



THE NHC GOP Podcast Transcript

Season 3, Episode 8: Individual Education Not Indoctrination: Conversation with David Perry – Republican Candidate for New Hanover County Commission

Reuel Sample: Welcome to the NHC GOP Podcast, I'm Reuel Sample. I am happy to be joined by David Perry, Republican candidate for New Hanover County School Board. David, welcome aboard.

David Perry: Oh, thank you for having me tonight. And hello, everyone.

Reuel Sample: It's great to have you on board. And by this time, everybody knows your reasons for running, the reasons why you are standing up right now. I want to know. First off, when you are talking to people out there on the campaign trail, what are people talking to you about? What are they most concerned for David Perry to bring to the school board?

David Perry: It just seems like it's the main thing. I mean, I think regardless of what your party affiliation is. Well, I mean, you just want your kids to get a great education. You want them to get be successful. Uh, this shouldn't be a partisan thing, but unfortunately, you know, the progressives have kind of politicized our schools and really brought some, uh, stuff into the our programs that are really been distracting and turning our education system on its head. And I think parents just want to get back to I want my kid to do well. I want my kid to be smart, and I want my kid to, you know, have a successful career when they graduate. And I think it's interesting.

Reuel Sample: Go ahead, go ahead.

David Perry: That's pretty that's pretty across the board now people have different ideas. Of course, you talk to the I mean, if you talk to the far left, they're going to have a different viewpoint. But I'd say 90% of the people are in the middle. They just want their kid to have a great education.

Reuel Sample: It really is a topic that bridges parties, is that we all want what's best for our children, and we believe that the Republicans, all five of you, have that in mind.

David Perry: Yeah. And so I think we've, uh, we talk a lot about, you know. The the entirety of the school system. And that's just seems to be the problem. The Democrats have got us towards looking at the collective good as opposed to the individual student and their good, and the welfare of the entire school district is not the common good, but the aggregate of every individual success story that we can.

Reuel Sample: Let's talk about that collective, because one of the major things on your website, and I like the way you put it, is we need to get back to individualized education without political indoctrination. What is all that about? Can you explain that?

David Perry: Yeah. I mean, one of the things I try to explain is like, too, sometimes we get Republicans gets a bad rap or you just don't want like if we're talking about, you know, the same book, for instance, that came out, everybody was up in arms about that, that somehow we're trying to whitewash history or some sometimes we're trying to do right wing indoctrination instead of learning. But I think for I'm not saying there isn't anybody who wants to do that, but that's the lion's share of Republicans don't want that to happen. What they want the kids to do is to learn how to think for themselves. They want to be able to say, you know, here's a theory. I don't mind if they teach the 1619 project in our high schools, as long as it's a theory and not fact. And then I think if you stack it up against traditional, um, views of American history and then say, the causes of the American Revolution, I mean, it's going to be pretty quickly dismissed. I think the strengths of that argument are pretty weak. So I want our kids to be able to think through things and develop their own ideas. And, I mean, that's a great thing. What happened to me in high school? I wasn't a great high school student, to be honest with you. I mean, because when I was in high school, um, a lot of it was memorization. You had to remember, you had to memorize this, that, and the other thing, and it just seemed like it was boring. And then I got to college, and I actually started thinking,

because the professors there actually wanted you to tell them what you thought about the material that you just read. They wanted your own ideas and to back it up. And that's, I think, the kind of thing that we shouldn't just limit the college we should be. Trying to get that done at the high school level as well.

Reuel Sample: One of the differences, it seems, between education and indoctrination is education, as you are saying, makes people and trains people to think where indoctrination is just cramming, as Rush Limbaugh used to say, they're mushy skulls full of stuff. And you want to get to education, not indoctrination.

David Perry: Yeah. And that's that's absolutely. I mean, what's supposed to be the government of the people, by the people, for the people. And unless you have truly educated individual citizens, then, you know, are you going to have serfs. And I think that's what some on the far left would like. But we have to stand against that and say, no, we don't want serfs. We want well-informed citizens who can think for themselves, who can question authority when necessary and be, uh, and work hard for our next generation and for our country coming up in the future.

Reuel Sample: You have mentioned this before, so it's nothing new. You have a dog in this fight because you are a grandpa and you have a grandchild in the school systems, and this is personal for you in many ways.

David Perry: Yes. So I mean, it's actually when I started becoming more politically involved was right around 2016, uh, when he was born, because, you know, many people out there, you know, there's many people who, you know, they loathe politics. They might go out once every four years and vote for president, but they don't really care to talk about it too much. And I think that's a good chunk of the population. Uh, but, uh, you know, once you have a son or a grandson in it, it's it's like, man, you you want to and you get to be I'm 58. You get to be a little older like me. And it's like, wait a minute. It's not all about the pools and the vacations. It's about what? What am I going to leave for my grandson? Is the world going to be a better place, or at least than it is now? You know it's going to be worth something for him to grow up, too. So, uh, that's why I, I really think he needs a solid education, and I just don't think he's getting it right now.

Reuel Sample: You have a background in technology. What are your thoughts about making our students, making our students ready for the technological workforce that they're going to be going into?

David Perry: I mean, I think you really do have to start with the basics. I mean, some people really want our kids to really decide on a career and in ninth grade, and I think that's a mistake personally. Uh, you they'll probably change their mind four times before they get more into what they want to do, you know? Uh, it's great to explore options, to maybe get kids excited about one career or the other. But, I mean, you really have to have the well-rounded education, because I found as a tech person that it takes a lot more than just technical knowledge to be great at a systems engineer.

Reuel Sample: Hey, more of that in just a second. It is no secret that politics requires money. We are asking you to join our 15 for Freedom program. That's \$15 a month for 15 months to help get Republicans elected to all levels of government. Every dollar that you give in our 15 for freedom program stays right here in New Hanover County. That's \$15 a month for 15 months in our 15 for Freedom program. Please go to NewHanoverGOP.org/15 today. We need you.

David Perry: I mean, you have to be innovative. You have to. In my case, you have to go and talk to the business unit. The business unit is going to come to you. They're going to bring you, hey, we want you to do the software project for us. And the fact of the matter is, you only have a vague idea of what they want and even a less of an idea what they actually need. You have to look at them, talk to people, figure out their current business process, critically analyze it, and then come up with creative solutions on how technology can aid them. So I think some exposure to, you know, obviously, uh, a little bit of computer knowledge is good, but I think the biggest thing is to learn how, again, how to how to be a critical and creative thinker.

Reuel Sample: Along with that technology you have talked about, you just mentioned, it is innovation, and you have mentioned that you are an innovator and that you're going to bring that innovation mindset to the school board. What things are we doing now in New Hanover County that need to be changed? Are there are there processes? Are there are there methods? Are there things that we're doing that if we just take a step back and change them, will result in a better tomorrow for our kids?

David Perry: I will. Oh, and one thing is, of course, parents rights. And, uh, I think there's a lot of people in our school administration and some teachers, not all, who think that they're somehow, you know, copartners with, uh, the parents to help raise their children and as a community. And that's just complete nonsense. Parents raise children. Our school system is a contractor. It should be there to provide a service, an educational service for their child. So when a parent comes to us and says they got a problem with, uh, you know, what's going on with their, uh, kids education, we need to listen. And I mean, if a contractor came into your house and started doing the job wrong, would you, uh, would you not say something to that contractor? Of course you would. And you would expect the contractor to listen because you're the boss and parents of the boss. So I think what we need in one of my innovative ideas is to have a, uh, independent parent advocate office. So you need to necessarily have a lawyer who can afford a lawyer in order to get some results from our school administration. Um, I mean, we saw what happened with Chance Diablo. The mother went to school, said, my, my son's getting bullied and, uh, do something about it, and it's getting serious. And they did nothing. And next thing next day there was a shooting. I mean, luckily, not fatally, but, you know, we have some people who are, you know, through administration that are out of touch, but an independent advocate that doesn't, you know. Thus there are. Uh, what's the word I'm looking for? Doesn't report to the to the superintendent's office or any of the schools, but actually is independent. Uh, could be able to advocate and get a just result for the parent.

Reuel Sample: You're talking about is a lot like the military system of always having family ombudsmen that are that are attached to the commands is that is that it's a it's a system that is outside of the chain of command, but it's there to provide an input system for the families. And you're basically saying talking about a parental ombudsman.

David Perry: Exactly. So I mean, I think that would be a great way, you know, if you've got, uh, you know, they can develop the, uh, school book and charge, hey, superintendents and, you know, school administrators, you need to listen to these people. You know, obviously, you're not going to have to necessarily agree with them all the time, but you're going to give them the respect that they do. So it sounds like they're working out some of the problems before they become bigger problems.

Reuel Sample: It's this in the this other outside thinking that you're bringing to the school board is that you've never you've never been on the school board before, but you are thinking outside the box as you run for school board.

David Perry: Absolutely. And so, I mean, even though I have a master's of education degree, and I spent three years working with special needs kids before I got into it, I mean, the bulk of my adult life has been, uh, you know, in IT. But I think that I could those skills that I bring from my 28 years in the IT, uh, software engineering realm really translate well to the problem solving skills.

Reuel Sample: Want to move on to another area of your campaign. And it's an area that is affecting everyone. And that everyone is talking about is we're in a budget crisis, \$11 million in the hole. One of the things that you do on your website is you talk about waste, and that's one of the areas that I wanted to highlight because it does add to our budget problems. What are the wasteful spending that you find in our school board?

David Perry: So I mean, you mean everybody's going to mention this like we did at the week debate the other night? Um, and I mentioned the, the, you know, the superintendent's office and the waste that's going on there. And that's a little bit of it, but I mentioned some other things. Um, you know, we obviously we get the D-E-I programs, but, you know, people will say, well, that's a different fund of money, you know, that comes from the federal government. But all that money, whether it's an administrative by the feds or by the state government or locally, it all belongs to we the people. So, I mean, I don't have a problem going to the board of commissioners and saying, after we've cut everything and saying, hey, we still need some more money, but I want to have the fiscal moral high ground before I do. I want to say we stripped it bare and now it's to everything that would be nice to have. Now we still got some got haves and we need some help.

Reuel Sample: When you talk about stripping things bare, what things are you not going to touch and what for you are things that are on the table?

David Perry: I think, like, for instance, we've got the eight alternative high school programs, four of them in separate buildings. Now, I would probably eventually phase out the Moseley Academy. I know we've been talking about that a lot, but the way, of

course, Superintendent Foust did it was ridiculous. I would have phased it out over a few years, and that every student there now at least graduate before closing it. And the same goes for the other schools, I think, again, why do we have we've got the Isaac Bear school, we've got, uh, all these different, uh, eight different schools. We've got marine biology specialized school program. I mean, why if they really want to do that, why don't we just send them over to, uh, look at work with, uh, Cape Fear community and let them do the work there, uh, and close that little, uh, program down and save us some money there. But overall, I don't want to touch the. Except for those extraneous programs. I do believe, again, I don't think we need to. Like, for instance, there was, uh, we recently just got a grant for a couple million dollars, I think, from the endowment fund for, um, career readiness for the health care industries, for middle school. I mean, I think we do need to learn math and social studies. It's great to be exposed to this stuff, but I really don't think we need to waste \$2 million on that. And we don't mean to waste. And I've heard we don't need EV busses from DEQ. We've got plenty of busses that are working fine, but we're. Problem is, we don't have enough bus drivers or science teachers.

Reuel Sample: Uh, you know, I had enough going on in middle school to think about what I'm going to be doing for the rest of my life. I was just happy to get through each day of middle school. I can't believe that we're talking about career training at the middle school level.

David Perry: Yeah. So let's just seems, uh, like. So there's a lot of money that's going on that that doesn't come in the regular budget, you know, uh, from the state. It comes in these specialty grants. And I would just say no to most of them because first of all, uh, they're just a waste of all of our "We the People's" money. But second of all, it sends, uh, they're usually strings attached to these. The money. You have to do this. I mean, we let's talk about the, um. We're on the hook with the federal government for, like, a \$4.3 million fine because of our disciplinary problems, because they're supposedly, you know, a greater percentage of, uh, black students receiving out-of-school suspensions or something in that than than other ethnic groups, but nobody really if you really look at the data and nobody's really shown me anything other, it's not like, oh, well. The white kids are getting a slap on the wrist. And for the same thing that the the black students getting an out of school suspension. It's all based off, you know, um, statistics and quotas and but the only reason we're really on the hook for that fine is

because we took federal dollars. Because it's not really a federal law. The federal government, I'm a Constitutionalist and we shouldn't even have a Department of Education. There's nowhere in the Constitution that says the federal government should be managing our state education system. So. But once you take their money, they get their hooks into you. And so I nine times out of ten, I'm going to say no to that federal money, especially if it's got a lot of strings.

Reuel Sample: One of the things that you do focus on, we talked about it real briefly before our podcast was teacher merited pay or I think you maybe teacher merited bonuses where teachers receive a bonus or pay or incentive based upon how well they do in schools. Tell me about that a little bit.

David Perry: Yeah, that's what I mean. Not that the idea of a performance bonus is anything to unique. But, you know, obviously the state sets the general salary structure for teachers, and it's just based off, you know, a number of years of experience in their educational level. And. In. There isn't too much differential, but there are you know, with and the county supplements it. I think they've got a pretty good job supplementing it. But we're still having a hard time, you know, hiring enough teachers and retaining enough teachers. I mean it's a problem. Because guess what? Teachers have families too. And even though they're the lifeblood of our school system and they're not in it to get rich, you know, just everything's getting more expensive, especially under President Biden. And it's tough to live in this county. You know, where my dad was an English teacher and my mom was a housekeeper, and we lived a pretty comfortable middle class life. Nowadays, 2 to 2 families of two parents are working and they're having a hard time. So it's and it's only getting worse and the cost of housing is going up. So I think we need some incentive to keep these uh, uh, teachers on, especially the good ones. So but instead of just handing out money based off experience and a more money based off that, I want to see it based off actual performance.

David Perry: You know, you're just going through the motions. You go into class and you're doing your class and you and your, uh, and then you're leaving at the end of the day, you know, just take your salary and go and that's it. But if you're spending the extra time to get that student that was perhaps, you know, going in the sixth grade with a second grade reading level, but you took that student for a year and they went up three grade levels. They still might be behind. But if you if you could see that success, uh, that

you were able to instill to those kids, then you should be rewarded for that. And I think that that will not only will that be, you know, a great way of retaining teachers, but it'll actually be a motivation for them to take that extra time with the students, because a lot of our students, probably most of our students, are still way behind academically from the Covid thing. You know, they lost a lot of knowledge during that time, and it's hard to make up for it. You know, you can't you know, they just passed everybody, you know and you know, so so now they're taking algebra when they didn't really learn basic arithmetic. And so it's going to be pretty tough.

Reuel Sample: So you really are because of your software background. You really are a systems guy. And you are looking at our educational board of education as a system that once we get the system fixed, we can start doing new and wonderful things. Is that a good summary?

David Perry: Yeah. I mean, I think we there are certainly plenty of things wrong with the system that we have to extricate. That's all the candidates talk about that. You know, the social emotional learning, the diversity, equity, inclusion, the um, and the the disrespect for parents rights, the transgender kind of agenda that some people have. But even once you extricate that, you still gotta there's still a lack of academic excellence, and we have to rebuild it. It's kind of like I was a history major in college. We, uh, that was my plan was to be a history teacher. I was never a history teacher, but I enjoyed history, and it was great. And, uh, but, you know, you look back at World War two, we had to defeat the Nazis in Germany militarily, but our job wasn't done there. You know, we had to rebuild under the Marshall Plan. And, uh, if we hadn't have done that, you know, Europe would have remained devastated and probably more dictators would have popped up. So, you know, I think once we once we extricate the, uh, the junk out of our system, we definitely need great ideas in order to make it great again.

Reuel Sample: I'm going to give you the last word. But before I do that, how can people get in touch with you to support your campaign and get to know more about who David Perry is?

David Perry: You know, the main way just to go to Perryforeducation.com. And it doesn't matter how you spell it because I bought both domains. Uh, and uh, or you can go to my Facebook page. It's out there too. But, uh, the best way to learn everything

about I'm pretty explicit about all the issues. And, uh, I think a lot more so than some of the other candidates about my ideas. There are pages and pages if you want to dig into the details, you know, they're not all present on the home page, but you can drill down so and then. Or just shoot me a message. David.Perry@Perryforeducation.com. I'll answer every single email I get.

Reuel Sample: I'll give you the last give you the last word. Why should Republicans in this primary vote to send you forward into the general elections?

David Perry: Yeah, I think that with me you're going to get not only somebody who's a constitutional conservative standing up for parents rights and cleaning house. And I think people know that, you know, I'm not going to just go along to get along. I'm going to get it done. And I don't back down from anybody. I'll do it nicely. But you got to stand up. Sometimes you just have to stand up for what's right, because it's our kids are worth standing up for, I think. And and that's, uh, that's the main reason you should. You should vote for me. You want a real conservative that's going to stand up for your kids and your grandkids and make sure that their education is absolutely excellent, then please vote for me. Thank you.

Reuel Sample: Early voting is going on right now, and I'm sure that you are out there in the polls and talking to people and getting to know people, and the early voting goes on. But March 5th is the big day, and you'll be out there talking to folks as well on that day. And David Perry, go ahead.

David Perry: Thank you. Reuel, I just want to say, yeah, I'll be out there and yeah, just stop by the polls. I'll be glad to talk to you too.

Reuel Sample: David Perry running for school board, board of Education, thanks for joining us today.

David Perry: Thanks.