



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.

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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.