



# LEANDRO on the BALLOT

How voting can help ensure that every child in North Carolina receives a sound basic education.

The name "LEANDRO" won't appear on any ballot in 2020 ... but the election outcome has consequences for guaranteeing a child's right to a quality public education.

Our elected officials must comply with the court decision for



## *Leandro v. State of North Carolina,*

which calls for the state to meet its constitutional responsibility to provide students with a sound basic education.

The following state offices are critical to *Leandro* compliance, as their duties are relevant to creating or carrying out education policy:



### GOVERNOR

Appoints several members of the State Board of Education.



### LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Sits on the State Board of Education, President of the General Assembly Senate so may cast tiebreaking votes.



### SUPERINTENDENT of PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Leads the Department of Public Instruction, the executive branch body in charge of overseeing the day-to-day operation of public schools.



### GENERAL ASSEMBLY - NC House & Senate

Sets state tax policy, determines how much revenue the state will have, then creates a budget that includes how much is spent on public education. The NCGA also determines how much school funding comes from local (county) government, and it sets policy to specify how education money is spent.

The NCGA has a constitutional responsibility to create public education system that serves every child.



### COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Set county tax rates to collect then appropriate funds for school construction and maintenance, and, at their discretion, provide additional operating funds to supplement state funding.



### SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Carry out the educational program and set local policy according to the parameters determined by the Department of Public Instruction.



### JUDGES

Ensure that the other branches of state government live up to their constitutional responsibilities with regard to education, or any issue of injustice.

STATE

LOCAL





# How to Spot a Candidate That Supports Public Education for Every Child

Any candidate for public office could say they "support" education, so it can be tricky to determine whether they're a true advocate for equity in our public schools.

Below is a list of points to consider when analyzing candidates for any public office that involves decision making for public education — from the state legislature to the school board in your local district.

## ◆ KNOWLEDGE of OFFICE

Proposing changes outside the purview of the office shows either that the candidate's not clear on the job itself ... or that promises are being made that can't be kept

### EXAMPLES:

- a state legislative candidate vowing to end a process controlled by individual school boards
- a school board candidate promising to install specific educational materials without regard to existing state-wide guidelines.

## ◆ PUBLIC SERVICE RECORD

Incumbent candidates, or those who have held a different public office, have a track record you can research, like their vote on key education issues.

## ◆ QUALIFICATIONS

While it's admirable for any person to help their child's school, serving on the PTA doesn't necessarily mean they support public education in a way that promotes better support for underserved children.

## ◆ ISSUE SPOTLIGHT

A candidate that doesn't mention education on their campaign website either hasn't put any thought into it, or they don't want voters to know their position.

# THE BASICS

## ◆ KNOWLEDGE of INEQUITY

Candidates may have limited understanding of the core roots of inequity in public schools. Look at their positions on some of the issues listed below, or ask them questions at an open house, town hall, or candidate forum.

### EXAMPLES:

- "Will you pledge to support state compliance for the *Leandro v. State of North Carolina* decision?"
- "What's your stance on private school vouchers and the expansion of charter schools?"
- "How can you fix the opportunity gaps that exist?"

## ◆ COURSE of ACTION

Candidates that are more committed to improving public education will have specific policy actions in mind.

### EXAMPLES:

- "We need to provide more professional development opportunities for teachers."
- "We need to remove the funding cap for students with disabilities."

## ◆ RHETORIC & "CODE WORDS"

If a candidate's solution to inequity in public schools is to send children to private schools instead, that's not compatible with providing a general and uniform system of public schools for the children of North Carolina.

Also, words like "choice" are used to convey the idea that parents should be able to choose what's best for their child ... but the real world consequence is that "choice" drives inequity.

# THE ISSUES

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## #LeadWithLeandro PLEDGE



Elected officials and candidates can pledge to work toward compliance with *Leandro v. State of North Carolina*. Signatories of the **Every Child NC Pledge** are signaling that they're aware of their responsibility to remedy the state's constitutional violation, and are willing to be held accountable.



## ENDORSEMENTS

Some professional organizations and education-related advocacy groups have a formal endorsement process, thereby conveying the opinion of those knowledgeable about the needs of children.