort into DEI-type of teachings and trainings and white supremacy and whiteness and racism. However, the people you think you're helping are actually failing in your school system. The poor children, the black children, and Hispanic children are failing to be ready for

college or the workforce. That is your responsibility, and you are failing at it. Now, I'm certain you're going to say that there's a lot of school districts that you're performing better than them. Well, if everybody's failing, that's no prize. That's no excuse. The white students in your district are doing extremely well, and I'm certain that they are not financially disadvantaged because it's much like my family. If you can afford the tutors, your students do well. So, it seems like the families who can afford things in your district are supplementing the education you're offering, and everybody else is failing while you talk to them about whiteness, white supremacy, and DEI. I had a list of questions here wondering if parents were being informed about the conversation surrounding merit-based programs like gifted and honors that you're floating dismantling as though achievement is also racist. So, I'm not going to ask the questions because no one else here has gotten an answer. One thing I can do is compliment you for following the direction of your legal counsel who obviously told you, "No matter what, this is what you say," because you've repeated yourself-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:54:10](#) Your time's up, Representative.

Rep. Echevarria: [00:54:11](#) ... repeatedly and repeatedly. Thank you very much.

Rep Jones, Chair: [00:54:13](#) Representative Quick, you're recognized.

Rep. Quick: [00:54:16](#) Thank you, Mr. Chair. Let me first of all apologize for my late arrival here. In traffic coming from Greensboro, I was watching the proceeding on my phone and I have to say it was pretty good TV. There was book throwing. There was cussing. There was all of that. I've been elected here for going on 10 years, and I have to say to you, I don't apologize for anybody else, but I had secondhand embarrassment for the way this meeting was being conducted. So, thank you all for being here, and I apologize. I didn't do anything, but I had secondhand embarrassment for the way this meeting was being conducted. I understood completely also what you all have said. In the course of deliberation, you made a comment. That comment was overruled by a vote. Is that right or wrong? You can use more than yes and no when you're talking to me because you're an adult, and I don't have to treat you like my toddler.

Dr. Griffin: [00:55:20](#) Yes.

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Rep. Quick: [00:55:22](#) So, the comment that you made was overruled by the vote, and you have since then, will you please state for the millionth time since you made that comment, what have you done about the law?

Dr. Griffin: [00:55:33](#) So, the board voted unanimously to follow the law that night after our discussion, and we've been in compliance since that night, and we're in compliance today, not only with the law but with involving parents as we always have.

Rep. Quick: [00:55:49](#) Thank you. Superintendent Trice, thank you for being here. Thank you for your accomplishment and doing one of the most difficult jobs in our society that is leading a group of educators to educate future generations. I was a former school board member. I understand how deliberative process works and how you have words that someone will say in the board, once the vote is taken, the board gets behind the entirety of the vote. I also understand... Well, let me ask you this. When did you become the superintendent?

Dr. Trice: [00:56:22](#) July 1 of this year.

Rep. Quick: [00:56:26](#) July 1 of 2025.

Dr. Trice: [00:56:28](#) Yes, sir.

Rep. Quick: [00:56:29](#) Many of the things that happened, I saw on the email, it says something about January 2024. You were not the superintendent in January 2024, were you?

Dr. Trice: [00:56:40](#) No, sir.

Rep. Quick: [00:56:41](#) So, you would have no responsibility for the entirety of the district in January 2024 since you did not become superintendent until July 2025. Is that right?

Dr. Trice: [00:56:51](#) That's correct.

Rep. Quick: [00:56:52](#) Thank you. There are some people who have an issue with the word "woke." I'm not one of them. There are some people who want to point out that African American students are not achieving because of X, Y, Z factor. I say this, Critical Race Theory was put in place to address the fact that African American students were not seeing themselves portrayed in educational settings, which led to—and research backs this

up—which led to their lack of performance in certain areas. Representation does matter. So, when there's a lack of representation, when there's an attack on students being seen and represented, as if that's an issue, when you want to talk about indoctrination, black kids've been indoctrinated since they started in public schools, when they've been told that they were slaves. As a school board member, I heard a child say this, "We were slaves and then Martin Luther King freed us." That's the reason why we need Critical Race Theory. That's the reason why we need teaching-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:57:56](#) Representative Quick, your time's up. Representative Warren, you're recognized.

Rep. Quick: [00:57:58](#) That's why we need teaching that continue- [inaudible 00:58:01].

Rep. Jones, Chair: [00:58:04](#) You're not recognized, sir. You're not recognized. Your time is up. Representative Warren.

Rep. Warren: [00:58:13](#) Superintendent Trice, if I could get your attention, please. First of all, congratulations on your promotion. I think that's great. You had mentioned that the link that the chair had referred to was a third party, a link to a third party, and that just raised some concern for me because I'm curious how your posting on your website works. Is there an individual who's in charge of it? Are there no guidelines or parameters that you're aware of or that you've set that someone could arbitrarily put a link to a third party on there, which has content contrary to the law we're talking about, and you're not aware of it? Could you explain to me how that system works?

Dr. Trice: [00:58:59](#) Certainly. An individual wouldn't post the resource on the website. We have a multidisciplinary team that reviews materials or resources, particularly if those resources are going to be shared with parents, which I believe is the case with the links that were shared to the committee. These are not links that are used for teaching and learning inside classrooms. We believe in the spirit and the actual law as written with respect to SB 49 where parents are essential partners. Certainly, parents come to us, our school leaders, our counselors, our social workers asking for resources and our multidisciplinary teams review links that may go to third-party organizations. We don't approve every resource in those third-party organizations, but generally if our teams feel like it's a good resource for parents

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to use to have conversations with their children, parents are free to do so. We believe in the partnerships with our parents to be able to vet material that's appropriate for their families.

Rep. Warren: [01:00:15](#) So, you don't have any objection to whatever gets posted on your website, as long as it's a link to another resource. Can you understand how some members of the committee might see that as a way to circumvent what is being prohibited by the law—a way to get access to it by providing a link to it outside of it? It just seems to me like you should have more control over that and guidelines that reinforce adherence to the law, even in terms of connections to third-party resources, as you call them. I would suggest you look. You also made a comment that school was seeing declining student enrollment. Do you know what's contributing to that, where the students are going? What's one of the factors for that?

Dr. Trice: [01:01:03](#) Well, I think primarily it's a result of birth rates and housing availability in our community. In communities across North Carolina, our country, and globally, there are just declines in birth rates. We're currently working with an organization to help us better understand that, but we know that that has a pretty serious impact on our enrollment.

Rep. Warren: [01:01:29](#) Do you think your enrollment decline is attributed in some sense to the Opportunity Scholarship Program?

Dr. Trice: [01:01:37](#) I have no information about the degree to which the Opportunity Scholarship is impacting enrollment.

Rep. Warren: [01:01:47](#) How many teachers do you have in your LEA [Local Education Agency]?

Dr. Trice: [01:01:50](#) We have just over 850 teachers.

Rep. Warren: [01:01:54](#) Okay. Do you have-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [01:01:55](#) Representative Warren, one more question for your time.

Rep. Warren: [01:01:58](#) All right. Thank you. Do you have any idea of how you would track whether or not teachers are complying with the law in their classrooms?

Dr. Trice: [01:02:07](#) Certainly, we expect all of our teachers to follow the law as written.

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Rep. Warren: [01:02:12](#) Well, I know that's your expectation. I would hope that it is. But my question is if you're not aware of and providing guidelines in postings on your website, I'm wondering how much control you have over or how much knowledge you have of what's going on in your classroom.

Dr. Trice: [01:02:28](#) Certainly, I was going to follow that by saying we expect teachers to follow the law, but beyond that, we do classroom walkthroughs at every level of our organization where we're looking at not only compliance with teaching of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study but the provisions outlined in SB 49.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [01:02:47](#) Representative Dahle, you're recognized for a question.

Rep. Dahle: [01:02:55](#) Hi, thanks for being here. Sorry you're being treated like evil Satan or something, but we're here to find out what's going on. I need to ask a question. Are you having difficulty making plans for your students and staff right now due to the fact that the General Assembly has been slow and/or has not financed *Leandro* or any of the cases as well as funding up to the level that was expected?

Dr. Trice: [01:03:28](#) Yeah. Certainly, budget for any school district is important, not only to plan for this year, but in future years. So, it does create a bit of uncertainty, but we're doing the best we can.

Rep. Dahle: [01:03:41](#) Thank you. I would like to talk for just a minute about our lovely Constitution. Section 1, we hold it to be self-evident that all persons are created equal. I have used this over and over and over again, talking about trans and gay people. I am gay. I witness and feel hatred when people find out I'm gay. When they meet me, they're like, "Hey, how are you doing?" Then they find out I'm gay and it's like, "Woo." It depends on who they are. Some people, the woman in the audience rolling her eyes is probably one of those people but I don't know that.

[01:04:24](#) So, I understand this, and I understand this fight. I have to say, we have a history of civil disobedience in the United States, and I do feel like you're following the law, and if you skirt it just a little bit, I'm kind of proud, and everybody can say I'm a horrible politician for saying that. But this is an attack on gay, trans people. This is a way for everybody to be afraid of something that is 1% of this population. One percent. It is outweighed by everyone else. If you do not like these people, don't talk to

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them. It's as simple as that. These people and the school system is between a rock and a hard place. You've got kids that are on one end of the spectrum to the other, and you have to do everything you can to help each and every person learn.

[01:05:37](#)

Now, the other piece of this is when you are upset, scared, worried at school, you don't learn well. Some of the best guidance I got was from teachers who said, "Hang in there, Allison. You're all right. You're not a bad kid because you're fat. You're not a bad kid because you've got blonde hair," and that's what teachers are trying to do. No one that I know of, no teacher that I know of, is trying to subvert justice by being kind. I think that this has been the biggest kangaroo court I've ever seen. I'm disappointed in the behavior at the beginning of this meeting, and I know I'm raising my voice, but I'm disappointed that we could not handle this in a way that had helped us work together to meet the law, as opposed to running you out in-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [01:06:42](#) Representative Dahle, your time is up. Representative Arp, you're recognized for series of questions.

Rep. Arp: [01:06:46](#) Thank you very much. Over here, Dr. Griffin and Dr. Trice. What I'd like to say is, it's simply not true that this bill is about attacking gay or transgender students. As evidence in the name of the bill itself, Parents' Bill of Rights, what this is about is the parent involvement in a child's education that's constitutionally recognized. On that line, I have just a few questions for Dr. Griffin. Have you retracted or clarified your statement? You were board chair at the time. Is that correct?

Dr. Griffin: [01:07:25](#) Yes.

Rep. Arp: [01:07:26](#) Did you clarify or retract your statements as you said on the video that you recommend not complying with the law?

Dr. Griffin: [01:07:33](#) I had said a few minutes ago that if I've created any misunderstandings, I apologize for that.

Rep. Arp: [01:07:39](#) You have. You have. Have you clarified that to your body of employees that you lead as the board of the schools?

Dr. Griffin: [01:07:49](#) Nobody honestly has ever asked me to do that.

Rep. Arp: [01:07:52](#) Okay. All right. Very good. You stated to Representative Schietzelt's question about the constitutionality of... Are you

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questioning the constitutionality of Session Law 2023-106? You stated before that you're not an attorney, so, you didn't have an opinion on that. Is that your statement?

Dr. Griffin: [01:08:16](#) My statement is that I do believe it targeted a subgroup of our students.

Rep. Arp: [01:08:20](#) That wasn't my question. Do you believe it's constitutional?

Dr. Griffin: [01:08:24](#) I believe it's discriminatory.

Rep. Arp: [01:08:26](#) Do you believe it's constitutional?

Dr. Griffin: [01:08:29](#) I'm sorry, what is... The law itself, is that what you're-

Rep. Arp: [01:08:32](#) What is constitutional? Yeah. Senate Bill 49 Session Law 2023-106, have you determined that it's unconstitutional?

Dr. Griffin: [01:08:43](#) I wouldn't honestly as not being an attorney qualified to determine that.

Rep. Arp: [01:08:48](#) Then your statement then is that, as an attorney, you can't be qualified to make a determination on whether or not that session law was constitutional or not.

Dr. Griffin: [01:09:02](#) Well, I believe we have clear non-discrimination policies in our district, and I do believe that it collided with those policies.

Rep. Arp: [01:09:11](#) So, my question is how can you expect the teachers to determine, because you refuse to put into policy explicit guidance from a policy standpoint for your employees to implement the law, and yet you've relegated that to a guidance? What's the difference between guidance and a policy?

Dr. Griffin: [01:09:35](#) Well, our procedures were developed to clearly help our staff enact the law, and those procedures are legally compliant with the law.

Rep. Arp: [01:09:49](#) Is there a difference between not compliance with a guidance and then not compliance with a board policy?

Dr. Griffin: [01:09:55](#) Not in terms of the law.

Rep. Arp: [01:09:57](#) What do you mean and not in terms of the law?

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Dr. Griffin: [01:09:59](#) Well, we were directed to develop procedures. The law calls for procedures, and we did that.

Rep. Arp: [01:10:06](#) It seems strange to me that you would relegate it to the area of guidance rather than board policy regarding this critical piece of the law as passed, duly passed, in the General Assembly, because it seems to create confusion. For instance, it says you mentioned in your letter to the school board that you decided against a policy requiring notification of parents about a child's request to change his or her name and pronouns. Rather, you directed staff to create a guidance document. That guidance, as I understand, states that employee should have a guided conversation with the student to determine if the student has any concerns notifying a parent. At what point would still a parent not be notified of the change in the name?

Dr. Griffin: [01:11:02](#) If you were to continue, then it does also say that the parents need to be informed if that were to happen.

Rep. Arp: [01:11:11](#) Yeah. So, what is the policy?

Rep. Jones, Chair: [01:11:14](#) Representative Arp, last question, sir.

Rep. Arp: [01:11:15](#) Okay. So, my question is do you believe that the parents will not be informed? What situation would a parent... You stated before, you said parents are paramount, essential partners and everything, but yet, it seems like this, that you're hedging. In what situation would a parent not be informed of a requested name or pronoun change?

Dr. Griffin: [01:11:45](#) There's another clause in the law that specifies if it perhaps would endanger the student. There's a legal citation in the law, and it says how you can do that if you feel it's necessary, but it's not left up to the judgment of the teachers.

Rep. Arp: [01:12:02](#) One last question is recently Title IX's rules from the federal government has talked about preventing gender discrimination based on gender has been removed. Do you have any biological boys or girls in the locker rooms of your schools?

Dr. Griffin: [01:12:22](#) Do we have any what in the locker rooms?

Rep. Arp: [01:12:24](#) Biological boys in girls' locker rooms.

Dr. Griffin: [01:12:27](#) We follow the law around bathroom assignments, locker rooms.

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Rep. Arp: [01:12:32](#) Right. Do you have biological boys in allowed access to girls' bathroom?

Dr. Griffin: [01:12:37](#) I'm not aware of that at all.

Rep. Arp: [01:12:40](#) So, you're saying that it does not happen?

Dr. Griffin: [01:12:43](#) I'm saying as a board-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [01:12:44](#) Last question, Representative Arp. Mr. Griffin, you can answer.

Dr. Griffin: [01:12:47](#) As a board member, I've never heard of that happening.

Rep. Arp: [01:12:52](#) Dr. Trice, do you know if there's any biological boys in girls' bathrooms in your school system?

Dr. Trice: [01:12:59](#) I'm not aware that that's the case in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools.

Rep. Arp: [01:13:01](#) Will you determine that and report back to the board if that is the case?

Dr. Trice: [01:13:06](#) I'm sorry, I didn't hear you.

Rep. Arp: [01:13:07](#) Will you determine that and report back to this committee if that is the case, if you have any biologically classified boys that are allowed access to girls' bathroom? Let me ask you this. Please report back to this committee with that information.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [01:13:27](#) Representative Ager.

Rep. Ager: [01:13:31](#) Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you both for being here, Dr. Griffin and Dr. Trice. In case you haven't realized it yet, you're here as props for some political theater, and that's frustrating to me as somebody who got up at 4:30 this morning to drive up here to Raleigh. I just want to get us back to the basics here and go to Article 9, Section 2, Paragraph 1 of the North Carolina Constitution, and that paragraph says that "the General Assembly shall provide by taxation and otherwise for general and uniform system of free public schools, which shall be maintained at least nine months, and every year, and wherein equal opportunities shall be provided for all students."

[01:14:23](#) As we get back to that, we have a joint responsibility here. As a General Assembly, as school boards, as county commissions, as

local governments, our most important job is to educate our children. And I think we've gone round and round the blame game, whose fault it is that we're not doing it, but the blame game doesn't generally get us anywhere, and we need to move forward with real solutions, which come both from the General Assembly and from our school boards, and we need to work together as opposed to fighting against each other. To start with today, my first question is really, Chapel Hill-Carrboro Schools actually have the second-highest grade level proficiency score in the state, 70.3% according to DPI. Can you tell us a little bit about how your school has produced these remarkable results as well as can you give us an update on your graduation rates compared to the state average?

Dr. Trice:

[01:15:23](#)

So, certainly I would put the success of our students squarely to our parents. They're very involved with the education and the direction of our school district. They demand high quality curricula, strong instructional approaches in the classroom. And beyond that, I would put our teachers up against any teachers in North Carolina or across the country for that matter. We're proud of our graduation rate, which a couple of years ago we had the highest graduation rate approaching 94%, which was an honor for us. It's something we celebrated. But at the end of the day, we want to just make sure that our school system is in place to give students as many options as they can attend to upon graduation, whether that's a four-year university, working with our amazing community college system in North Carolina, joining the military, starting a business. We want to give our students as many options as possible, which is one reason we want to make sure that our curriculum, our teaching and learning is at a very high level for all students irrespective of background.

Rep. Ager:

[01:16:51](#)

Thank you. And just one quick follow up. Can you just give us a sense, sort of broad picture, of some of your biggest challenges, maybe staffing, recruitment, retention that you all face currently? And it sounds like you've been in the job less than six months, so, I'm sure you're just facing those challenges, but if you can just give us some sense of the biggest challenges that you face as you-

Dr. Trice:

[01:17:15](#)

So, certainly I've been in the job six months but been tied to our community for about 20 years, both as an employee but also as a parent. And our biggest challenge I think we face now is certainly issues tied to declining student enrollment as was

mentioned, that's one of the primary ways that school districts across North Carolina receive funding to educate their kids. And for the better part of a decade, we've seen that declining enrollment. We've been working with our community to address that and put a plan in place to address that and revision our district. But as I mentioned to our community in over 13 community sessions for the past month or so, this also presents an opportunity to instill opportunities that currently aren't available to our students. So, while it's a challenge, every challenge presents an opportunity, and that's the way that we're going to approach the problem solving together as a community.

[01:18:23](#)

But I would say that that's among our most important challenges. Second, I'm sorry, to that is dealing with an issue that has come up here. Certainly, we struggled like many districts with closing opportunity gaps and achievement gaps in our district. We've been cited by the Department of Public Instruction for the over-identification of black males, for instance, in special education. And so, being intentional about programming that supports students who are most disconnected to a positive schooling experience is very important to us. And so, I wake up ready to go to work every day to do that important work for our community.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [01:19:06](#) Representative Miller.

Rep. Miller: [01:19:09](#) Thank you, Mr. Chair. Representative Warren asked the question earlier about the declining enrollment. I think the evidence we've heard here today, we know why you're declining, but you mentioned, Superintendent Trice, about your fund balance. Did you say \$300,000 is all you have in fund balance?

Dr. Trice: [01:19:29](#) I believe that's the audited amount.

Rep. Miller: [01:19:32](#) Is that your general fund balance or is that your capital?

Dr. Trice: [01:19:36](#) General fund balance.

Rep. Miller: [01:19:36](#) How much do you have in your capital?

Dr. Trice: [01:19:38](#) I don't have that information in front of me, but we could get that to you.

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Rep. Miller: [01:19:41](#) So, if you had to spend \$1 million today on a roof, how would you do that?

Dr. Trice: [01:19:49](#) We would approach our county commissioners for support who've indicated that they will be our backstop in a financial crisis until we can get back to a healthy spot.

Rep. Miller: [01:20:01](#) So, how are you addressing the declining enrollment? Let's go back.

Dr. Trice: [01:20:05](#) Well, there are multiple ways that I think any school district will have to ... with declining student enrollment, we'll have to right-size our organization. We'll have to look at facilities use over time, look at attrition of staff over time. And so, there are multiple ways that school districts will have to address declining student enrollment in the near future.

Rep. Miller: [01:20:30](#) And you're attributing your budgetary constraints right now to that declining enrollment?

Dr. Trice: [01:20:35](#) Well, that's the information we've received from partners who have studied this more deeply than we have. Declining enrollment is primarily attributed to birth rates locally, housing availability and affordability as I've mentioned, but those are just some of the reasons that we're experiencing declining student enrollment. Primarily at the elementary level, you can see it. We have fewer kindergarten classrooms this year than we had last year. We're serving about 350 students fewer this year than last year, but our middle schools and high schools are pretty healthy, healthy in terms of enrollment. So, that gives us some indication that birth rate is having an impact on enrollment in our district.

Rep. Miller: [01:21:30](#) So, you just testified that the elementary is where you're losing kids. Do you attribute that to any of the stuff that we've heard here today?

Dr. Trice: [01:21:42](#) I've not heard any concerns about what was brought up today, and nothing to that effect has come to me either as deputy superintendent prior to me becoming superintendent. So, that's not anything that I would attribute to declining enrollment in our school district.

Rep. Miller: [01:22:02](#) Well, I actually have a niece that lives in your district who's texting me listening to this meeting, and she has two small

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children, and she just sent me a text that says, "There's no way I can put them in this system. We're going to have to find an alternative." So, I would definitely look at what we've heard here today is attributing to your decline in elementary. Thank you.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [01:22:25](#) Representative Miller, to help with that, since 2019, students there are down 10%, administrators are only down 1%. With that, Representative Pyrtle, you're recognized for a series of questions.

Rep. Pyrtle: [01:22:37](#) Thank you, Mr. Chair. Dr. Trice, I think you've clarified where I was going to go with my questions, but I think one of the other members asked about your tenure with the school system, and you stated that you had become the superintendent in July of 2025?

Dr. Trice: [01:22:55](#) Yes, sir.

Rep. Pyrtle: [01:22:56](#) Prior to that, you were the deputy superintendent, and you held that position for how long?

Dr. Trice: [01:23:02](#) Approximately three years.

Rep. Pyrtle: [01:23:04](#) What was your title, or what was your area of responsibility when you were the deputy superintendent?

Dr. Trice: [01:23:09](#) Curriculum instruction.

Rep. Pyrtle: [01:23:13](#) Teaching and learning and systemic equity and engagement, would that be a fair assessment of your-

Dr. Trice: [01:23:17](#) Yeah, that was my title, but the area I was over was curriculum and instruction.

Rep. Pyrtle: [01:23:22](#) When you took your current position, did somebody backfill your position from within the organization?

Dr. Trice: [01:23:29](#) Yes, sir.

Rep. Pyrtle: [01:23:29](#) Did they have the same title and areas of responsibilities now as you did when you had that position?

Dr. Trice: [01:23:35](#) Same area of responsibilities but different title.

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Rep. Pyrtle: [01:23:39](#) Did they do the same thing that you did?

Dr. Trice: [01:23:42](#) As I mentioned, yes, same area of responsibilities but different title.

Rep. Pyrtle: [01:23:47](#) Okay. And you left the school system for a while, but then you came back?

Dr. Trice: [01:23:52](#) Yes, sir.

Rep. Pyrtle: [01:23:53](#) And when did you come back? What was your title then when you come back?

Dr. Trice: [01:23:58](#) Chief equity and engagement officer, I believe was the title.

Rep. Pyrtle: [01:24:02](#) Okay. As the deputy superintendent, I guess I would assume, and correct me if I'm wrong, but you probably attended the school board meetings and were engaged with the superintendent about the curriculum and the plan of organization with the direction of the school system. Is that correct?

Dr. Trice: [01:24:21](#) Yes, sir.

Rep. Pyrtle: [01:24:22](#) So, were you in fact at the meeting where Dr. Griffin made the comment about the Senate bill?

Dr. Trice: [01:24:29](#) I believe I was there.

Rep. Pyrtle: [01:24:32](#) Okay. So, you were involved. To say that the first you heard of it was sometime after July the 1, it's a little bit misleading, correct?

Dr. Trice: [01:24:41](#) I don't believe I said those words.

Rep. Pyrtle: [01:24:43](#) Okay. To say that you just started your position as a school superintendent on July 1 without any prior knowledge of what was going on within the school system is not accurate, right? You knew what was going on when you took the job. You took the oath, you knew everybody that worked there, had a good knowledge of-

Dr. Trice: [01:25:04](#) I believe... I'm sorry.

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Rep. Pyrtle: [01:25:05](#) Had a good knowledge of how the operation of the system worked.

Dr. Trice: [01:25:09](#) Certainly I had a knowledge of how the system worked, but I believe the question was, in my previous capacity, did I direct the system as I do now as superintendent?

Rep. Pyrtle: [01:25:21](#) Okay. But you did direct employees on a daily basis as a deputy superintendent?

Dr. Trice: [01:25:28](#) Certainly.

Rep. Pyrtle: [01:25:28](#) And the curriculum. You pretty much oversaw the curriculum?

Dr. Trice: [01:25:31](#) Absolutely. Yes, sir.

Rep. Pyrtle: [01:25:35](#) Okay. Okay. And while you were there, I think some of the materials that were discussed earlier, some of the books, was that something that ultimately you had the final approval to say, "This is a good book, this is not a good book"? Because I know that one of the things you talked about in your release when you were identified as the new superintendent was what was very important to you was transparency. So, I'm just wondering, when you were looking at the books that were in question, was that transparency in place then that you allowed the parents engagement into saying, "Hey, you know what, I like this book or I don't like this book?" Or when they complained to you about a book, you're the ultimate person responsible for that.

Dr. Trice: [01:26:14](#) As I shared previously, I think the books that were mentioned today are not part of our catalog but are linked to a third-party organization, but with respect to how we adopt books and curricular material in our district, we have what's called a curriculum management team that reviews and vets resources for adoption, and then we take those curricula and resources and make a recommendation to our board for adoption to our official curriculum.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [01:26:48](#) Representative Pyrtle, I will have to cut you off there.

Rep. Pyrtle: [01:26:50](#) Thank you.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [01:26:51](#) Is there a member who has not asked a question who would like to ask a question of these two gentlemen? Representative Schietzelt, you're recognized for an additional question.

Rep. Schietzelt: [01:27:02](#) Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, I want to come back to just two questions really quickly because over and over and over we've asked, "Do you believe the Parents' Bill of Rights is constitutional, Dr. Griffin?" And I've been troubled by your answers.

It's a lot of, "Well, we're following the law."
"Well, do you believe it's constitutional?"
"Well, I'm not an attorney."
"Well, do you believe it's constitutional?"
"Well, I believe it's discriminatory."

So, I'm going to ask you again because I believe you took the same oath that just about every local official takes to support and maintain the Constitution of the United States, the laws of the United States, the Constitution of North Carolina, and the laws of North Carolina that are not inconsistent therewith. So, let me ask you again. I don't think your status as a non-attorney absolves you from determining whether or not you think something is constitutional. Do you believe the Parents' Bill of Rights, as it is written, is constitutional?

Dr. Griffin: [01:28:02](#) I'm not trying to be oppositional about this, but again, as I'm not an attorney, and in that sense I don't feel qualified to say it's constitutional.

Rep. Schietzelt: [01:28:16](#) I'm not asking you what you think a court would say. I'm asking you whether you believe that the law is constitutional?

Dr. Griffin: [01:28:30](#) I think there's a part of the law that's singled out a subgroup of students.

Rep. Schietzelt: [01:28:34](#) So, is that a, "No, I do not believe it is constitutional?"

Dr. Griffin: [01:28:38](#) The Constitution would call for equal treatment of all students, would be my understanding.

Rep. Schietzelt: [01:28:45](#) And so, do you believe... Now, there's a distinction we make in the law. I'm not going to get down that road. Again, the consistent evasion here of refusing to say yes or no is deeply troubling, but watching your responses, it's been like watching a

shapeshifter throughout this entire hearing because not only have you given these answers, you also at one point said something to the effect... I wrote it down. "We have local non-discrimination policies that we believe collided with the Parents' Bill of Rights." In that situation where you have a local policy and a state law that collide, which of those two bodies of law are you required to follow?

Dr. Griffin: [01:29:32](#) Well, and the non-discrimination policy that I was thinking about as I spoke was related to federal law-

Rep. Schietzelt: [01:29:41](#) So, you do believe that this is not constitutional or otherwise unlawful under federal law?

Dr. Griffin: [01:29:53](#) Okay. Could you repeat that, please?

Rep. Schietzelt: [01:30:02](#) I don't think I will, Dr. Griffin, because I think I'm going to get the same answers that I've been getting for the last hour and 40 minutes or however long we've been in here. I just want to really quickly have comment, Mr. Chair.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [01:30:12](#) Last follow up.

Rep. Schietzelt: [01:30:13](#) Well, this won't be a follow-up. Just-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [01:30:14](#) Last question. Last comment, Sir.

Rep. Schietzelt: [01:30:16](#) I would just like to say there's a lot of mounting distrust with the public school districts as reflected by the declining enrollment right now. Now, we have to do something to help our public schools. In the House—if you look at the House budget—we're trying. I've gone out in my district and made a big deal about trying to raise teacher pay because I think it's incumbent upon us to do everything we can to bolster the workforce pipeline, to make sure that we have quality educators in every classroom because that's going to make a difference for student outcomes. We care about the teachers because we care about the kids, and it makes it really difficult for us to do our job when the leaders of these school districts can't come in here and even give us a straightforward answer to straightforward questions. When we get a bunch of mealy-mouthed bureaucrats, that is disappointing.

[01:31:15](#) Mr. Chair, I have nothing else.

House Select Committee on Oversight and Reform Hearing, December 10, 2025

Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools

Former Board of Education Chairman George Griffin

Superintendent Rodney Trice

Rep. Jones, Chair: [01:31:17](#) Mr. Griffin, a few of my friends in the opposite party seem to think I've kind of not been fair to you, so, in total transparency, I want to be fair. So, after the meeting on January 18, 2024, you were good with following SB 49 as the law then, right, sir?

Dr. Griffin: [01:31:38](#) Yes.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [01:31:39](#) Okay. Put them up, please. Either you are perjuring yourself or maybe you just have a really bad memory because... Go down. On February 12, almost a month later, you sent an email: "The Parents' Bill of Rights law contains a number of provisions that were adopted by the board with two exceptions. Number one, instruction on gender identity, sexual activity," blah, blah, blah. "Number two, prior to any changes in the name or pronoun used for students in school," blah, blah, blah. "You asked what changes has the district made to implement this bill? How might this affect our district? As mentioned above, we revised seven board policies to accommodate most provisions of the law. As for the other two, my response is rooted in our mission statement, core values, and key priorities." So, are you lying today, or did you just forget about what you wrote?

Dr. Griffin: [01:32:34](#) I've-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [01:32:35](#) One or the other.

Dr. Griffin: [01:32:38](#) I was referring to the fact that we did not put in a policy-

Rep. Jones, Chair: [01:32:42](#) No, sir, you said that you were defining.

Dr. Griffin: [01:32:42](#) One clause.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [01:32:43](#) It says right there, you adopted (the board) with two exceptions. Which is it? Did you adhere, or did you change to go with a mission statement? One or the other. You wrote it. These are your words, not mine.

Dr. Griffin: [01:32:55](#) We adhered to the law.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [01:32:56](#) So, you lied in this email to these persons?

Dr. Griffin: [01:33:00](#) I wouldn't say I lied.

House Select Committee on Oversight and Reform Hearing, December 10, 2025

Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools

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Superintendent Rodney Trice

Rep. Jones, Chair: [01:33:02](#) Did you misconstrue the truth and not be honest with these people? Are you lying to us, or did you lie to them? You lied to somebody.

Dr. Griffin: [01:33:12](#) I may not have been as clear as I wished I could have been.

Rep. Jones, Chair: [01:33:15](#) This has nothing to do with clear. This is a lie. These are lies. You swore to tell the truth today, and you lied. My friend here wants to get mad with me and say that I'm a little harsh on this committee. This is about children, indoctrination and grooming, and that is what you are doing, and it's wrong. And you sat here at this committee today and you lied to us. I wanted you to walk in here and say, "Hey, man, we were wrong. We're going to do the right thing. We took the wrong path, but we're correcting ourselves as hundreds of corporations and school districts have done over the last 12 months." They found out it was wrong. This has nothing to do with what my friend from Wake County said. It's not. This is about protection. You're putting filth in front of babies. The biggest decision they make, are they going to have macaroni and cheese or rice for supper?

[01:34:11](#) They don't need to be worried about pronouns. Hell, they don't know what a pronoun is. It's wrong. What you're doing is wrong, and you lied to this committee under oath. Is there any further questions from the committee? Representative Echevarria. That's the last question for today.

Rep. Echevarria: [01:34:34](#) Thank you. My journey here has been interesting. My family, I'm a descendant of immigrants. And often when we have a discussion like this, some of my colleagues ignore their own accomplishments to perpetuate a narrative. So, we have up here people of color. We have LGBT people up here. And apparently in our society, we have been able to attain. You, Mr. Trice, obviously you've attained to the level of superintendent, and I applaud you for that. I've read your resume, it is excellent, and I thank you for serving. I do have a question about the future. I mean, obviously the chairman has spoken about the honesty that's been shared here, but I do have a question about the future. So, people can live how they live. That's not what the Parents' Bill of Rights is about. So, my question is this, have all the parents of students who are using a different name or pronoun in your district been notified?

[01:35:45](#)

Currently, so that email is what it is. But since then, now under your charge, obviously you were the deputy superintendent, have they all been notified?

Dr. Trice:

[01:35:57](#)

It's my understanding that all parents have been notified. It's my expectation as superintendent that as a district, we will follow SB 49, Parents' Bill of Rights, as written.

Rep. Echevarria:

[01:36:09](#)

Okay. So, now you keep saying "as written," I love that. Will they be notified?

Dr. Trice:

[01:36:15](#)

As I mentioned, SB 49 requires that parents are notified.

Rep. Echevarria:

[01:36:20](#)

Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you for appearing today.

Rep. Jones, Chair:

[01:36:26](#)

I'm speechless. I'm glad I put some words down before I got here because I'm disgusted by your open defiance. I'm disgusted by your lies. What we've seen here today is dangerous and a predatory reach of radical woke ideology disguised as diversity, equity, and inclusion being pushed on our most vulnerable. Let's be clear, these aren't policies, and they do not protect children. You sat there and tried to tell us this is about protecting kids and promoting acceptance. It's not. Let me tell you exactly what it is: extreme indoctrination that targets children, grooms them, and drives a wedge between them and their families. Yeah, the media is going to spin this. We know it. But I want to know how defying state law and injecting politics in the classroom is not extreme. How is keeping secrets from parents about their own children during moments of deep confusion not extreme?

[01:37:18](#)

How is manipulating curriculum to mold kids into political foot soldiers not extreme? Y'all have bragged about it. You've admitted to it. Parents send their children to school every day expecting them to learn, to be safe, to be in a neutral environment, free of politics and free of filth. Instead, you stole their innocence. You push books and lesson plans and surveys that have no place in this school. Academic achievement gone. You've replaced reading, math, and science with guilt, shame, and division. You're teaching kids to feel guilty, either oppressed based on color of their skin, their family values, or what they believe. And while performing gaps grow wider and test scores fall off a cliff, you focused on one thing, spreading your ideology. Let me be clear to every parent watching and

listening. This General Assembly hears you, and we stand with you. We will not rest until our schools get back to teaching basics—reading, writing, math, science, civics, not gender politics, not racial division, and not activist slogans.

[01:38:27](#)

If parents want to teach that at home, they're welcome to do such, but it's not going to be adhered in our public schools, period. Because right now, what's happening in your classrooms is not education. It's recruitment, and it targets the children. They're turning them into foot soldiers for a cause that they don't understand by adults who know better. I'm here to tell you, you don't get to do that. You will not ignore state law. You will not turn our public schools into laboratories for social engineering while robbing kids of their education. This ends today, because if not, we're going to fight you every step of the way. We're going to protect children. We're going to restore sanity in this state, and we will make sure that no radical ideology stands between a parent and their children ever again. Let me be real clear. This General Assembly will use every tool, every statute, and every ounce of our authority to protect children and to force you to comply with the law.

[01:39:32](#)

If you don't follow it willingly, we will hold you to the fire with every legal and legislative mechanism in our power. You've made your choice, and we've made ours. This committee is over.