



How voting can ensure
the education rights of
North Carolina children.



© Every Child NC. 2022. All rights reserved.



The *Leandro v. State* court decision demands all schools deliver the education standard guaranteed by the state constitution.



The **Leandro Plan** shows **HOW** to meet the education standard by addressing the public school system's critical needs.

ELECTIONS MATTER for the school improvements promised by the Leandro Plan:

- ◆ Elected officials are the ones responsible for creating and carrying out much of the policy that governs public school operations.
- ◆ The Leandro Plan's funding and equity guidelines can only help students if office holders are committed to serving North Carolina children.

The following offices are critical for Leandro compliance:



GOVERNOR

Appoints several members of the State Board of Education.



LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Sits on the State Board of Education, President of the NC 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.



NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY - 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.

STATE



JUDGES

Ensure that the other branches of state government live up to their constitutional responsibilities; the court also provides guidance for protection of individual rights.



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.

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 know whether they’re a true advocate for public school students with the greatest need.

Below is a list of points to consider when analyzing candidates that will be decision makers 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 local school boards
- a school board candidate promising to install specific educational materials regardless of state rules.

◆ PUBLIC SERVICE RECORD

Incumbent candidates, or those who have held a different public office, have a track record you can research, such as 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 EQUITY

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 support compliance of the *Leandro v. State of North Carolina* decision?”
- “What’s your stance on private school vouchers and charter school expansion?”
- “How can you fix opportunity gaps?”

◆ 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

Candidate Commitment to Leandro



Elected officials and candidates can show their commitment to compliance with *Leandro* ruling. Signatories of **Every Child NC’s statement** are signaling they’re aware of their responsibility to remedy the state’s constitutional violation, and are willing to be held accountable.

© Every Child NC. 2022. All rights reserved.



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.