

Freedom of Speech for All Educators #Schools Our Students Deserve
March 2016



by Cindy Hoyt

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Good Evening School Board Members, Dr. Merrill & Audience participants.

My name is Cindy Hoyt. I am a Special Education Teacher, Mentor and an NCAE member. I rise to address a proposed Resolution, "Freedom of Speech for All Educators".

If our *strategic* plan is to provide Wake County students with a relevant and engaging education, which will graduate 95% of our students, and help them become *collaborative* and *critical thinkers*; then it is essential to keep those communication lines open with all Educators.

We are the first line of defense, the *boots* on the ground of Public Education. We help bridge the *connection* gap by recognizing and identifying *obstacles*, *injustices* and *areas of need* when it comes to our schools, students, and communities.

We get involved because it is our professional and personal responsibility.

In order to work as a team, (you, I, and all stakeholders) need to encourage open and honest communication without fear of *retribution* or *retaliation*.

As a mentor, I see and hear **FEAR** coming from our experienced and beginning teachers in our county. Fear leads to frustration, frustration creates anger or worse yet, apathy.

Since creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking requires *action* and not *indifference*, it is *imperative* that we listen to what **is** and **isn't** working and strive to attain a collaborative relationship with our Educators.

These patterns reflect our ability to retain *highly qualified* educators and ultimately increase student growth and progress.

I say, *Freedom*. **Freedom** of Speech for all Educators.

Thank you for helping our students.

Please consider using the sample resolution on the next page to create a resolution to present to your school board members and superintendent.

DRAFT: Sample Resolution on Teacher Free Speech Rights

Whereas, the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution protects the rights of all Americans to speak as private citizens on matters of public concern; and

Whereas, the First Amendment provides free-speech protection to public, not private, employees because the Bill of Rights applies only to governmental actions; and

Whereas, government also has more authority to regulate the speech of its employees than it does to regulate the speech of the general citizenry; and

Whereas, when serving in their official capacities as teachers, within the duties of their jobs, teachers have certain responsibilities not given those same protections; and

Whereas, what teachers say inside the classroom is considered speech on behalf of the school district and is therefore not entitled to the same protections;

Whereas, speech outside the classroom is protected unless the school district can show that the speech created an adverse impact on school functioning; and

Whereas, teachers can criticize the local school board if the opinion relates to a “matter of public concern,” such as public education for all students; and

Whereas, as experts on what occurs in the classrooms of North Carolina, teachers should advocate for public education and public school students;

Therefore be it resolved, that:

The _____ Board of Education recognizes that public school teachers in North Carolina have free speech rights protected by the First Amendment, as long as the speech does not adversely impact the functioning of their public school.

This approved on the ____ day of _____ 2016.

Chair, _____ Board of Education