
20 Years on the Frontlines of School Governance

Why Local Voices Must Reach Washington

By Mike Greer: **Blowing in the Wind** October 16, 2026

As I prepare for the final meetings of my 20-year school board career, having served sixteen years in Paradise and four years in Crescent City and Del Norte County, I am reminded that public education is inherently political and shaped by elected leaders at every level. Over two decades, I have met with national and state leaders, including the President, Vice President, Governor, and numerous senators and congressmen. Holding the rare dual responsibility of serving as both a district and county board member in California, I learned early that protecting our students and schools requires taking local issues straight to the halls of power.

A defining highlight of my advocacy occurred earlier this year when the California School Boards Association (CSBA) specifically selected me to participate in a federal lobbying effort in Washington, D.C. Joining me was just one other school board member from Bakersfield and CSBA staff, I met directly with officials at the U.S. Department of Education to advocate for essential education programs and federal funding for Del Norte County. Bringing the direct experiences of rural and local California districts to federal policymakers in Washington was a vital opportunity to push for the resources and federal support our schools desperately need.

This federal work builds upon years of active state-level governance. During my two years on the CSBA Legislative Committee in Sacramento, I collaborated directly with legislators to highlight local hardships caused by state policies ranging from: state-mandated electric buses, to a troubling lack of accountability within the state Department of Education. My drive to sharpen local governance also led me to help found the Association of California County Boards of Education and co-lead workshops at annual CSBA state conferences alongside our superintendent, Jeff Harris.

Effective advocacy in Washington and Sacramento must always be anchored in frontline community service. In the catastrophic wake of the Camp Fire in Paradise, I witnessed our community burn as it destroyed 90% of the homes and damaged or destroyed 8 out of the 9 schools. At the beginning of the communities recovery I personally distributed over \$40,000 in gift cards received from around the world to the displaced students and families across makeshift encampments and schools. When officials insisted our high school graduation could not take place on our home football field, we told them watch us! The resulting ceremony did happen, and became the largest gathering of Paradisians in history, drawing state, national, and worldwide media coverage.

That same commitment to community carried into my service in Del Norte County. Two of my most rewarding moments were initiating the renaming of Margaret Keating School to O’Me-Nok Learning Center Elementary School in Klamath and accepting the CSBA Golden Bell Award alongside Superintendent Jeff Harris for exemplary tribal and community partnerships.

Reflecting on these twenty years, I have observed troubling shifts—politicians taking on the role of parents and destroying the role of families in our schools, while labor unions shifted focus from helping teachers become better educators toward political unionism and social ills. My experiences lobbying in Sacramento and meeting with the U.S. Department of Education in Washington, D.C., reinforce that dedicated local trustees can and does make a difference when we stand up for our communities.

As I conclude my service, I encourage future board members to keep taking the fight for our students all the way from local classrooms to the national stage. I ask that my supporters join me in electing Ron Bates to take my position on the school board for District 5. I want to thank all the people who have supported me in my quest for educational excellence, especially my wife, Shannon, and daughter Alison, who have put up with my schedule and political aspirations. I am grateful for the excellent school board members who have shared their wisdom and insights with me as we worked together to attain a better education for all students. I sincerely hope they feel the same way.