



CANDIDATE SPOTLIGHT

DEANA GRIFFITHS

SCHOOL BOARD - ASHBURN DISTRICT

CANDIDATE: **DEANA GRIFFITHS**

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How long have you lived in Loudoun County?

I have lived in Ashburn for 16 years. We lived in Sterling for the first nine months and then bought a house in Ashburn. I was raised in New Jersey and my husband grew up in Massachusetts. We met while we were both working in New Jersey. We actually met at the old Yankee stadium three days before 9/11, so we didn't go on our first date until the end of September. I was in Weehawken at the time, and I watched the Twin Towers fall that day. It was a shock to everyone. My future husband and I had a lot to talk about.

What do you like about living in Loudoun County?

Compared to living in New Jersey where everything is so crowded and you have to go to other towns for day-to-day life, Ashburn has everything right here. My job is also very close, so my commute is also short. I don't have to leave the Ashburn area to access everything. I really love it here. Schools and parks and an overall safe community is a great place to raise a family.

What do you do professionally?

I am a civil engineering recruiter. My firm does recruitment for construction and infrastructure work. I have been recruiting in civil engineering since 2016.

Since there is so much construction in Loudoun County is there a big demand for civil engineers?

Yes. We are already seeing all the new roads and construction, along with data centers.

What made you decide to run for school board?

The angry mom in me came out when our kids were locked down and masked. I think that's when I started to really think about it, and more so after I learned about the sexual assault that happened at Stone Bridge High School. I had spoken at a school board meeting back in 2018 against Policy 8040 (which was a different policy at the time, it has been reworked) [*Loudoun's Policy 8040 allows students to use their chosen name and gender pronouns that reflect their consistently asserted gender identity without any substantiating evidence, regardless of the name and gender recorded in the student's permanent educational record.*]. When it didn't pass, I took a deep breath and thought I wouldn't have to worry about it again. The next thing I know, an assault happens at Stone Bridge High School and two weeks later policy 8040 passed. I didn't know the details about the assault until late June after 8040 had already passed. The current board knew what happened and passed it anyway.

If you are a woman or have a daughter, it should really bother you. It should actually bother everyone. Also, what is happening with Title IX. It doesn't just stop with the schools. You are losing privacy by having to share fitting rooms, locker rooms and bathrooms. They are taking everything away that we have fought for as women. Policy 8040 is setting girls and women back. All of these issues have been brought to my attention and is a concern for most students at LCPS.

Do you have children in LCPS?

Yes, I have two children who attend middle school.

If you are elected, what would you like to see change with LCPS and the school board?

Get back to common sense. Once I am elected, I will be able to evaluate the financials. I'd like to see where all the money is going, for example the Covid money. I am also interested in reviewing the "capital improvement program" and how we can better distribute the money. The current board wants to use that money to build the pilot program co-ed bathrooms. We can put a stop to the rest of the construction and get rid of wasteful spending. We could expand access to vocational programs/training and how money is allocated for capital improvements. Improvement monies should be used to repair crumbling schools as opposed to funding gender neutral bathrooms. Right now, vocational programs are limited to the Loudoun Academies. They should be in all high schools so students can learn a trade as well as receive apprenticeships. There are empty buildings all over Loudoun County. LCPS could lease some of these buildings to have vocational programs on-site. They would need to be accessible and not require kids to be bused to these facilities. I really care about the vocational programs being accessible to all

students. We need to get back to focusing on students' learning life lessons and the basics. I am running for school board for the public schools, but I believe in being able to choose what is best for your child and your taxes should go toward that as well. Every child learns differently.

The school board recently hired a new superintendent. What do you think about the process?

The vetting process doesn't seem top notch. You would think that with everything Loudoun has gone through, the Superintendent would be vetted properly. I met with the recruiting firm at one of the listening sessions and I asked the recruiter about involving the parents more, but it seemed like they didn't really care to do that. I also took the LCPS survey asking for better vetting.

What do you think about the controversial books in school libraries?

Inappropriate books that sexualize children should not be in schools; especially for K-8. High school kids are old enough to go to the public libraries if they want to read these books, but they should not be displayed in school libraries.

What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

I enjoy hanging out with my family, hiking, biking and going to museums. When the kids have days off from school, we do something educational like go to museums or watch educational programs. Even when they are not in school, they are learning and retaining information.

If you had a superpower, what would it be?

I'd like to snap my fingers and make all parents and their kids happy. You can't please everyone, but the new board will certainly try!