

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

Personal Profile

Name: Brenda Stephens

Position Sought: *Orange County School Board*

Incumbent (y/n): N

Education/Professional Background:

- **Bachelors degree in Sociology ~ Minor in Black Studies**
- **Master in Library and Information Science.**
- **Retired Director of Libraries for Caswell, Orange and Person**
- **Army Veteran ~ Fort Bragg was my permanent duty station.**
- **Filled in for teachers in the classroom at Cameron Park School during college years.**

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? Response:**

Serving as a school board member requires knowledge and commitment. Through my experience as a previous Board member, I believe that I have the knowledge to work effectively and colloratively on the board.

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

The role of a school board member is to establish policy for the school district and approve a budget and hire a qualified superintendent.

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?** Response

Efforts that are being made to close the Education Gap are successful. Drop Out prevention efforts are working well, there are efforts underway to promote Science with our robotics club. The face of FFA has changed significantly throughout the years, and that's a positive for our school district and it is making a difference in the lives of our children.

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

It is role of the administrative staff to make budgetary recommendations to the school board. The customarily act on the recommendations coming from the superintendent and staff. We have drastically cut, and I can't imagine where the district could possibly cut any further.

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?** Response:

There is never too much Parental Involvement. Parental Involvement is crucial in the educational process according to a Portland Based study. The study indicates that parents taking part in school functions, helping with homework and modeling desired behaviors heightens student achievement.

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?** Response:

I support sex education curriculum that provides factual information for students. I also support the development of curriculum that is geared appropriately to age level of students.

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

Response:

Bullying exists in all schools. It is incumbent upon the leadership to implement and enforce strategies which address ways to help reduce bullying.

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? Response: I believe 30 minutes would be reasonable for all elementary and 45 minutes for middle and high; however I know that this is not a reality for many students.

b. Should new school buses have seat belts? Why/why not? Response: Seat belts are a good idea, but are cost prohibitive.

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 handed fairly and expeditiously, with minimal distraction? Response:

Orange County schools have a Student Code of conduct. Many of the principles are guided by the North Carolina General Statutes and violators are subject to disciplinary actions by local officials.