

## **SB247 Press Conference**

**March 20, 2019**

**Christine Kushner, Wake County Board of Education Member**

- As an elected School Board member, I am responsible for overseeing the spending of public dollars from state and local taxpayers—and I take that responsibility very seriously.
- The Wake County Public School budgeting process is public and open, including months of public debate and community input.
- Wake County currently passes through almost \$36 million to charters, but there is no clear oversight of the spending of those funds.
- This figure has been escalating—last year’s increase to charter schools was \$5 million—we need a pause on charter school expansion so we can improve the oversight of these funds.
- As a taxpayer, I expect the responsible spending from charter schools for the millions they receive from Wake County taxpayers.
- We are working to make smart investments in our Wake County Public Schools.
- Innovation is happening in Wake County, and it’s happening our Public School System:
  1. More than 97 percent of Wake County Public School teachers met or exceeded NC academic growth standards this past year.
  2. Wake County has led the nation in the number of National Board Certified teachers for 14 consecutive years.
  3. A large majority of our schools are diverse and thriving.
  4. We remain an economic engine for our community, helping to attract and retain families who, in turn, grow our economy.
  5. We accept all students into our schools, regardless of background or ability—we are inclusive schools.

- Wake County offers choice through magnet schools, year round calendar schools, and other application schools. We have innovative themes and specialized curriculum to meet varied student needs.
- Magnet schools also retain the mission of reducing minority and racial isolation—that is part of their goal, along with offering school choice.

North Carolina's education leaders need smart investments in our public schools. There are fewer dollars, and competition for those scarce dollars is NOT helping students, especially those with special educational needs who are only served by traditional public schools.

We need to reflect on current laws and spending and find a better way to strengthen all schools in our state.