

This week, the Cobb County School District was honored by a visit from the President of the United States.

Our safety, transportation, operations, maintenance, food and nutrition, technology, and countless other team members did an outstanding job under very short notice.

The head of the US Secret Service detail was very complimentary of our safety and security, as well as how we were able to smoothly host the event, and that this was the best event in the last couple of years.

This was a clear reminder of the quality and commitment of the people who protect our students and staff every day and will benefit Wheeler's campus for this entire school year. Please join me in thanking all of our team, especially our men and women of our Cobb County School District Police. Thank you, guys. I appreciate it.

The White House's selection of the Cobb County School District for a presidential visit is a rare and historic honor. In 2008, the District also hosted a campaign event for then-Senator Barack Obama at McEachern High School.

After yesterday's visit, Cobb County will have hosted three sitting presidents. President Ronald Reagan in 1984, President George W. Bush at Harrison High School in 2003, and now President Trump at Wheeler High School in 2026. According to local media, roughly one hundred people protested this visit. The large majority of Cobb residents, across the political spectrum, treated the visit as the honor that it was.

I particularly appreciate Board Chair Scamahorn, Vice Chair Chastain, board members Cristadoro, Wheeler, Hutchins, and Sayler for their attendance and support for the President visiting our school district. And I've already apologized to Dr. Hutchins before, but publicly, I did not say, Dr. Hutchins. I said Mr. Trey Hutchins. So, my apologies again.

I do appreciate that this president is not universally liked. That is something he has in common with every president since, and including,, George Washington. No one agrees with every decision a president makes; My goodness, I don't even agree with every decision I make. Like all of them, when the President of the United States chooses to honor your school district, you say yes. Public schools do not pick and choose their elected officials according to their own personal politics. Once elected, a President occupies the office of the White House. "Not my president" is not an option for a public school system or any other United States citizen. As far as that goes, once the election is over, the winning candidate becomes the office, whether you voted for the winning candidate or not. It's the president of the United States of America. Period. Full stop.

In 2008, under a Republican-majority Board, the District professionally hosted an expressly political campaign event by then-Senator Obama. We do not control the President, the White House, the Secret Service, or the content of any remarks or who the President asks to speak. What a President chooses to say is not known until the moment he speaks. What is known is that the White House chose our schools because of the high-quality choices we offer our families. What is also known is that I am responsible for a school district with such high achievement that the White House chose the Cobb County School District from over 13,000 public school districts across the country.

The vast majority of Cobb citizens, regardless of party, recognize the honor. Some have said that the president's coming to the Cobb County School District brings divisive politics to the county. Is that divisive? Like not supporting the removal of inappropriate materials from the hands of children, or demanding that we require masks and vaccinations during COVID, or not supporting the board's anti-racism resolution. Is that the kind of divisiveness we're talking about? Perhaps anyone who opposes our district being honored needs to take a long, hard look in the mirror and ask themselves if they are supporting students or waving their own political flag.

For those whose objection is truly one of principle—that schools should never host any elected official of any party—I look forward to the same response when the next president that they support chooses to honor our school district regardless of party. The deafening silence will answer the question: Are you supporting schools, or are you playing politics? The response to yesterday has already answered that question for some who are both in and outside of this room.

What a true honor it was for the president of the United States of America, the greatest country on the planet, to ask and choose to come to the Cobb County School District, the best place to teach, lead, and learn. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Those are my comments.