

NAME: Wandy W. Taylor
PARTY: Democratic
SEEKING: School Board, District 2



Why are you seeking your office?

After retiring from Gwinnett County Public Schools in 2016 as a principal, I continued my passion for teaching and learning by working as an education consultant. During my interactions with many parents and stakeholders, it became apparent that they embraced the changing demographics in the county and they wanted a new, more progressive “voice” to represent them. As a lifelong educator, I can add value to the existing board and bring a fresh mindset to educate ALL children. Thus, I decided to seek a seat on the board of education with the campaign slogan of – *Now is the Time!*

What do you expect to accomplish if elected?

If elected, I will endeavor to help Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) transition from being a “very good” to a “great” school system. Achieving greatness will be contingent upon the school system’s success with meeting the needs of ALL children, regardless of their cultural, religious, or socioeconomic background. As a member of the board, I will be a persistent “voice” for ALL children and serve as a constant reminder to my fellow board members that the success of GCPS hinges on our ability to educate our most challenging students.

What distinguishes your candidacy?

My 15 years in the corporate sector coupled with 22 years in public education have provided me with an array of experiences that separate my candidacy from the others. As a retired principal and current education consultant, I am keenly aware of the challenges related to teaching and learning. I have managed school budgets; supervised teachers; served *in loco parentis* to thousands of students from many socio-cultural backgrounds; and counseled countless parents regarding their important role in the education process. Simply stated, I have a firm grasp of teaching and learning and the challenges that educators face every day.

How can we improve school safety?

Schools across America use various strategies such as having frequent drills, hiring school resource officers (SROs), using metal detectors, and installing buzz-in systems in their facilities to improve school safety. While there is merit for the use of all these strategies, in my opinion, the most important strategy for improving school safety is *building positive relationships*. When school officials (SROs and

campus monitors included) build relationships with their students and staff, the climate becomes less chaotic and more conducive to teaching and learning.

Pick one issue. Expand on how you will address it.

For over a decade, GCPS has continued to exhibit a pattern of suspending minority students at a disproportionate rate. When students are suspended they become *disengaged* with the education process, which often leads to low academic achievement and a higher probability of dropping out of school. In the same way Starbucks recently “owned” its issue related to cultural insensitivity, GCPS must do likewise. The suspension issue in GCPS cannot be resolved until the leaders “own” the problem. I will lead that charge and strive to make GCPS a more culturally competent organization that strives to engage ALL students.

Please give a 100-word summary on your background.

I have 15 years of experience as a director of human resource services in corporate America and 22 years of experience in public education, eight as a principal in Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS). In addition to having earned my doctoral degree in Educational Leadership, I am a wife; mother of three educators (two teachers and a principal); and the grandmother of an elementary student in GCPS. As evidenced by my doctoral dissertation – *Teachers’ Perception of Using Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies to Improve Classroom Engagement* – and my current work as a consultant, I have a passion for public education