

Statement of Judy Kidd
Before the Federal Commission on School Safety
“Proactively Protecting Our Schools”
Eisenhower Executive Office Building
Washington, DC

July 26, 2018

Thank you for making school safety and student success a priority of your day, and for this administration. Thank you for being part of making America great again and hopefully, by the end of this short presentation, we will together partner to make America’s SCHOOLS great again. I come to you humbled to represent the opportunities for student success through multiple viewpoints. I am an educator; I am a caring and invested tax payer, mother and grandmother; I am an educational advocate and lobbyist; I am the President of the Classroom Teachers Association of North Carolina; and I am a student who experienced success in education that far too many of our current students will never have because of the needs we can start addressing today.

In speaking with thousands of educators and making observations myself, there are three major needs that we MUST address as a country if we are to ever Make America’s Schools Great AGAIN!

The first need in our schools is, RESTORE SUCCESS. We must as a nation define what education is? What is the purpose? Why do we have students in our public schools? The purpose is actually quite simple, and most school systems even use the same language: the purpose is to graduate contributing, successful members of society. We want students to leave our schools ready to become productive adults who pay taxes, work hard and experience every possible success this great country has to offer. This is what we SAY... but then we measure success on graduation rates. Does walking across a platform to receive a diploma actually reflect you are ready to become the type of contributing citizen we desire? At a local Charlotte, N.C. school 98% of the seniors walked across the platform to the sounds of pomp and circumstance, they received their diploma, yet that same group of seniors when tested earlier that year scored a 48% as being “College or Career Ready” per Federal testing parameters. How is this possible? This school was highly praised and received Title 9 funding and various other funds because 98% graduated. My friends in education, we must RESTORE SUCCESS! Federal and state dollars should NOT be attached to graduations rates that fail to measure the real preparedness of our students. A system based on graduation rates supports fabricated outcomes without incentivizing to validate success in future endeavors. SUCCESS should be defined instead as READINESS for that specific student to face tomorrow with hope and equipped with the skills necessary to move forward. To make America’s schools great again, we must RESTORE SUCCESS by measuring our student successes, and our schools, in a better way. A process where the focus becomes the preparedness of each student entering the workforce prepared to contribute and not a measure of those who receive participation certificates on graduation day.

This brings up a second great need to make our schools great again, we must RESTORE PERSONALIZED EDUCATION. Call it differentiation, individual education plan, one to one... whatever you call it we must

get back to created pathways for each student instead of standardized programs, standardized tests and standardized curriculums. In our present system by our practice, we tell thousands of students every single day, we as a society DON'T care about them. They are not wanted. They are worthless. We do this every day in education because we are forcing students that don't fit standardized systems into them and giving no other option. We place students who enter our country not able to read or write in their own language by chronological age in classes that are taught in a language foreign to them. Not only is it unfair to the student but it is unfair to the teacher who is evaluated based on the individual performance of their students. What about the student who isn't college-bound or academically inclined? What about the student who wants to be a blue collar worker? What about the student who comes to school each day not knowing what their future holds? We must break this vicious and defeatism cycle of cookie cutter education! It's time for us to RESTORE PERSONALIZED EDUCATION by adding vocational education options back into our system to meet students where they are. We need students who do not desire college to be successfully prepared to enter the workforce. We need, as a nation, to have well qualified blue collar workers. We need a pathway from standardization and into personalization. To make America's schools great again we must RESTORE PERSONALIZED EDUCATION that only comes from knowing the individual dreams, desires, and capabilities of our students allowing them to cater their education to achieve their goals, so we can graduate productive and contributing members of society!

Tied closely to these needs to RESTORE SUCCESS and to RESTORE PERSONALIZED EDUCATION, we must RESTORE BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS. Schools today are experiencing behavioral issues that continuously disrupt instruction while administrators are told in order to receive full federal or state funding suspension, both in school and out of school, must be reduced regardless of the offense. How can our educators be required to prepared students to be productive and contributing members of society if the classroom atmosphere is disruptive and chaotic because students creating the issues go largely unpunished or at the least corrected? Daily fights, concealed weapons, teachers assaulted are being ignored to reduce the number of incidents reported. This is unacceptable! I do believe if we today work hard to restore success and personalized education, a HUGE reduction in student outbursts will occur. When a person feels they are being valued, they tend to make good choices. That being said, there will always be a percentage of our students that simply need strong boundaries that are strictly enforced. This isn't to address the negative behavior but to provide a better and more positive educational environment for all students. It must be said that students are profiling themselves and as a result, they are performing so that they can be removed from an educational environment that they perceive does not suit their needs. We need to correct this for them.

To make America's schools great again we must give local schools the authority and permission to enforce written behavior policy guidelines without fear of funding loss or reduction of school grades. This of course begins with revoking the Executive Order often referred to as the "Dear Colleague Letter of Jan 8, 2014" and will continue with new policy that encourages and strengthens positive behavior from our students. Unfortunately, we still need to strengthen the communication between the courts of the land and the schoolhouse to better serve the needs of students who participate in both of those

arenas. The schools cannot be the repository of some student criminals. There are many examples that I can provide to help with your understanding of this topic if you like.

I want to thank you for listening today, not just with your ears, but your heart as well. America is becoming great again under your leadership and we can make our schools great again in this process. Let's not waste any time but TODAY commit to RESTORE SUCCESS in education by defining what it is and appropriately measuring outcomes. Let us RESTORE PERSONALIZED EDUCATION for all students so not one feels unvalued, unimportant, or lost. Let us RESTORE BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS so our teachers are supported, administrations are freed to create positive, productive environments, and our students know the boundaries for achieving success as they grow into productive, contributing members of society. Will you join me? Let's RESTORE our schools.. Let's make America's schools as great as this nation! Thank you. God bless you and God bless our schools!