

Advocacy in Schools

Why advocacy?

- “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever...the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have said to you.” John 14:16&26

Intersectionality

- This term was coined by professor Kimberlé Crenshaw (who teaches at Columbia Law School and UCLA) in 1989.
- Intersectionality describes how race, class, gender, and other individual characteristics “intersect” with one another and overlap.
- Any justice issue is intersectional, there is much more at play than what the issue presents as on the surface.
- Intersectionality helps us to understand the complexity and dynamics of an issue. Helps us to understand the “why”
- Advocacy and justice work **MUST BE** intersectional, otherwise we are just trimming the branches of the problem. Allowing for systems to work on multiple fronts which is how they are designed.
- When our advocacy is intersectional, we have a full view of the issue and can get at the roots.

Pastors for North Carolina Children

- Mobilizes faith communities for public education
- Mission: Serving Children by advocating for North Carolina's public schools

The Need

- Chronic underfunding and unjust policies are preventing children from receiving the public education guaranteed by the state constitution
- All children are affected when schools lack basic resources; however, school deficiencies have an even greater impact on children with greater needs.

The Calling

- We have a moral obligation to love all of God's children and a civic responsibility to support the youth in our community as they learn and grow
- Public school advocacy is a just and compassionate way to serve children in your congregation, neighborhood, and throughout NC

The Plan

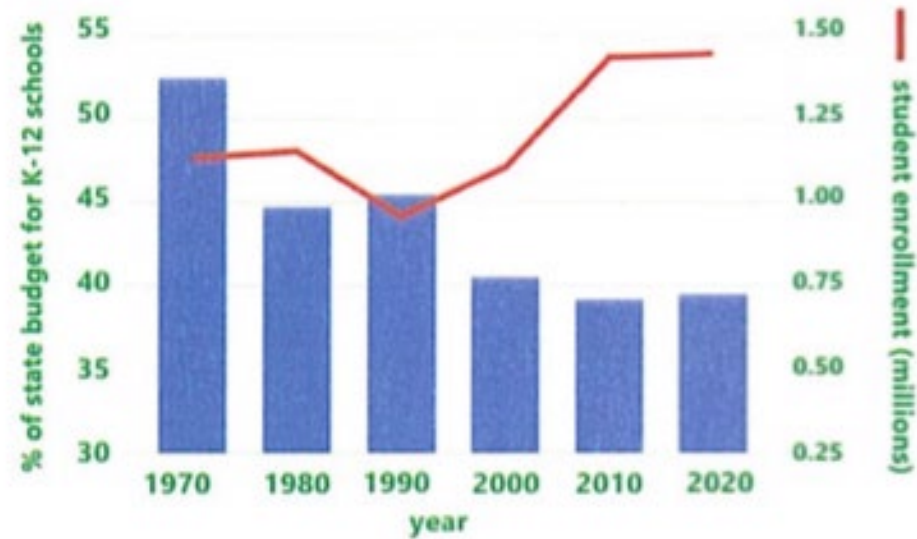
- Going beyond offering charity to fill the gaps, Pastors for NC Children is calling on lawmakers to directly address student needs via budget and policy measures.
- Their growing network of church leaders and congregations advocate for adequate public school funding for equitable access to educational opportunities for all children.

The North Carolina Public School System

- Over 1.4 million children enrolled
- 115 districts (Local Education Agencies (LEAs))
- 2400 schools governed by publicly elected boards
- 94,000 teachers and staff
- LEAs are the top employer in 55 countries and in top 3 in 94 of NC's 100 counties

The North Carolina Public School System

Given increasing student enrollment, the education budget set by state lawmakers has not kept up with growth, leaving public schools to do more with less.



Some schools are challenged even further due to the inherent inequity among LEAs, which contribute 25% of the total school operating cost and ~90% of capital expenses.

For example, a lower-wealth LEA that lacks the tax base to fully supplement state funds would not be able to provide the facilities, supplies, staffing, and support services that are essential to fulfill student needs.

Leandro v. State of North Carolina

- Filed in 1994 on behalf of students from rural, low-wealth counties who were not receiving equal education opportunities
- The 1997 decision stated that children are owed a minimum standard of education and that North Carolina was failing to provide that standard
- Now, over 25 years later, the state still has not met its constitutional obligation
- In 2021, the court ordered the legislature to enact the Leandro Plan, as set of policies to improve public education funding and resource distribution

Mission Amplify

- Combines training in public education advocacy and strategies for reaching out to elected officials
- Inform participants about the issues facing public school students
- Build a network of groups to carry out monthly campaigns to lawmakers in support of public education
- Share the needs of students and educators with elected officials via handwritten letters, phone calls, and virtual or in-person meetings.
- Each monthly campaign will focus on a single issue within public school policy that urgently needs to be addressed by the NC legislature