



## ASK THE CANDIDATES

### What will you do to ensure all North Carolina children have access to educational opportunity?

- In the current iteration of the *Leandro* case, an expert study recommended North Carolina increase education investments by nearly \$4 billion to provide resources – particularly to schools serving high concentrations of children of color and those from families with low incomes – that address the ongoing failure to provide a constitutionally-adequate education. Which investments would you prioritize to address stagnating academic outcomes and growing achievement gaps? How will you ensure the state legislature will make these investments?
- A growing body of research shows Black students are 160 percent more likely to receive in-school suspension and 84 percent more likely to receive out-of-school suspension than white students. How would you address these problems?
- School funding is largely calculated on the basis of enrollment. If families keep their children out of school due to the pandemic, districts could lose funding next year even as the cost of education has increased during the public health crisis. How would you avoid this cut to education funding?
- What policies are needed to help schools educate children remotely in the event of continued school closures?
- What is the best way to fund the state's over \$8 billion deficit for school construction and other capital improvements?
- The state's A-F school grading system has been widely criticized for failing to give parents meaningful information and unfairly stigmatizing schools with high concentrations of students from families with low incomes. What measures should the school grading system include that would most reflect whether all children are being given meaningful opportunities?

### Twenty-five years after the *Leandro* case commenced, the state is farther from meeting its constitutional obligation to provide all children with the opportunity to receive a sound basic education

## FACTS YOU CAN USE

- Per-student funding is down 3 percent from 2008-09, when adjusting for inflation and enrollment increases. When you adjust for the cost drivers faced by schools (enrollment, salaries, and benefits), actual resource levels are down nearly 5 percent per student during the same period.
- In 2008-09, North Carolina's average teacher salary was 12 percent below the U.S. average. Now, average teacher pay is 16 percent below the national average.
- In 2008-09 national average per-pupil spending was 18 percent higher than per-pupil spending in North Carolina; now it's 26 percent.
- North Carolina's school funding effort (total education spending as a share of the state economy) has fallen from 42<sup>nd</sup> in 2008 to 50<sup>th</sup> in 2017.
- If North Carolina were to increase its funding effort to the national average, FY 2016-17 spending would have been \$4.3 billion above actual levels.

## DID YOU GET A REAL, MEANINGFUL ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION?

If not, here are some follow-up questions that might help you get a more specific answer:

- If you believe there is enough funding to provide resources that meet students' needs, please tell us where that funding is located.
- Can you tell me about what principles or values will guide your decisions on this issue?
- What are the problems you see in the current approach?

VISIT [WWW.NCJUSTICE.ORG/ELECTION2020](http://WWW.NCJUSTICE.ORG/ELECTION2020) TO SHARE THE ANSWERS YOU RECEIVED.