



## **THE NHC GOP Podcast Transcript**

### **Season 3, Episode 2: Civility in Education: Conversation with Nikki Bascome, Candidate for NHC Board of Education**

**Reuel Sample:** Welcome to the NHC GOP podcast. I'm Reuel Sample. I am talking to somebody who I am told that if you knew that she grew up on the boardwalk of Carolina Beach, you need to be worried about her. Nikki Bascome, welcome to the podcast.

**Nikki Bascome:** Hey everyone. Hey Reuel, thank you so much for having me. I'm so excited.

**Reuel Sample:** It's great having you here. You are running for school board here in New Hanover County. Why in the world would you want to do something like that?

**Nikki Bascome:** Oh dear Lord, put a gun to my head for that one. I actually, I it wasn't something that I went into lightly. It's something that I have considered for a long time, something that my husband and I, I think he's, , more excited about this than I am. Uh, just we see that there's a need. There's, uh, there's a civility that's missing. This isn't the same community that it used to be. Growing up at Carolina Beach, you knew everyone. And one of the things that I always told my children growing up is you don't say anything bad about someone unless you're in a closet, covered your mouth with a pillow, and you you muffled it. , and that's not. That's not how it's happening nowadays. It's it the keyboard warriors and everyone saying bad things about everyone. And, , it's just a sad state of affairs, and we just need to get back to being kind, and we need to get back to being the people that we want our children to grow up to be. I want, I want my child to look back at this podcast and say, I'm proud of my mom. Look at her.

**Reuel Sample:** Yeah, well, let's talk about that civility problem right now, is that there's no doubt about it, is that we are divided, is that you're either Republican, you're a Democrat. You you think teachers are the worst things in the world, or you think parents are the worst things in the world. You think principals are the bad things. You think the school board is out. Why are we why are we at this low point of civility in our school board?

**Nikki Bascome:** I think because we've forgotten how to talk to each other, we have forgotten how to communicate on a real personal level. I think we we forget that that teacher goes home and is a parent themselves, or that parent wakes up in the morning and has a tough job. And it's not that they don't care about their children, but they're trying to provide for their children. I think the the civility has gone out the window because we forgot to communicate with each other. , we forgot to ask the questions of what do you think? Instead of nowadays, it's I can tell you exactly what you think. And I don't like it. And it's just, no, you don't know me. You can. I can't even tell you Reuel, I've had so many people over the last couple of weeks, , that have listened to some of my speeches and listened to some of my campaigns that I've known for years and say, I didn't know that about you. And how can how can you turn around and say, you know everything about your child's teacher that you've never even talked to, or the parents of a child that you saw down the hallway that might be a little bit dirty and you know exactly what's going on in their lives.

**Nikki Bascome:** You don't know unless you ask those questions, and you begin to communicate and you develop a relationship. And I honestly feel like we've gotten away from building our relationships. We've really gotten away from humility. We've gotten away from I'm not perfect, I'm not claiming to be perfect, but I'm not going to point out all your flaws either. And but we're going to try to find a way to come together and do what's best for the kids and and at least be an example for our kids. And our kids shouldn't demand perfection from everyone. They should know they're going to make mistakes. They're going to say the wrong thing, they're going to do the wrong thing. But as long as you learn from it and you come back from it and you make better choices, then we can all come together. And as adults, we need to do that for our children. We need to be the example for them to follow.

**Reuel Sample:** One of the things that that that occurs to me is, is when I was in school is that this was a a partnership between teachers, parents, administrators, and they all knew each other. Is that is that oftentimes they'd be in the same church or organization together. And and that's the worst thing to see Mrs. Smith at in the pew next to you, uh, how do we get and because of that, is that there is that this partnership, this, this whole understanding of we're all working together, not for the ideological prize of controlling the school board, but to educate our kids. How are we going to get back to that?

**Nikki Bascome:** Well, it's going to take leadership. It's going to take someone sitting on the board and saying, stop, please stop. And one of the things that came out recently was a survey of teachers that said they felt like they weren't trusted. , and gosh, I can see it when when I'm walking down the hallway, they, they do feel kind of deflated. And it's not just not just that they don't feel trusted by the parents, but they don't feel trusted by our district. Mm. And they don't feel trusted by our board. , and I think it's going to take our board to lead our district leaders to say this is what we need to do, and we need we need to come together and, , it's going to take leadership, not just saying this is what you do, but leadership actually doing it. I was listening to a the first part of the board meeting tonight, and they were not nice to each other. They were not. And talking over each other. And it's something that. Lead by example.

**Reuel Sample:** Yeah. If that if that happened in a classroom and people started talking over each other is that that's not a good thing. And the teacher would hopefully put an end to that. But parents and educators and leaders talking over each other, that sets a really great example for our kids.

**Nikki Bascome:** It does. I saw the best meme. It was a teacher sitting behind her desk and a child standing in front of her, and the, , parent was standing beside the child, and apparently it was a parent teacher conference, and the teacher was saying what the child was doing and the parent was pointing at the child, what were you doing? And that was like 20 years ago. And you do it now, and it's the parent pointing at the teacher, what did you do? And it's the culture has changed and I'm not sure how it changed or why it changed, but one of my missions is to turn it back around and become partners with our teachers and our adults, and anyone that has something to do in our children's lives. And one of the things, okay, being, uh, being a single parent, I had, of course, I went through a divorce with my first two children. And one of the things that the court

system makes you do is to go through mediation. And one of the things that they talk about is regardless of having two separate homes, you must still come together because you're raising this child together so that the child doesn't use one parent against the other. Huh. So if our court systems recognize tornado.

**Reuel Sample:** Sorry about that, folks. We're recording this while we're in the middle of a of a of a storm watch. And so that even though the sound is down, it came on through. So that'll probably hit on your end, too. Go ahead.

**Nikki Bascome:** I put my phone on mute. Did you not?

**Reuel Sample:** I did too, because I am a trained and certified podcast host. But, uh, I got, I got, uh, I got overcome by technology. Continue. Go ahead with your story.

**Nikki Bascome:** , so if our court systems can recognize that a split between a mother and a father can create that atmosphere where a child can use one against the other, how could a child not use the same thing between a parent and a teacher? So as as adults, we should be able to recognize that and say, oh, you're not getting one over on us as long as we communicate with each other. , and admittedly, my my son got in trouble at school this week, and the first thing the teacher did was talk to our son. And encourage him to use better choices, which he didn't. And the next choice was to email us. So it wasn't email his father and I, and it wasn't one of those situations where like, oh my gosh, that evil teacher saying our child is horrible, no. Son, what did you do? And tell us about the situation and trying to to get it and to talk amongst ourselves and say, you know, maybe you need to talk to your teacher about it and and tell our teacher, you know, we're going to address this here at home.

**Nikki Bascome:** You address it at school. And if that doesn't work, let's come together. Let's have a meeting and and let's see where we can go with this. But it was that communication. I am so happy that she emailed me to let me know what was going on so that we could address it at home as well, because I think sometimes they're afraid to approach parents. But we need to get away from the fear and say, you know what? This child is doing this. And I'm not going to asse there's, , there's a really good training called Touch Points with Doctor Brazelton. And it's it's usually geared towards early childhood. And one of the pillars of his training is you leave your assptions at the door.

Just leave your assumptions at the door. And that's the best advice that I've ever been given, is do not walk into. I walked into a classroom with a teacher that I knew had a D beside her name. She was the best teacher I've ever had. And just, you know, I think our power is getting ready to go out.

**Reuel Sample:** Well, we we will we will soldier on. So let's let's talk about some policies here a little bit. Is that one of the things that you are, uh, concerned about is that we have policies that that have built, been built upon policies and, and, and practices and structures and everything else. One of the things that you are concerned with is that you want to find that pathway between making sure that our policies both match state law as well as community values, and sometimes those are at loggerheads. Tell me about tell me about, uh, how you're going to achieve that and some of the background on that.

**Nikki Bascome:** Well, I honestly think that some of it stems from, , miscommunication. I think a lot of people don't really dive into the policies themselves. They they take what someone else says and says, oh, that's the policy means this, that and the other without reading it themselves. And, and I think really making maybe having a little bit and I hate saying the word training, but having parent trainings on what our policies really mean, maybe having spotlights, weekly spotlights that our district says, hey, did you know that policies 7205 says this, this and this? Did you know that policy 4004 is all about student voices? And at one point, the policy was supposed to say that student voices had voting rights on our board.

**Reuel Sample:** Interesting.

**Nikki Bascome:** Did you know these are the notes? That's something that came up tonight. And it does say, and if you look at our policy, , 4004, it does say in student voices that they would have voting rights where applicable. I'm pretty sure the word was where applicable. Okay. Which is vague. Who decides that it's applicable? Who doesn't decide? So that's something else that we need to look at our policies. Why? Why does it say. And now I'm going to have to go look, because I was looking at it tonight because it was something that the school board was discussing tonight about student voices. And, , I know. So when it comes to policy 4004, there are two extremes to that because it is all about student voices of should students sit on a board? Should they sit, you know, should they sit in a policy meeting? Should they sit on the policy committee?

Should they sit on the curriculum committee? , and should they have a voting right. And there's two different factions of that. No, we don't need student voices. And yes, we do need student voices. And I hear again, I kind of fall in the middle. I do agree that our students should be welcome to come, especially now. I don't want my 12 year old in a policy meeting, because he's going to tell you that we need ice cream, and and soccer should be part of the curriculum. But I mean, being realistic and being adult and responsible about it. But our high school students, to see how a policy meeting runs, to see how a curriculum meeting runs and why are you learning what you're learning? Well, it's it's not because Nikki sits on the board and says, this is what you need to learn, but because general statute says this is what you need to learn.

**Nikki Bascome:** But then also so that they can learn a little bit about the government, how government runs. And you can't just because I'm on the school board does not mean that Nikki gets to decide everything. You know, you and I discussed earlier it getting away from it's me, me, me and not we we we. When it is we we decide and we decide as a board. That's why it is what it is. And we also have to follow general statutes. We have to follow our federal grants. We have to follow all these different things. So it's not just the seven people making these decisions. We have to fall within what the policy says. And if we don't like those policies, we don't like those general statutes, we don't like those laws then we go higher and we lobby for higher. But calling me up on the call to audience and talking bad about me is not going to change those, but our need to. But there again, our students need to see how these things - how it how to navigate it. So I'm not against having student voices. I'm against them having voting rights on it.

**Reuel Sample:** Well, because they're students, after all. Is that is that is that they don't know what they don't know. And and and giving them that kind of power is not smart, but giving them a participation in their education, I think, is actually very smart.

**Nikki Bascome:** But then who who decides who's who these students are? Mm. How old are these students? Are they in a particular program? Are they male? Are they female? Are they black or the white? Are their parents Republicans or are their parents Democrats? Are they high school students or are they middle school students, or are they elementary school students? How is that decided? And that's all things that need to be worked out and unfortunately have to be spelled out in our policy. Because if you

don't, then then you have loopholes that people start messing with. And I think that gets us in a lot of trouble, because people find those loopholes and you don't want to stranglehold everything, but you also want to make sure that there aren't loopholes that people are taking advantage of.

**Reuel Sample:** Now, the other side of that coin is, is that there you have a responsibility to community values. Is that and there are some times when the community values go head to head with state laws. So how do you tackle that? Uh, uh, do you just fly in the face of state laws or or what? What do you do when the state says, well, we can allow, for example, biological boys to play against girls on teams and stuff like that. And the community clearly says, we don't want that. So what do you do about things like that?

**Nikki Bascome:** Well, that's where as someone on a board, you can start making those connections at a state level, and you start navigating those avenues of how do we make those changes, how do we talk to DPI and Department of Public Instruction? How do we talk to our state representatives? And and that's what we start doing is we become the advocate. We don't sit here on this board as, hey, look at me, Queen Nikki, telling you to do this, this and this. No, I become an advocate for you. I can't change that. But here's who you talk to. This is the avenue that you go down. These are the policies that you look for, the state statutes that you look at, the laws that you look at, and who can change those who can make a difference. And. Show them how to lobby and how to be an advocate for themselves. Be an advocate for their family. And it's going to take more than just one person. I I'm just one person. I can't do it for you. But, you know, I'm I'm going to talk to my neighbor over here and my neighbor over there. And together we're going to go make change at the state level. I, I'm I'm here. I can only do so much, but I can be an advocate for you and, and help guide you to where you need to go.

**Reuel Sample:** The primaries are coming up. They're just they're 56 days away. Early voting starts.

**Nikki Bascome:** No pressure. No pressure at all.

**Reuel Sample:** No, uh, early voting starts Thursday, February 15th. So you get Valentine's Day off, but Thursday, and then and then early voting ends on March 2nd.

And the election day for the primaries are March 5th, 2024. How are you going out and talking to people?

**Nikki Bascome:** Right now we have a couple a couple of small events. I am trying to get out there, and unfortunately, the political arena is very difficult. People are scared. People are scared. They're like, I don't know if I want to host an event, but I support you, I love you. I have a couple of small events coming up. They are. I can't advertise them yet because they aren't written in stone. But I do have a couple of small events, and then I'm going to go to as many things as I can be invited to. I think we're going to be in the Martin Luther King Parade, which I'm excited about. I have business cards, I have some mailers that I'm going to send out. And like I said, I grew up here, so I'm hoping that my local grassroots people will come out to the polls for me, which they say they will. We'll see. And I'm also hoping I, I've been in a lot of community groups and I've, I've done other things in our community. I'm hoping that people will see past the letter beside my name and know I'm not just a Republican. I am Nikki Bascome. I am a nice person. I'm a fair person. I'm a kind person. I want to do what's best for our schools. I want to do what's best for our families. I want to do what's best for my children. And and I want to I want to get back to communicating. I want to get back to being just civil. These children that were raising. It's not just a parent thing. We're sending these children out to our community. They're they're the ones that are going to be changing your tire or being your lawyer, or deciding what happens with your Social Security when you can't anymore. I mean.

**Reuel Sample:** Being your doctor as you grow older.

**Nikki Bascome:** I mean, we're what do we want to raise? Do we? Do we want to raise finger waggers, or do we want to raise people that are going to be kind and considerate and and listen to you? Then we need to listen to each other.

**Reuel Sample:** Nikki, how can people get in touch with you?

**Nikki Bascome:** Oh, yay! I love this question. My website is Nikki for schools.com and oh my gosh, my website. I got to think about what my website is.



**Reuel Sample:** And that's the number four. So it's Nicky the number four Schools.com. And they can also email you from that from that website. You also have a Facebook page as well.

**Nikki Bascome:** I do and Nicky Bascome for school board.

**Reuel Sample:** And we we are having a debate with all of the Republican candidates coming up very soon. So keep an eye out for that. Nicky, I'm going to give you the last word tonight.

**Nikki Bascome:** Give me the last word. Oh, wow. Just be nice. Be kind. Raise our children. Be the person that you want your child to be 20 years from now.

**Reuel Sample:** Absolutely wonderful. Nikki, thanks so much for being on board with us tonight. And all the best of you in the primaries.

**Nikki Bascome:** Thank you so much, I appreciate it.