**Scott Babbidge**

Zip Code of Residence \_28277\_ Years in Charlotte-Mecklenburg \_\_6\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Previous place of residence \_\_Arizona\_\_\_\_\_        How long? \_\_9 years\_\_\_

Children? \_Sierra\_\_  Their ages? \_\_18\_\_\_\_

**If your child is/children are school age, what school/s do they attend?**

Sierra is a 2011 graduate of Providence High School – She is attending UNCW this fall.

**What is/was your experience with those schools?**

Sierra started school in Arizona – K and 1st grade were difficult, she was behind grade level at the end of 1st grade. We then made the decision to move her to a magnet “traditional” school which was heavy on Reading, Writing and Math. She blossomed and by the halfway mark of her 2nd grade year she was on grade level, and at the end of 2nd grade she was above grade level. She stayed at the school (which, by the way, was the oldest and worst of the schools in the district we belonged to, yet test scores were very high) through 6th grade. We moved to Charlotte in time for her to start 7th grade at JM Robinson. Moving from a school of 300 kids to a large middle school like JM was an adjustment, and she had a difficult time making the adjustment. The quality of education was good – but I found that there was an acceptance, particularly in Math, that being average was good enough. That carried through to Sierra’s first year at Providence High School. While Providence is a very good school, it was when my wife and I took a VERY active role in Sierra’s education that things really picked up steam for our daughter. We have a major problem with her 1st year math teacher. We were not happy, and became even unhappier when the guidance counselor at the start of her sophomore year told us “I don’t see any problem with Sierra getting “C’s” in Math – that is what she has been getting and that’s just what she is going to be in Math, a “C” student. That was NOT acceptable to me – and so we did something about it and hired a Math tutor for our daughter. That brings me even greater cause for concern now that I am running for school board – thankfully we were able to pay $35 once a week for extra help – but I worry even more about kids whose parents can’t afford that kind of extra help. Now, it total disclosure, it was a combination of my wife and me getting more intensely involved and Sierra believing in herself that turned our daughter from a child that struggled early in her CMS experience to a child that graduated a member of the National Honor Society.

You see, education is not just about the newness of a building. It’s not just about the courses offered. It is not purely about principals and teachers. It IS about parents setting expectations for their children and doing what is required to help their kids achieve their potential. Schools, teachers, principals, coaches, advisors all play a vital role in partnering with parents AND students to push and pull and sometimes even prod students into being the best they can be and unless ALL of those roles are committed and dedicated to student success we will not reach our collective full potential.

In CMS today, we have too much finger pointing and too much blaming someone or something else for our problems – this has resulted in a community divided about education. In addition, this community continues to stay engulfed in a negative situation driven by emotion and problems. I am the kind of leader that will bring to the board the attitude and approach based in objective thought, honesty, and focused on solutions. We must elect people who will lead us to the common ground upon which we all stand, and from there build solutions that are forward thinking, innovative and driven to improve the educational experience for EVERY CMS student, no matter where they live, the color of their skin or the socio-economic status of their family. I will not accept negativity, complaining or anything else that detracts from the problems before us.

**What have you done to educate yourself about the history of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools?**

My wife has been a public school teacher for almost 25 years. She taught me a valuable lesson many years ago – I asked once, right before the start of a school year, if she got a “scouting report” on the children who were going to be in her class that year so that she could know which kids were likely to be trouble or cause problems. She very firmly told me that she did NOT want to know about the kids who were coming. She did not want her opinion to be clouded by the opinions of other people. She said that getting a “bad” report on a child before even meeting the child could cloud her approach to the child in a way that would be unfair. “What if the child is not anything like the report I would get?” That is the approach I bring. I respect and understand the history of CMS – not nearly as well as people who grew up here. But at the same time I believe having lived here for only 6 years provides me with a different perspective. I am not emotional about the problems we face in CMS – as a result it is easy for me to have an open mind, to listen objectively, and to propose and work on solutions that will help EVERY student.

Fact: Every child wants to be successful

Fact: Every parent wants their child or children to do well in school and in life.

Fact: I believe in both of those things – and it does not matter to me where the child lives, how much money the family makes, or the color of the child.

In conclusion, I am NOT an expert on the history of CMS. And I believe that makes me very qualified to lead CMS into the future – a future focused on solutions and making CMS the “Model American School District”. It’s time for the rest of America to come look to CMS for ideas on how to be the best. That is my overriding vision for our entire school district.

**Which of the following books about Charlotte, its schools, and public education in general have you read?**

(  )The Dream Long Deferred by Frye Gaillard (  )Boom for Whom? by Stephen Smith

 (  )Class and Schools by Richard Rothstein (  ) Schoolhouses, Courthouses, and State Houses by Eric Hanushek and Alfred Lindseth

 (  ) The Shame of the Nation by Jonathan Kozol   (  ) Other?

In college, I did the required coursework to perform a student teaching practicum. During those courses I was exposed to writings on education and found that 99.9% of the time, the material I was reading was, in one way or another, biased. I believe that is a MAJOR problem in American education today. Everything you read or hear has been written from behind a bias. What we find then, is depending upon a person’s individual bias we either completely agree or completely disagree with what has been written. This is a fact of American life, but it is also a plague on our country. Much of this comes from people wanting to manipulate numbers to meet their pre-conceived ideas or beliefs. Some of it comes from special interest groups that spend millions upon millions of dollars to further their personal agenda. In fact, with both the Broad Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation we are seeing exactly that happen in our school district. Having entities from far away with no real ties to our community driving the agenda we are allowing our kids to be experimented on by people with motives that do not match that of moms and dads in Mecklenburg County. This is unacceptable to me because it is not putting KIDS FIRST.

**Please share pertinent information about your background/experience which will inform your work on the Board of Education.**

For my entire adult life, education has been the “Babbidge Family Business”. I spent my first 5 years out of college doing daily and long term substitute teaching in middle and high schools – so I have direct knowledge about how to connect with and teach kids, how to manage a classroom and encourage and promote learning.

My wife and I just celebrated our 22nd wedding anniversary – and for the entire time that we have been together, she has been a public school teacher. I know much better than the other candidates in this race about what really is going on in education.

Lastly, our daughter was educated in public schools. Add those things together, and you guessed it, education has been a topic of dinner time and family conversation EVERY day of my adult life.

I have also been successful in business. In 2001 I was the Sales Manager of the Year for a $3 Billion corporation (Insight Enterprises). I led a turnaround of a unit of that business. In 2001 I took a team that had 33 people and $44 million in sales the year before and turned it into a team of 24 people that sold just short of $58 million. I was nominated and chosen by the VP’s of the company to take part in its exclusive Advanced Management Training program where I learned about every facet of our multi-national corporation. I also am a Certified Behavioral Analyst in Predictive Index – a program developed at MIT that is used all over the world today to help leaders understand their people in ways that lead to high performing organizations. In late 2003, I went to work for a friend of mine who happens to be Black and we started an IT Reseller. I ran all of the day to day operations of the company and in our first year in business we were named the Grand Canyon Minority Supplier Development Council’s “Supplier of the Year” in the $1 million - $10 million category.

Today, I work for a local company and we have developed a cutting edge, web based software that teaches kids the extremely important life skill of financial literacy/personal finance/money management. In fact we are currently working with The Male’s Place, we have been part of the gang prevention program at First Baptist Church West, and we have done a 300 student pilot program with Olympic High School which saw student performance improve by almost 88% in just 60 days.