



The NHC GOP Podcast

Episode 3:20 **Common Sense: Nikki Bascome for NHC Board of Education**

Reuel Sample: On this episode of the NHC GOP podcast.

Nikki Bascome: And I don't think it's going away anytime soon, though. I just because Foust is gone. I think, um, it's going to take some time. They're good at their job, and they leave their politics at the door. Or at least they should. And most of them do. And it wasn't until I filed to run with an R beside my name that she knew I was a Republican, and I knew that she wasn't. You get up in the morning and you're hopeful that, you know, maybe tomorrow is going to be a better day. And, and I, I see a little bit, a little bit of spark in a few people that I was worried about, um, getting through all of this. And so now they're just a little bit of sparkle in their eyes again. And, I mean, these are my friends. These are my coworkers, and I worry about them.

Reuel Sample: Welcome to our podcast. Welcome, Nikki Bascome. How is it going out there in in campaign world?

Nikki Bascome: Well, Reuel you've known me long enough. I am the perpetual optimist. So we're going great. I have we're we're just chugging along, and, um, I'm not a politician. I have never been involved in politics, so I'm just going with the flow and doing what I feel is best. And, um, I think we're going great. And other people will probably be like, man, she doesn't know what she's doing, but we'll figure it out along the way. We're doing good. We're great.

Reuel Sample: One of the things that I wanted to bring up is that you are running for school board in a brand new world, is that the parents of today have a different set of expectations than parents of yesterday. Let me just play this from a person in Texas.

A Different Set of Expectations?

Texas Mom: Would say really intensely in the last, like, you know, 5 to 10 years. The idea of school and what parents now, today, what young people, young parents want from school is, like fundamentally different than what, um, you know, the baby boomer generation wanted for schools, for their kids. And, like, what my mom and dad wanted out of school for me is very different than what parents want out of school today.

Reuel Sample: Is she right? Are are the expectations that we have for our kids today from our parents? Are they that much different than, say, 30, 50 years ago?

Nikki Bascome: I think the expectations but also the understanding of of schools. I don't think my parents really knew what was going on in school. Just drop you off and you you go learn something. Come back. And, um, I think the expectations are a little bit different. Yes. Um, I think parents were a little bit more trusting then. Interesting. And, you know, it it's such a political it's so politicized right now. I honestly, I worry about my younger children. I have adult children that went through the schools and I never worried about. Oh, that's that's a Republican. That's a Democrat. That's a liberal. Oh, look at how she talks. Look at what she's wearing. Look at what she's driving. Look what's up on her wall. I never worried about that stuff. You walk into the classroom and you're like, hey. Teaching math. And we're good. It's definitely. It's a different world. Definitely a different world.

Reuel Sample: Now, one of the things that parents do expect is, is that their students are prepared. And you and I were talking about a program that New Hanover County and other it's not unique to New Hanover is this dual enrollment program, where our students can go to class and also get college credits at the same time. And you were talking to me about how underprepared are particular students are here in New Hanover County. Tell me more about that.

Unprepared in the Dual Enrollment Program

Nikki Bascome: Yes. So my experience with dual enrollment, my oldest daughter, who's now 26, um, she was in dual enrollment in New Hanover County schools and most phenomenal thing. So by the time she graduated high school, she already had college credits and was well on her way. Um, and it's such a great experience for kids that might not have that opportunity or might not know that college is for them. It's nerve wracking sometimes to try to figure out what what you want to do. And everyone's asking, what do you want to do with your life? What do you want to do? Um, so it's a great opportunity to get some college level coursework under your belt, and it and it helps some of our underprivileged community be able to be put into a situation that they might not necessarily do after high school. Um, so I had met with someone from Cape Fear Community College last week. Um, that was explaining to me, you know, and they were at Cape Fear Community College, works with New Hanover County Schools, Pender County Schools, Brunswick County Schools, and said that there is a stark difference between our schools and the other counties surrounding us. Our high school students are not prepared for this dual enrollment. They're just not they're not measuring up. Some of them had never written a paper before. Juniors in high school had never written a paper before, and I have to assume that this is what some of our high school teachers are so frustrated about that they know that the children are not prepared, but their hands have been tied for so long that there wasn't much they could do except just push them through. Just push them through, just push them through. Um, and I feel like Cape Fear Community College is having to suffer for it because our kids aren't ready for it.

Reuel Sample: Not only is community college suffering for it, the other students in the class are suffering for it because they've got to make up for the lack of preparedness for our own students and the students themselves. Is that if you're not at a minimum level and you go to a class and you're not prepared for it, you're frustrated beyond belief. And you you are laying this not necessarily on the students themselves or the teachers themselves, but we had a previous superintendent that really, really did some damage to this program.

Nikki Bascome: Think so. One of the things that they had set up between Cape Fear Community College and New Hanover County Schools is a proctoring program where

when the the high school kids needed to take either midterm exams or end of the year exams for their college level courses, they could do it at their high school. Um, that way they didn't have to go to Cape Fear Community College campus and take an exam. They could do it at high school. Um, and one of the things that Cape Fear Community College wants to work on, and they're getting ready to do a pilot program with a different county where everything is right there on campus so that you're still with your friends, you're still being able to do the sports that you want to do and the extracurricular activities that you want to do. And you're still, um, able to socialize with, with your age group and not be put into this older college level course. So this proctoring exam, this proctoring program gets put on the high school, um, computers so that the kids can come in and take their exam at their school and not have to go to the Cape Fear Community College campus.

Nikki Bascome: And for some reason, at some point, New Hanover County Schools said, we're not putting that proctoring program on our computers. You're going to have to figure something else out. So, um, it wasn't a college thing, and they're working through it now. Um, it's something that our school board wasn't aware of at the time. It was something that I'm assuming our superintendent knew. But right now, um, I was told that they're meeting with Doctor Barnes and they're meeting with the school board, and they're fixing this, um, denial of proctoring program. Um, I honestly, if a if a community college is coming to you and saying, hey, here's this wonderful opportunity for your children and especially the underserved population, and we want to help them succeed. And once you give a child, especially a 16, 17, 18 year old child, that taste of success, they want more. Their chances of going on to do something more. I just don't understand why we weren't bending over backwards to do whatever Cape Fear Community College needed for us to make this successful.

Reuel Sample: We're talking with Nikki Bascome, who is running for the Board of Education here in New Hanover County. How can parents make sure that their kids are properly prepared for this? Because when they go to these schools, they are junior and seniors in high schools, right. And so that those first two years of, of, of high school are critical in getting ready to do this. So how are you going to help these parents get their kids ready for school for these programs?

Nikki Bascome: Yeah, I have said this from the very first time that we ever talked is communication. Go talk to your teacher and and teachers. Tell your parents you know this. There are so many resources out there that are available for parents and that the teachers can share with you. You know, um, there was one kid that had never written a paper before, and and how do you overcome that? Well, you know, get the parents involved and tell them, you know, here's the resources that we have available to you and and we need your help. It's going to take parents and teachers coming together and saying, we we need to work on this instead of blaming each other. Well, it's your fault that this happened or it's their fault for this. No, let's come together and let's work together and let's figure it out. I think that's the most important thing you have.

Nikki Bascome and Building Relationships

Reuel Sample: You have said this from day one, is that you are you are interested in those relationships, the relationships between, uh, students and teachers and teachers and parents and even the teacher, the students and the parents is making sure that relationship is there. If it's not there, there's not going to be any education in our systems, no matter how hard you try.

Nikki Bascome: Exactly, exactly. And, um, and as a parent myself, I have to admit I put a lot of pressure on my teachers. Um, and then the teachers have all the pressure from the district, and the district just seemed in the past, wasn't supporting them enough. And when you're feeling, when you're not feeling like you're supported, it's easy to just give up. You know what? Just you go into survival mode. Just let me get through my day. We'll do the best that we can. And you know, here we go. So I can understand their frustration. I want to help them. I want to be right there. And and I am. I'm right there in the trenches. Um, spoke with a couple of teachers today that are excited that I'm willing to volunteer and be in their classrooms and and not because I want to spy on anyone, but I want to know, what are you going through? How can I help you? And how can we possibly speak for them? How can we speak for them if we don't know what's going on in their everyday lives? And that's where, you know, the board and also the district can be that liaison between the families and the teachers and be able to to speak for them or help guide them through this communication barrier that we're having right now.

Reuel Sample: You're talking about an excitement. We've had a change in staff. We have a new interim superintendent. What are you hearing and how are you going to work with him going forward?

Nikki Bascome: Well, I have never met Doctor Barnes. I'm very excited. Um, I've seen him in passing at board meetings and other things going on in our county. Um, from what I've heard from a few teachers now take into account there's thousands of teachers. There's no way that I could speak for every single one of them. But, um, from the teachers that reach out to me and the ones that I see in different extracurricular activities that we have, um, there's, there's a, there's a, there's a little bit more, maybe not quite excitement, but there's definitely hope and faith that we are going in a better direction, that maybe this is what we need. And and they're not feeling quite as, uh, I just I don't even know what word to put in there, but, uh, here we go again. Um, you get up in the morning and you're hopeful that, you know, maybe tomorrow is going to be a better day. And I see a little bit a little bit of spark in a few people that I was worried about, um, getting through all of this. And so now they're just a little bit of sparkle in their eyes again. And, I mean, these are my friends, these are my coworkers, and I worry about them. And I'm happy that we're getting back into the classrooms. And I'm so happy for them. And this week we've had, um, so some of our schools have already gone back, but this week is like the big orientation, and you're seeing all the families and the and the friends and the teachers walking down the hallways, and there's lots of high fives and there's like, wow, how's your summer? And there is a lot of excitement revolving around that. Um, but this year it was different. This year it was just so incredibly different. Um, there wasn't there was a little bit, like I said, a little bit more sparkle in the eyes this time.

Qualified to be on the Board of Education

Reuel Sample: I'm excited to talk about your qualifications a little bit. You have you've been you've been part of this community since you were born.

Nikki Bascome: Well, okay. Just to correct that, I was not born. I was not born in New Hanover County, okay? I was actually so my family is from North Carolina. My mother's my mother's side of the family traces back 1600s. I was an Air Force baby. My dad was in the Air Force, so I was actually born in Texas, in Texas.

Reuel Sample: But you you ended up in Carolina Beach?

Nikki Bascome: We ended up at Carolina Beach when I started elementary school. So I've been here. Um, it's been. No, we're not even going to say how old I am.

Reuel Sample: No, never. Absolutely not. Absolutely not.

Nikki Bascome: I'm kidding. I am 51 years old. I am proud of every single one of those 51 years, and every single one of the grays that come along with it. I'm proud of them.

Reuel Sample: You got to wear that. You got to wear that Gen X badge proudly. That's right. Well, one of the things that comes up a lot is, is, you know, everybody here in this community. But I wanted to play this little clip from a conversation that you put out as one of your advertisements. But it's a it's a good it's a good one. Let me that's all great.

Woman in Ad: But what real experience do you have?

Nikki Bascome: Well, in 1997, I opened an in-home child care facility and became the very first five star in-home child care facility in New Hanover County. I was also a training site for the North Carolina Family Child Care Rating Scale. I was working on my early childhood education degree at the same time as a single mom. I later went on to be an early childhood consultant for Smart Start of New Hanover County. I assisted early childhood providers preparing for their licensing and rating scales, and I also implemented and developed trainings on age appropriate practices and positive discipline techniques.

Reuel Sample: You know, first off, is that your dog?

Nikki Bascome: Yes, that is my dog. That's.

Reuel Sample: That's a big dog.

Nikki Bascome: She is 60 pounds and does not realize it. If you could see me right now. Um, she's a Belgian Malinois, which are the police and military dogs.

Nikki Bascome: And she is. And when I say that she's mouthy, I don't mean that she likes to bark a lot. When I say mouthy, she she chomps a lot. And that's how she says she loves you. Um, I have to warn people when they come to my house, I'm like, because she sounds like she's going to break the door down.

Reuel Sample: Well, I'm just I'm just thinking of Dane Scalise, and he has another dog in one of his advertisements. He can always come to you. But but you have done a lot you, you you're very active in, in beach life and the surfing for healing. But you have extensive background, even in education, even to the point where you have been a consultant for schools. Uh, talk more a little bit about that.

Nikki Bascome: So my education is early childhood. It's mostly, um, birth through birth through kindergarten. Um, which is where my passion was, and learning child development and child psychology. But when you take child development classes and you take child psychology classes at the college level, um, most of the time it covers a little bit of everything. Um, and I've just been fascinated with, with watching children trying to figure out, like a two year old, why why do they fill up buckets and dump them? And there's actually a phase in their life called the fill and dump. That's what they do. They fill the buckets up and they dump them wherever they want. And so learning just a little bit of child development so that we have an understanding of where to meet them and the expectations. Um, you can't expect a, a six year old to handle a situation that a 12 year old could handle because their brain just is not developmentally there. Yes. And and it's our job to guide them and to you to to sit back and think about where this child is and be the professional and say, I don't think they're prepared for this. Um, but then that's also, you know, you mentioned surfer's healing, um, which is an autism foundation. And that's where a lot of our EC teachers, or even just a regular teacher can say they can look at a child and start Assessing where they fit developmentally.

Nikki Bascome: And that's when you start to recognize that they might need a little bit more help. They might need an evaluation because they're physically or cognitively or even verbally. They're not meeting their developmental milestones like we would expect them to. And it's all based on a curve. Um, so you're going to have some that are going to be at this level over here. There's going to be some a little bit higher and a, some a little bit lower. Um, so you basically kind of analyze what's in the middle and if it's a little bit lower, let's watch a little bit more, um, and pay attention to what's going on in the

classrooms. And that's where our teachers are so wonderful at that because they know child development. Um, and that's why we should listen to them when it comes to this curriculum. Um, because they know child development and they know where these children are, and they understand that bell curve. They understand that there's some a little bit behind, a little bit above. But as long as we're keeping somewhere in the middle and then they can, they can decide if they need to go a little bit higher, a little bit lower. Um, I don't even remember where we started off with this conversation.

Reuel Sample: It was it was all about your qualifications in in schools.

Nikki Bascome: I do have a story about my oldest son. Um, my oldest son, who's now 28. Um, was having issues in middle school, and he had soccer. Player loves soccer, love lacrosse. And, um, he was having some issues where he didn't want to play anything anymore. He didn't want to he didn't want to go outside. He didn't want to try out for soccer in middle school. And, um, going back to all of my consulting days, the first thing that you do is you observe? Um, that's a lot of what our teachers do as well. You know, we can't cram so much curriculum and so much stuff into one day that they're not able to observe how the children are reacting to the curriculum or if they're picking it up. And so I went back to that observation phase, and I asked the principal at that time, she was absolutely fantastic. And I said, this is what I do for a living. Could I please come in and observe the classroom in the back of the room? I'll be silent. I won't say a thing. I just want to see what's going on in the classroom that maybe, you know, if there's something not going on there, then I'm going to start evaluating what's going on at home. And is it something that I'm doing because I was a single mom? It's a it's hard. Self-actualization is hard. Um, but I went into the classroom and what I realized is this poor teacher was dealing with so many discipline issues, and she wasn't getting any support.

Nikki Bascome: Um, that my son was starting to suffer for it. He was just sitting in the back of the class, just getting bored. And then when he's not getting anything in his classroom, then he. He was just blah. He didn't want to do anything. And so I talked to the teacher about it, and I talked to the principal, and I said, this is what I observed. And together between the three of us, um, we figured out what was going on, and we figured out how to move forward from that. Um, I'm not saying that every parent in the world should be going in and observing their classrooms. Um, but maybe someone that has

the capacity, like I do, to to make those observations or, um, maybe have someone in the, our social workers or, um, maybe our admin that that know child development and can see and recognize what's going on in the classroom can go in and help these teachers and give them the support that they need. Or maybe the teachers can just say, hey, I need help, and I don't feel like I'm getting the support that I need. And I think that's why that climate survey was so, so scathing because they're not getting the support that they needed.

Reuel Sample: We're talking about that climate survey that was that just came out about 3 or 4 months ago that ultimately led to the ousting of the previous superintendent. It was, to use an overused term, a very toxic environment within the New Hanover County school system, not just for our students, but within the ranks, within the teachers and within the staff.

Nikki Bascome: And I don't think it's going away anytime soon, though, just because Faust is gone. I think, um, it's going to take some time. It's going to take some time. It's just like with a breakup, you know, when you have a breakup or, um, divorce or any tragedy in your life, you don't just bounce back because the sun came back out. It takes some time. There's going to be a lot of healing, and I think there was a lot of trust broken between families, between teachers, between admins, between the district, between the school board. Um, it is going to take some time to build back, but as long as we have faith and and we communicate with each other and keep those lines of communication open, I think we can find our way back. I really do.

Parent's Rights and Education

Reuel Sample: Let's talk about those trust issues. Republicans talk a lot about parental rights. This is just this is just come out in the last couple of months.

Newscaster: Greg White with the campaign for Southern Equality, argues the parents Bill of rights forces North Carolina schools to discriminate against LGBTQ students.

Greg White: Our belief is that every student in North Carolina deserves to be safe and welcome wherever they attend school. And what we're seeing is that that principle is being violated.

Newscaster: State superintendent of NC dpi. Catherine Truitt argues the law provides transparency for parents, adding, quote, parents, not the state, are ultimately responsible for raising their children. The parents Bill of rights ensures that parents remain aware of major health related matters, impacting their child's growth and development. The complaint also calls out the ban on transgender athletes in girls sports.

Reuel Sample: You know, we were just talking about the the development of kids and the development of kids minds, where parents have to be involved in all that. This parental bill of rights makes sure that not only parents are involved, but that kids are being exposed to things. That's a bad word, I guess. But education is all about. Education is all about exposure to new things at appropriate times. So, Nikki, how can we make sure that our kids are learning appropriate things at appropriate times? Balancing all that with the parents rights to know, um.

Nikki Bascome: Teachers as professionals, they are good at their job. They they are professionals in education. They are professionals in child development. I wholeheartedly respect that. But, um, there is a very famous child psychology psychologist, um, that wrote numerous books. His name is Barry T Brazelton. He developed a program called Touch Points. And what he says in it is, yes, these are professionals at education and at child development. But I, as the parent and the expert of this child. And together. So together, we need each other. We do. You cannot have peanut butter without jelly. You can't do it. Um, so, um, and and speaking of the parent Bill of rights and who, who we can talk to and who we can't talk to, I have a huge issue with that. Um, and we have discussed you and I have discussed this in privately before. Um, and, you know, most people I would have to assume that everyone in New Hanover County knows that we had a serious, serious issue with, um, child sexual assault within our schools. And a lot, a lot of information was swept under the rug by adults, and, um, and I have an issue with anyone, anyone that said that tells a child that you can't talk to your parents, hide this, or you can't talk to your teacher. Hide this. How could you ever? If you are a professional and you know child development, then you know, putting that responsibility, the discernment in the hands of a child to know who to talk to and who not to talk to you. Don't put that discernment on a child, ever. If you are a professional in child development, you know that is not appropriate.

Reuel Sample: You at least should know that that's not appropriate. But but we see this. We see this across the country, the most notable not only here but in Lenoir County, up in Virginia, where, uh, Students were assaulted and they were told to hide it, to not talk to. But so you can't have it both ways. On one hand. On one hand, they're saying, oh, don't talk to your parents about this. On the other hand, they're saying that kids should be able to. It's just a whole mish mash of of ideas, when it comes down to it, is that children need to be developed and taught appropriately at the appropriate age and at all times, with a balance of parents and teachers and school staff involved.

Nikki Bascome: There you go, a balance. It needs to be. Well, you know, it's just like in government, there needs to be a checks and a balance because if anyone has 100% control, then you are opening that door to someone that has nefarious thoughts in their mind and without checks and balance. How do you know? How do you know?

Reuel Sample: Well, we actually really don't have anybody here live on our on our, on our Facebook feed yet, but.

Nikki Bascome: They don't like us.

Reuel Sample: I'm sure they like you. It's me. But what scares you the most about our current education system is that there's got to be something that keeps you awake at night because you've got you've got skin in the game. Your, your oldest has has graduated and moved on. But you still have kids in school here in New Hanover County. What scares you?

Nikki Bascome: That question would have been a whole lot different back in December. Um, because now I'm out here in the world on my political stage, and that scares me for my children. Scares me. Hey, you know what it was, um, in all honesty, it was the school board. It was the school board that scared me. Um, they were the ones making the policies and, um, not necessarily the school board that's in now, but in the past, I've been watching it for a long time, and I just. I was scared because there were so many people that that run for the school board that either didn't have skin in the game, never been in a classroom, didn't have kids. It was a political game to them. Um, and and I am so tired of the political game. I'm so tired of the political rhetoric. Our

teachers deserve better. Our students deserve better. Our district deserves better than this whole. The Republicans did this. The Democrats did that.

Nikki Bascome: Um. I'm just. I'm tired of it. Um, there's extreme factions on both sides and, um, and it just it scares me because it seems it seems like that's not going away anytime soon. That's what scared me. It scared me to know that. Yeah. Okay. My kids are going to be out of this school district soon enough. But what about my grandkids? And and where is school going? To turn into a place where, you know, we might learn how to write a paper. We might get our kids to the point where they could do the dual enrollment and be successful, or they might turn into activist. Where is our school district really going to be going? And that's what scares me. And I want to start bringing the focus back to what's happening day to day in the classrooms, and what policies are being made that really do affect what's going on day to day in these classrooms. That that's what, um, some, some policies. Is just the curriculum itself right now just is not feasible. Um, to it just isn't meeting the the students where they are. Um, and what are we doing? Are we just pushing our kids through just to push them through?

Reuel Sample: There's a curriculum. It was a curriculum that nobody had really time to read. It was a curriculum that nobody had time to evaluate. It was. It was almost chosen. Oh, okay. Well, there's a, there's a, there's a curriculum that we could put into place.

The Board of Education Matters – Even If You Do Not Have Children

Nikki Bascome: Um, and I don't have the answers. Let's make that perfectly clear. Put that out there for everyone. I don't have all of the answers, but what I do have is I. I'm really good at listening. I'm really good at observing. And and I want to know what what can we do about it? We not Nicki, but what can we do about it? And I want to be a facilitator Hater of things like that. I want to bring about change by facilitating change, not just dictating and throwing a gavel around. I don't want to. I don't want to sit up there and say, oh, you have to listen to me because I'm the one in power right now. I want to be a voice that that can speak to the people, for the people and all the people. And you know what? That that one's. This is another thing that kills me about running. Yeah. We're going to talk about this one, too. Um, so being in this political arena and I tell people I, I'm running for school board and the first thing I hear out of either they have

children or that doesn't matter to me. I don't have children in the school. I don't have skin in the game.

Nikki Bascome: School board matters. School board matters. We were just talking about the dual enrollment. What are we putting into our community college that eventually is either going to be out of community college, going on to secondary school, or going on to get their bachelor's, their masters, their doctorate. What are we setting them up for success for that? Or what about they decide? Dual enrollment is not for them and they go into a trade school. Who's working on your car? Don't you want to know that? That they're halfway educated to read the instructions?

Reuel Sample: Or who's going into who's going into the military and protecting our country? And you cannot be stupid in today's military.

Nikki Bascome: Your who's your next financial advisor? Who's your next county commissioner? Did they come through New Hanover County schools? I mean, for the longest time, we always said we looked at people that graduated from Harvard or Harvard, Harvard. And we were like, oh, that's an Ivy League school that I have to hire them just on that. I don't I don't care if they were the last in their class. They graduated from Harvard. That meant something. I want people to look at they graduated from New Hanover County schools. That means something. That means something. And we're we want kids coming into our society as productive, intelligent members of our society.

Reuel Sample: And that's the hallmark of public schools. That's the hallmark of of why we. That's right. Because there is a public investment into even if you don't have kids, even if you don't want to have kids, even if you don't like kids, as you said, they are always going generation that's in school right now are going to be the lawyers, the doctors, the plumbers, the the electricians, the Politicians.

Nikki Bascome: Our soil and water, our wastewater. Yeah. We don't want the wastewater going out into our river.

Reuel Sample: Exactly, exactly. That's why we invest in public education.

Nikki Bascome: And so I want to drive home. You might not have children in the school district, but. Wow, this is so super important to everyone. Please don't dismiss it. Don't. Not at all.

Reuel Sample: And then really quickly, uh, the GOP legislature passed a budget that vastly increases teacher pay. Uh, not only for new teachers, but for for master teachers. How are we going to recruit teachers here for New Hanover County?

Teacher Pay

Nikki Bascome: Well, first and foremost, we need to get it under control. And not just the money, but we need to get our curriculum under control. We need to get our discipline under control. We need to make sure that if we do get teachers into our school district, that they feel safe, they they feel safe and they feel supported. Um, I think those those two are top priorities. Um, and then we can start looking at the pay. We also need to figure out, um, where our money is going to. Um, there was someone from NCI, which is the, um, North Carolina Association of Educators that had mentioned to a friend of mine that we have a lot of money in New Hanover County. We have a lot of money that goes into our schools. Our county gives us a lot of money. Where is it going? Yeah. And, um, we need to start taking a really deep dive into the last five years of our financials and figure out. And I can't do it on my own, and I'm not a financial person. Um, but but let's get a let's get a group together, and let's start looking through it and seeing where it is going, where it is going to. And I'm here to tell you, um, I've had some really bad jobs as a teenager, but if you have a good boss and you love your job, you'll do it without the pay. Yeah. And I'm not saying that I'm not. I'm going to take teacher pay away. We're going to keep paying teachers.

Reuel Sample: We're not cutting teacher pay. Let's let's make sure that's on the on the on the record.

Nikki Bascome: But but let's give them an environment and a place that they want to be in that they want to be in. Um, because you can give them all the money in the world. But if they're if they're treated poorly, they're like, is it really worth it? Is it really worth it?

Reuel Sample: I had a podcast with Dane Scalise the other day.

Nikki Bascome: I love him.

Reuel Sample: He's a good guy. Dane Scalise and John Hinnant and Bill Rivenbark, who are running for county commission, along with Leanne Pearce and all these folks who are on the county commission who actually control what money the school board gets is that they are really looking forward to working with this new school board that's coming up, because there's that communication that's going to happen. That hasn't happened in quite in, well, the last two years under Republican leadership, there has been this great communication with the county. And these folks are looking at continuing that as money is always whether it's in a in a marriage or in government marriage, it's always the it's always the killer. Nikki, you are running with two other folks, Natasha, two, David Perry. But we're talking about you. How can folks help you out in running for school board?

Nikki Bascome: Well, you just put my website up there. You can go to my website. You can learn a little bit more about me. Um, if you want, you can reach out to me. We can have a personal conversation. Um, and.

Reuel Sample: I don't think she'll record it. She's not going to record this.

Nikki Bascome: All right. No, I won't record it.

Nikki Bascome: I, you know, as much it bothered me so bad when we were in such a budget deficit and we were talking about losing teachers. And here I was trying to raise money for my campaign. I felt, oh, I felt like such a heel. Um, but then I realized, I can't help these teachers, and I can't get on the school board without these donations. I need your help. I need help getting my name out there. Um, there there have been talk about political rhetoric. Um, there have been. It's going to get dirty here very, very quickly. Very. It already is. Um, I need those people that know me to. To help me squash those rumors of, oh, she's a Republican. She obviously believes this, that and the other or this false lie or this misleading lie. It's not true so much that we hear it's not true. Um, I and I encourage anyone that thinks badly of me, reach out and talk to me. Um, ask me the tough questions I don't like. I mean, I tell you all the time. Don't ask me that. I'm scared to answer that. Um.

Reuel Sample: You do answer them.

Nikki Bascome: I do. I will, and and I'm not afraid to be put in the frying pan. I mean, come on, people, I have four kids. Single mom put myself through it. Do you think I haven't been in the frying pan? Like you said, I'm married as well. And here's the thing that bothers me a lot about politics as well. The political rhetoric is everyone's like, well, you believe in X, Y, and Z, and I don't believe in that. Or, you know, you have this one point that I don't like. And the one thing I want to ask anyone, whether they're married or with a significant other, or do you agree with them 100% of the time? And if you tell me you do, I know that you're not being truthful. I don't agree with my husband all of the time. We don't agree on a lot of things, but it doesn't mean I'm going to throw him out with the bathwater and tell him that he's not any good. I am good, I'm not a good politician. I will tell you that all day long. I am not a good politician, but I am good for this job. The school board was meant for me and and it. I'm meant for the school board. This is where I was supposed to land. And I hope people will reach out to me and. And throw me in the fire. Frying pan and find out if I'm good at this job. I'm ready for it. I'm ready to take on the tough questions. I'm ready to take on the tough job. I've already started building a relationship with the county commissioners just because I know it is so super important.

Nikki Bascome: I'm building those relationships with the teachers, even even the ones that I feel like might not welcome me at because I have an R beside my name. I'm still reaching out to them because you know what? They're important. They're important too. And we are professionals. I'm going to tell you that right now, our teachers and our admins are professionals. They're good at their job and they leave their politics at the door. Or at least they should. And most of them do. I have this one teacher. Oh my gosh, I absolutely love her. Been working with her for years and years and years. I will bend over backwards. I will sing her praises from every rooftop in this county. Love her. And it wasn't until I filed to run with an R beside my name that she knew I was a Republican, and I knew that she wasn't. First time we ever knew and we and we had a powwow and she said, I'm going to tell you, Nikki, I support you because of who you are, not because of the letter beside your name, but because you know what's going on in our schools and you will speak for us. And I want that to be clear. I don't care what letter is beside your name. We're professionals. We can leave that at the door and do

what is best for our children and do what is best for our staff, our families, and our district. And let's be number one. Let's we have the capability and the money to be number one. And let's make it happen.

Reuel Sample: We can't. We can't endit and in any better way. Nikki Bascome.

Nikki Bascome: I planned that, right?

Reuel Sample: You did. Nikki Bascome for board of education here in New Hanover County. All the best of you. And if you did not join us for our live conversation, please leave your comments in the in the comment section and we'll get those over to Nikki. And we also ask that you subscribe on all of your favorite podcast networks. The more people subscribe, the more we can get out to folks who really do need to hear this conversation. Nikki, once again, best of luck to you. Thanks for joining us here tonight. Uh, on behalf of Nevin Carr, who is the chairman of the Republican Party here in New Hanover County and all of our officers and members, I'm Reuel Sample. Thanks for listening.