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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
ORANGE COUNTY SCHOOLS**

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Orange County Schools Board of Education Welcomes New Member, Swears in Returning Members, and Elects New Board Leadership

Board unanimously elects Carrie Doyle as Chair and welcomes newly elected Board member Lori Russell

HILLSBOROUGH, N.C. — Orange County Schools Board of Education officially welcomed one new member, swore in three returning members for new terms, and elected new Board leadership during a special meeting held on July 13, 2026.

Lori Russell was sworn in for her first term, joining returning members Will Atherton, who begins his third term; Sarah Smylie, who begins her third term; and Anne Purcell, who begins her second term. Following the swearing-in ceremony, Board members elected Carrie Doyle as Chair and reelected Wendy Padilla as Vice Chair.

The Orange County Schools Board of Education is composed of seven community members elected to provide leadership and oversight for the school district. Board members serve four-year terms and are responsible for setting district policy while ensuring every decision reflects the best interests of students, families, staff, and the Orange County community.

"I chose to serve because I believe in the promise of public education and the potential of every student," said Russell. "I look forward to listening, learning, and working alongside our community to help Orange County Schools continue moving forward."

Carrie Doyle, newly elected Chair of the Orange County Schools Board of Education, reflected on the opportunity to serve in this leadership role.

"I am grateful for the trust my fellow Board members have placed in me as Chair. I look forward to leading collaboratively with Vice Chair Padilla and the whole Board in order to best serve all the students of Orange County Schools."

Orange County Schools congratulates its newly sworn-in and returning Board members and looks forward to their continued leadership and service on behalf of the district and the students and families they serve.

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Orange County Schools' mission is to educate students in a safe, inclusive environment where we engage, challenge, and inspire them to reach their maximum potential. Orange County Schools serves approximately 6,600 students across 13 schools and is committed to fostering belonging, promoting academic excellence, and building strong partnerships with families and the community to prepare every student for lifelong success.



