

**Orange County Board of Education
Candidate Questionnaire
Sponsored by Orange County Voice**

Personal Profile

Name: Charles (Greg) Williams

Position Sought: *Orange County School Board*

Incumbent (y/n): N

Education/Professional Background: *UNC Chapel Hill – Computer Programming, Old Dominion University – Electronics Engineering, Naval War College – Joint Professional Military Education.*

- *Professional: CEO/President - SERT Systems, Inc, and Commanding Officer US Navy - NCTAMSLANT Detachment Raleigh, NC.*

Questions

- 1. What skills/training do you bring to the table that can benefit Orange County students? If you have served on the board previously, why do you want to serve again?**

As the CEO of a corporation, I have had experience with Budgets and Financial responsibility which would be of use when working with the county's school budget. From my military training, leadership and commitment are core values that are used and expected from the officer community. I am committed to ensuring that each student receives the quality education that they deserve. Additionally, my training as a certified Naval Instructor and the years that I have spent training our young sailors will be of value in the continued growth of Orange County Schools by ensuring that the curriculum and resources are up to date and used effectively.

- 2. In your view, what is the primary responsibility of the School Board and what should its goals be?**

Our primary responsibility is to ensure that each student receives a quality education in a safe environment with the tools needed to achieve that goal.

Goal 1: A quality education through continued Professional Development for our faculty, updated curriculums, creative teaching/instructional techniques, and the retention of our quality teaching staff.

Goal 2: Effective use and spending of the county's school budget.

Goal 3: Ensuring that the School Board has clear and open communication between the faculty, parents, and community.

3. What three programs that directly affect student achievement are working best in Orange County Schools? What programs need the most improvement? How would you improve them?

I think that both the Math and Science, along with the Media/Technology Programs are having a positive impact on our students, but that they have to be constantly updated to ensure that our schools technology and curriculum are on the cutting edge of where the rest of the world is. I want to see more done to improve the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Program and greater emphasis on our Exceptional Children (EC) Programs – all of our students deserve a quality education and it is my tasking as a School Board member to ensure that is happening on my watch.

4. How would you prioritize areas of spending for the Orange County School budget? If funding was cut, where would you cut spending?

We would have to ensure that any cuts to programs would not negatively affect the quality of education for our students. The priority would be to not negatively affect that quality of instruction. We would have to be creative and look at what can affectively be cut back while still maintaining that high level of instruction – I don't think that there is one key area that can be cut. We have to weigh all choices and make the difficult decision of where to cut back.

5. Do you feel that the amount of parental involvement allowed or encouraged with teachers and coaches is more than enough, less than enough or about right? Why?

I don't think that we can ever say that parental involvement is about right or more than enough – the family has to be involved and the faculty and School Board have to listen. I think the more a family is involved in a child's education and school life,

the more affective that education can be. The feedback from parents and faculty help to sharpen the level of instruction and its effectiveness.

6. The legislature recently decided to add age-appropriate sex education for the public school in addition to abstinence only programs. Do you support this? Why/why not?

I think that it is important to have age-appropriate sex education to inform our students of what happens if they have sex and how it can affect them at such a young age. I do agree with the addition of abstinence only programs in the hope that it will lower the number of teen pregnancies. Ultimately, the family has to be onboard and supportive of these programs – the continued education in this area needs to be strengthened and promoted by the parents.

7. Is bullying a problem at OCS? If yes, what would you do to improve this?

I do not know of specific cases of bullying in Orange County Schools, but any school will have some form of bullying in varying stages and intensity. The key is to make the faculty aware of the signs and what to look for, to ensure that students know that they can come forward with a complaint and not feel threatened, and to ensure that parents are involved and supportive of the program to eliminate bullying. A structured form of punishment has to be utilized also – just sending the student home or suspending them is not always the answer. Keep them in school and learning through an “in school” suspension program, that way we can hopefully address the issue, correct it, and still offer that student an education; not giving them an opportunity to turn away from school and possibly drop out.

8. The school bus system is important to rural residents who lack neighborhood schools. Some of our children are on the bus for more than one hour to get to school. We are also concerned about their safety on the bus

a. What is a reasonable amount of time for students to be on the school bus before the first school bell rings?

- i. Elementary Student?** ~ 30 minutes max
- ii. Middle School Student?** ~ 30 – 45 minutes max
- iii. High School Student?** ~ 1 hour max

Providing schools actually in some of these rural areas, and not just in the city limits, would improve this situation and cut down on some of the routes.

b. Should new school buses have seat belts? Why/why not? I think that it is a good idea. Any additional form of safety that can aid in the well being and security of our children on the buses is a plus. We need to make sure that we are doing everything to ensure their safety when traveling to school.

9. Legal, moral and ethical issues are a fact of life and provide important teaching moments for our students. Is the current code of conduct working? What is the board's role in assuring that legal/ethical issues involving faculty, staff or board members are handled fairly and expeditiously, with minimal distraction?

The current Code of Conduct is very concise and detailed and explains what is and is not tolerated within the school system. It also clearly states the response by the school system if the code is violated. I think that it is working, but that it can be improved on. The code has to be adhered to at all times and infractions have to be handled expeditiously and fairly. The faculty has to be aware of what to do in the event the code is broken, students have to realize that infractions will be dealt with swiftly and fairly every time, and parents have to be involved and aware of their children's actions at school. The Board, Faculty, and Staff have to have all of the details of any infraction and make educated, fair decisions based on those facts. We have to remain neutral and not take sides that will cloud the outcome. The ultimate goal is to stand behind the Code of Conduct and provide a safe and positive environment in each of our schools.