

Chapel Hill-Carrboro Board of Education Candidate Platforms

Matthew Barton for Board of Education

I want to help solve the overcrowding of the schools. Academic achievement is lowered when too many children are jammed into each classroom. Crowded trailers that must be evacuated at every serious storm warning are not suitable classrooms. I will continue the cooperative effort of school boards, towns and county government to plan and finance efficient, cost-effective schools for our growing community. A new bond issue is required for the bulk of the financing, and that means more tax revenues will be needed to repay the bonds.

I will work for simultaneous planning of development and the public schools. New residential development brings more

children into the already overcrowded school system. This must be given an important weight during definition and consideration of that development. Specifically, I intend to work with the school administration and the towns to assure that an impact study is performed for each development of greater than 50 homes proposed within the school district.

I support equality of educational opportunity. I support efforts to increase the participation of women and people of color in science and math studies. Beyond reading, writing and arithmetic, I believe understanding the scientific basis for our civilization is important for all students, so

they can participate successfully in an increasingly technical workplace.

I will be accessible to the public to discuss the current status of the school system and what can be done to improve it. Continuing the strong tradition of citizen participation in the major decisions of the school system is crucial for the community.

I support better communication with parents about what is expected of their children during the year, both in academics and behavior. I will propose the school provide a clear description at the beginning of the year of the topics the student should master by year end.

Bill Elstran for Board of Education

It is hardly arguable that we are the most talented community in America with bright people focused at our flagship University.

What is it that prevents this critical mass from reaching the goal of individual excellence in our schools?

Our school system is a good one, but it is not as good as it should be, and we haven't even started thinking about what it can be.

Those in the know are the first to say "No!" — "no" to new ideas, to new approaches, to new ways of utilizing people.

The consensus committee concept is not a good way to nurture and utilize the talents of individuals.

Schools are there to serve individual students, their parents and the community that supports them.

We should provide the students with an academic challenge and high motivation so that they can obtain achievement, self-

esteem and confidence in their own decision-making.

We should communicate with their parents, get to know these parents and involve them in ways not yet tried.

Our community deserves a school product of employable and socially responsible citizens.

Weak leadership should not abuse the money citizens give us to run our schools.

We did not just notice that we are short of classroom space, nor did we just discover that many African-American students are not being served.

This motivational genocide started in the '80s and continues to this day.

Our gifted and talented students have always needed the extended challenge they are not getting.

Our students are disadvantaged by an abundance of narrow knowledge of a few cultures and broad ignorance of others.

What is necessary to bring us from a posture of resisting change to one of welcoming change, new ideas and seeking new frontiers?

The answer is experience in education, courage in meeting a challenge, and the ability to lead individuals.

Bill Elstran has been a leader since his university days as a quarterback and successful member in the Student Senate.

He has 10 years as a teacher, 10 years as a principal, two years at the superintendent's level in finance and eight years in curriculum.

He is an author (Latest: "What Every Parent Should Know About Schools"), sportsman, artist, and an educator with vision and courage.

On Nov. 7, put the status quo "consensus committee concept" out to pasture and vote for the only candidate with extensive school leadership and experience.

Elizabeth Carter for Board of Education

I have always tried to be involved in the education of my children. I have volunteered at their schools as part of the PTSA, served as co-chairwoman of the Carrboro School Fair, and helped out in the classroom, book fairs and numerous school field trips. I have always been concerned about public education and encouraged my friends, family and acquaintances to get involved with their children. I've even "claimed" some children as my second family because their parents could only get involved at a certain level due to jobs or other needs. But I knew that those parents also wanted the best for their children.

Through my school involvement and community volunteer efforts, I listened to parents, students and teachers discuss the needs and benefits of our public educational system.

There are three specific goals that I propose need immediate attention in our school system. They are:

has approved new proficiency standards that will be implemented in 1999-2000. It is very important that we assess and prepare our teachers as well as our students to surpass these standards. Measures must be implemented NOW to assure the success of ALL OUR STUDENTS. We cannot wait for 1999. The standards must be viewed not as a means of retention, but acceleration and excellence. We must believe that all children can be successful. The Blue Ribbon Task Force recommendations must be implemented. The playing field for our students must be leveled. We are in the business of educating children.

2. ACCOUNTABILITY. The school board has charged the district with the implementation of Proficiency Standards. In order for our school district to be successful, greater accountability is needed. The problems are not mine or yours alone, nor are the solutions. The degree of accountability reflects our commitment to every student. The school board, adminis-

trators, teachers, parents and students must work together to assure mastery of the basic skills needed for completion at each grade level, and for the dreams to be realized by our unselfish involvement and respect for students. "Walk the talk!"

3. FACILITIES/OVERCROWDING. The two are interconnected. If we continue to grow, we must assess needs and plan with the other governmental bodies and developers in our community for new facilities and renovation of existing buildings. We must plan strategically, being mindful that our strength is in our diversity. We must maintain and create varying costs for housing and development.

ALL CHILDREN ARE MINE. I believe in their ability to be the best. I am exercising my belief by doing formal and informal actions which demonstrate my belief. By believing and doing, we as a school system can help each child achieve. I believe in your children, as well as mine. Will you believe in me?

Harvey Goldstein for Board of Education

Our public schools traditionally have provided very high quality education to the children of this community, and have enjoyed deservedly a great deal of community support.

But we now face a horizon of severely overcrowded schools, class sizes that are too large to maximize the academic achievement of all students and a growing political climate of cuts in needed public services combined with vicious attacks on public education itself.

These problems seriously threaten our ability to meet our most fundamental and important obligation to the next generation: to prepare our children to meet the challenges of work and citizenship in an increasingly technological, competitive and diverse society.

My highest priorities for the School Board are:

(1) Reduce class size.

This is the key for teachers being able to address the individual learning needs, and academically challenge, every student.

(2) Relieve the acute overcrowding problem and change the way capital facilities are planned so as to avoid chronic overcrowding.

This will require a school bond in 1996 or 1997, and joint-planning among the county, towns and schools.

(3) Ensure that the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Task Force are effectively implemented and fully funded.

Emphasis here should be on more effective parental involvement and mentoring programs, and activities that extend the effective learning day of students who are at risk.

My background and qualifications include:

- Orange County resident for 13 years.
- Married, with two children in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools.
- Educator and teacher for 19 years.
- Professor of City and Regional Planning, UNC.
- Past President of the Parent Board, Chapel of the Cross Child Care Center.

- President, Chapel Hill-Carrboro PTA Council, 1994-95; vice president, 1993-94.
- Frank Porter Graham PTA Executive Boards four years.
- Culbreth Middle School PTSA Executive Boards 1995-96.
- Orange County Skill Development Program Board, 1995-96
- Recipient of 1995 Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools Volunteer of the Year award.

I am running for the Chapel Hill-Carrboro School Board because we need, now more than ever, strong, effective leadership, visions, fresh ideas and an unwavering commitment to excellence for our public schools.

My experience as a planner and an educator gives me the perspective and the appreciation of the links between quality of schooling and workforce preparedness, and between quality of public schools and community economic well-being.

I am prepared to "roll up my sleeves" and help meet the threats now facing our public schools.

Louise Cole for Board of Education

A "One Size Fits All" approach to academic achievement doesn't work.

1) The main emphasis of my campaign is to strengthen academic performance for each and every child. The present curriculum works for only some. Rarely noted is the plight of our minority student achievement, currently below the state average and almost 40 points below Durham's.

The Blue Ribbon Task Force has recommended using a proven curriculum that works for minority children. I have researched and found two such "proven" curricula that have demonstrated dramatic results for minorities within months rather than years. A Johns Hopkins University fourth-year analysis of this was overwhelming. Scores went from the 25th to the 75th percentile in four short years.

Such a curriculum doesn't pander to the

emotional, warm fuzzies and social engineering of today's Curriculum Restructuring. It's a very strong, core-knowledge based and discipline-controlled curriculum. In short, it works!! Our curriculum has had years of analyses to try to find the problem of showing minimal improvements at best. Last year the school system spent \$6,100 per student, almost twice that of private schools. Money is not the answer!!

2) There are ways to improve upon the wasteful spending and redirect monies to the classrooms, i.e., there was an increase of 292 students over last year and an increase of only two more teachers, while an increase of 15 administrators and service personnel was noted.

Overcrowding has an impact on achievement. Lack of proper facilities planning and recent extravagant spending on schools

have compromised the district's ability to build. We can complete two schools within the next four years, without raising taxes.

3) True Site Based Management will give the parents, principals and teachers the power to accomplish the above.

I want the talents, skills and abilities of each child to be recognized, challenged and magnified. We need curricula that work, and to build more schools by eliminating wasteful overhead. We need to help the teachers in the classrooms by directing more teachers and supplies into the classroom. We need real site based management so there can be real responsibility and accountability.

Mahatma Gandhi said, "The future depends on what we do in the present." It's time for strengthening academic performance and eliminating the waste now.

Peter Morcombe for Board of Education

Almost ignored by the media, a bold new policy for education is taking shape. In May of this year, Jay Robinson, the chairman of the N.C. Board of Education, announced a new direction for the management of our public schools: "We believed that we should seize the opportunity to transfer authority from a large agency in Raleigh to where it never has been: with the more than 1,900 schools across North Carolina."

How will things improve when authority is truly at site level?

The handcuffs will be removed from principals, teachers and their customers. Here are just two examples:

- Curriculum. The distress of Afro-American children tells us that all is not well in our schools.

If we work together to help them, all children will benefit.

Our schools are awash with experimental programs imposed from above.

How can teachers teach, or kids learn when the curriculum is always changing?

This district is introducing "Curriculum Restructuring," based on an approach that has not achieved a single shining success after 20 years of experimenting in thousands of schools across the United States.

Our schools must be allowed to consider better, proven curricula such as those advocated by Louise Cole, Sandra Theard and myself.

- Waste. Public education is a monopoly. Have you ever heard of an efficient monopoly?

Ron Pannesi recommended that we drag our administration "kicking and screaming" into the 1980s. Currently we are wasting between \$3 million and \$8 million per year.

With local control it will be easier to eliminate this waste. The savings can be used to fund more teachers and more school construction.

Poor leaders have one answer to every problem: Give us more money!

We don't need more taxes, just better leadership and better management of our resources.

I ask you to elect me and the other common-sense candidates, so that the bold initiative by the N.C. Board of Education will be implemented fully, faithfully and without delay.

Kevin Cook for Board of Education

These are four of the most important areas of concern I have for the Chapel Hill-Carrboro schools.

1. I would like to improve the education for the children in our schools that are at grade level and below grade level. Reducing class size is the fastest way to improve the teacher's ability to help these children. In Orange County last year they started a program called "Communities in Schools" with a ratio of 15-16 students to a teacher. They noticed as much as a 60-point increase in the end of year test scores for at-risk students. Individualized instruction can help many of our children catch up and excel in school. Empowering our teachers and helping them with reduced class size benefits all.

2. We need to build more schools to

accommodate the growth in our schools. We need to work closely with our county commissioners and local governments to fund the construction of new schools. The new state projections for growth in Chapel Hill-Carrboro schools are an increase of 35 percent from 1993-94 to 2003-2004. For the previous 20 years we did not build any new schools in the district. I am very impressed with the recent requests from the Town Council on requesting donations of land from Southern Village and Meadowmont. I feel that my business experience and communication skills will help in the school board's future negotiations with the county commissioners on the funding for more schools.

3. I would like to see site based management increased. We need to return more

responsibility and budget issues to individual schools, empowering our teachers to help their students improve through more individualized instruction. Presently individual schools do not have enough funding to implement special programs to address the needs of their students.

4. I volunteer with the Pines Community Center helping minorities and low-income families obtain financing for buying homes in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro area. I feel there is a tremendous need to teach all of our children about credit and managing money in high school. I would like to see a program offered at the high schools addressing this community issue.

I would pursue funding for this program from our local banks and financial institutions.

Sandra Theard for Board of Education

I am a lifetime resident, born, raised and educated in Chapel Hill.

I have a son presently in the school system.

I am a volunteer at Phillips Middle School.

I am not the status quo and feel the school board needs a strong voice and leadership that will treat all students and families with respect, fairness, empathy and decency regardless of socio-economic status, culture, race, sex or religion.

I can provide this voice and this leadership.

I support academic excellence that works for everyone, personal accountability, eliminating economic waste and mentor programs.

Rebecca Coyne for Board of Education

1) Stop waste: establish priorities and goals for expenditures. All spending should be focused on the most efficient way to achieve academic excellence. A prime example of waste is the decision the present school board made on Oct. 5 to spend \$10,000 of the Blue Ribbon Task Force money on yet another survey instead of focusing on the specific recommendations made for programs.

2) Establish guidelines for dealing with violence, drugs and gangs in school. The school board needs to provide broad definitions of acceptable behavior. Then, through the superintendent, offer guidance to the individual SGCs and principals in

the establishment and implementation of behavior expectations with specific positive and negative reinforcements.

3) Require a response of the school system to questions and concerns of parents and students. When a concern or question is brought to the attention of anyone within the school system, serious consideration needs to be given in an immediate response.

4) Bridge education and test results of different racial backgrounds. There are two curriculums. One is written. The second is what the teachers teach. It is designed to be less demanding to create a better self-image in the students. I submit that the belief

that a student cannot do the higher level curriculum only serves to convince the student of inabilities instead of abilities.

5) Establish goals and techniques for providing for broad middle-range students' special needs. "Average" students who display an unusual "gift" in any subject area or are "challenged" in any subject need to receive the extra attention given to "Special Education" children regularly.

6) Motivate and reward existing school system employees. Employees and facilities that demonstrate an exceptional improvement toward specific goals need to receive additional money as determined by immediate supervisors.

Ken Touw for Board of Education

My wife and I have three children: a daughter who is a Chapel Hill High School graduate, now in her second year of a full graduate fellowship in mathematics at the University of California at Los Angeles (a school choice we keep secret during basketball season), a daughter who is a junior, and a son who is a freshman at CHHS.

I have worked in Chapel Hill-Carrboro schools for 10 years and on the school board for four years to seek positive changes in order to help our students achieve academic success.

As a parent working in the classroom, a PTA Council representative, and a member of numerous system-wide committees, I have demonstrated commitment to empowering teachers and parents to improve community schools.

We have an excellent public school system which can get a lot better without

destroying its foundations.

I believe in protecting the rights of those with whom I disagree.

I will not use the courts or the state legislature to impose my will and values on others.

We can and must resolve conflicts through open, respectful dialogue.

If re-elected I plan to:

- Enhance school-based management by continuing to provide increased policy and budget flexibility, by encouraging responsible teachers, thoughtful parents, active students and other educational staff to participate, and by increasing communication with schools.
- Improve academic achievement of all students by focusing on the educational needs of each student, recognizing various learning styles, encouraging individual talents, broadening availability of gifted ser-

vices, meeting the special needs of students as inclusively as possible, and recruiting community and university resources to meet needs of students and teachers.

- Alleviate overcrowding and strive to reduce class size by advocating for additional quality schools funded by the county and state and by permitting site choice of multi-track year-round schooling.
- Expand evaluation of academic programs and school staff by including use of client feedback and student achievement.
- Determine feasibility of year-round education in Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools.
- Renew long-range vision for the school system.
- Strengthen and individualize continuing professional education for school staff, especially in the areas of science, math and the arts.

Nicholas Didow for Board of Education

My four major priorities for our schools are: 1) to end overcrowding and establish effective facilities and resource planning and implementation, in renewed partnership with Carrboro, Chapel Hill and Orange County governmental authorities; 2) to further decentralized site-based management and school restructuring initiatives; 3) to raise the performance expectations for all stakeholders in our public schools; and 4) to increase professional development resources for our teachers and support staff and hire proven, accomplished teachers and staff. I care deeply about the quality of our schools for all our children.

The most important issue during the next four years is to end the overcrowding crisis. Our school system can never again adopt a passive role in zoning, development review and general community planning. We must be actively involved in all

review and permit processes to anticipate and effectively plan for impact on the schools concurrent with development. Furthermore, we simply must accept and initiate the current invitations to renew partnership with the towns of Chapel Hill and Carrboro in effectively planning for growth. Clearly we must approach the schools as a responsibility of the entire community.

We must also take the initiative to include the Orange County Board of Education and staff in joint facilities and resource planning and funding requests before going forward to the Orange County Commissioners. We must be able to understand the position of the County Commissioners, and anticipate the steps in the planning process that will address the demands and pressures on them.

I am a native of North Carolina with three children enrolled in our public

schools. I have been a faculty member at UNC's Kenan-Flagler Business School since 1979. My record of effective leadership and positive community service includes serving on the original FPG School Governance Committee (1991-1994) and helping implement Family Grouping at FPG in 1993, PTA membership and school volunteer activities. I have also served on the board of directors of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Public School Foundation since 1991 and helped raise money and manage grant funds to promote system-wide education innovation and teaching excellence. I was a founding member of University United Methodist Preschool and served on its board 1986-1991. Over the years I have served in a variety of lay leadership responsibilities at University United Methodist Church, including chairman of the administrative board in 1992 and as a trustee from 1994 to the present.

Sara Williams for Board of Education

My candidacy is best represented as a composite of three well-known fictional characters — a Lion, a Scarecrow, and a Tin man. I am empowered with the courage of a lion to make the changes that we must make; I shall utilize my brain like the Scarecrow to study our options, share ideas, decide what's best; finally, this Tin man's heart is in it because I care deeply about our children and our schools and will do all within my power to encourage their success.

One problem overshadows our district: the gap in the achievement of majority and minority students. There is much emotion over this problem. But it's not an obstacle we can't overcome; I like to see it as a challenge. I believe that all children will

rise to the level of higher expectations — we must demand it! Change takes time; the schools alone cannot compensate for the disparities in students' homes. "There's no place like home," as Dorothy said. Home is where we need to begin our mission. If you ask teachers why students do not do well, the answer is because parents do not support the schools. I want to be the champion for quality improvement, and I believe the school board should support all efforts at getting parents — and the community — involved and helping teachers STAY effective.

This partnership is an integral part of Site-Based Management, treating teachers, principals and parents as resources. Let's allow them the responsibility and

accountability to day-to-day decisions which are unique to their particular school and students.

I am advocating optional year-round schools.

They are cost-effective and can accommodate growth, alleviate existing overcrowding and allow for class-size reductions while minimizing the need for expensive, new school construction.

So, Munchkins and Good Witches: I need your support and vote on Nov. 7. As we travel down this Yellow Brick Road, let us show courage, use our brains, and have a heart.

And when I get to our wizard Neil Pedersen, I can say "See — we had the power within us to figure this out all along."

Also running for Board of Education: Bea Hughes-Werner