

My name is Christopher Cota-Robles and I am writing this statement to explain what kind of freakshow I experienced and witnessed at the Onslow County School Board Meeting that took place on March 7, 2023. I attended the meeting to discuss the constant physical violence that takes place at Parkwood Elementary between students and staff as staff members on the receiving end of extreme violence with no support from their employer. I had brought some supporting documents with me to be shown to the board members. As I waited outside of the building to be opened, I was meet by the District Secretary who let me in.

The conversation between us was cordial, she asked for my name in which I replied, and her facial expression changed. She told me she was familiar with the name and the situation I was going to address. At that time she had told me some topics that I was not allowed to discuss such as grievances, show pictures, or mention names at this particular forum because it "wasn't the right setting". As if she knew exactly what I was going to talk about. I understood about the not mentioning name and I respected that aspect. Everything else I wanted to talk about seemed to meet the boards criteria of "not being the right setting". The District Secretary did mention that she was not the proper authority to say what I was and not able to say. She was preparing me for a possible answer from the appropriate authority. She then referred me to the boards lawyer.

I met with the boards lawyer who told me the same as the District Secretary about what I couldn't discuss. I felt as my 1st Amendment rights were trying to be silenced. As if the board didn't want any light to be shed on this situation and exposed to the public eye. I didn't let these tactics from stopping me from speaking up to these bullies. I wasn't there to only speak on the behalf of my wife's abuse at her school, but also how she's not the only educator who is or who has gone through similar experiences. How schools across the county are failing their educators and students safety within the classroom.

Once the meeting was officially underway, the first thing that I witnessed was a motion for the Chairman to step down. The Chairman seemed very frustrated at his fellow board members. When I was called to address my issue I was given five minutes to speak. I asked the board members if they had the files that I gave to the District Secretary when I signed in to address the board. To no surprise, the answer was no. I saw the files clear as day still sitting on the District Secretary's desk. Mr. Rogers, a board member was shocked that I was providing them some documents and learned that the Chairman was involved in my wife's grievance. More commotions between the members ensued about when they're supposed to get those documents and why the Chairman didn't notify the other members of the grievance and that it's up to the Chair when the documents are to be seen. It was clear that the Chairman was becoming further irrational and frustrated. In my opinion, I believe a recess was called due to the Chairman becoming frustrated at being called out by fellow board members for not following policy and that I was providing proof that he didn't want to be seen. Once the motion for recess commenced, I stood at the podium waiting.

At this time, many people in the galley came up to me thanking me for speaking for my wife and fellow educators. Giving me encouragement to keep pushing the issue. As I was talking to a few individuals, I saw in my peripheral vision the Chairman walking straight towards me. He addresses me and shakes my hand. Out of respect for the position, I obliged. The handshake was longer than what a handshake should be and became uncomfortable. I released his hand thinking he would do the same, but he didn't. I pulled my hand away with a little more force to give him the impression that I was done and to let go. That subtle notion gave the impression that he was an enforcer, like he was trying to intimidate me for

speaking up against his decision on my wife's grievance. I didn't think board members were able to come up to individuals during a recess and speak to them directly. I asked if the documents will be reviewed by the members or have to see firsthand when they come back from the recess. To disengage with his uncomfortable conversation, I turned back to the other people around me who were trying to give me their own support. To which the Chairman walked away. The Chairman claimed that he stepped up into the position and always follows policy.

Those words that he said, I did not see and I have no trust or confidence in his abilities to be holding the position he is currently in. My final thought about this issue is to please hear the pleas of the constituents and act.

Christopher Cota-Robles