



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF NORTH CAROLINA



2026 Ballot: Elected Offices That Shape Public Education in North Carolina

Public education is foundational to North Carolina's future—preparing our workforce, strengthening communities, and fueling our economy. It is a state constitutional requirement. The Declaration of Rights in the [North Carolina Constitution](#) states: “The people have a right to the privilege of education, and it is the duty of the state to guard and maintain that right.” –Article 1, Section 15

State Offices

- **N.C. General Assembly—House and Senate**

Voters elect members of the N.C. House and Senate to two-year terms. Together they make up the General Assembly. The legislature has major responsibility for both the **funding and laws governing public education**. It sets the state budget for public education, including funding distributed to school districts and funding for the operation of the Department of Public Instruction. It also establishes statewide teacher salary schedules and enacts laws affecting teacher qualifications, curriculum, school regulations and other education policies.

- **N.C. Supreme Court and Court of Appeals**

Voters statewide elect Supreme Court justices and Court of Appeals judges to eight-year terms. These appellate courts interpret state laws and constitutional provisions that affect public education. Court decisions can have significant implications for education policy, funding and students' constitutional right to educational opportunity. The *Leandro* litigation is one prominent example.

Local Offices (*Offices and their terms vary by county.*)

- **Board of County Commissioners**

County commissioners are primarily responsible for **funding school facilities**, including construction, renovation and maintenance. They also approve local county appropriations to the school system, which may supplement state funding for teacher pay and other school needs. County commissioners set the county property-tax rate that supports these local appropriations.

- **Local Board of Education**

Local school board members govern the school district and make decisions about budgets, personnel, district operations, and the implementation of state and local education policies within the authority granted by state law. They adopt and manage the school system's budget using federal, state and local funds. Unlike county commissioners, local school boards **do not have independent taxing authority** and depend on state and county funding for much of their revenue.

A strong and equitable public education system for all students is an investment in North Carolina's future.

Public schools unite us! Public schools do the public good!