

League of Women Voters

NC State Education Action Team Organizing Meeting Notes

May 6, 2017 Annual Meeting

Co Leads: Mary Monroe Kolek, Ph.D.

Willie Taylor

Why it is important to be informed and involved:

It has never been clearer that a well-educated public is critical to the health of our nation and its role as a leader of peace and prosperity on the global stage.

Traditionally, even though we may have had deep and extended discussions about the details of “school”- for example, when to teach long division or whether cursive was passé- the role of public education as the central and connecting tie that binds and fortifies us as a nation committed to equality and in constant pursuit of excellence was recognized as central to our narrative and essential to our future. That is until recently.

It appears that we can no longer take such agreement for granted. In an age of customization, decentralization and divisiveness, public education- and in particular the children it serves now and in the future- are no longer seen as part of a single fabric, made rich by its varied colors and textures. Such a shift in paradigm makes our work compelling and essential if we are committed to pursuing the national LWV call to: *Support federal policies that provide an equitable, quality public education for all children pre-K through grade 12.*

Support implies a deep understanding of the conditions, issues, options and range of outcomes associated with policies and their related mandates and actions. The role of the LWV Education Action Team is to encourage, educate and develop connections among NC local LWV affiliate groups in service of this goal.

NC Education Action Teams

May 6, 2017

Meeting objectives:

- Taking a census of the current status of existing groups/interest across the various LWV chapters represented at the meeting.
- Developing a strategy for creating a data base to connect all LWV branches with Education teams (liaison name, e mail, telephone number, number of active team participants, current areas of focus/action- top 3 topics, website link.)
- Take temperature of goal focused on developing a statewide position on public education (review Piedmont's materials)
- Discuss establishing system for statewide alerts related to education issues, actions. (Can/should we connect with other nonpartisan groups that specialize keeping the public informed about education issues/legislative activities?)
- Develop an approach to diagramming an organizational flow for communication/connection/collaboration among NC Ed teams.

Sample: Public Education Position for LWV PT

The LWVPT Public Education Roundtable History

The LWVPT Public Education Roundtable was founded in 2010. One of the first acts was the participation in the LWVUS national study on the "Federal Role in Public Education" in 2011. Concurrent and following this almost year-long study, numerous meetings were held to discuss the status of public education on a local level and coupled with the knowledge gained from participation in the national study, the LWVPT Public Education Roundtable developed "A Round Table of Thoughts about Public Education – A White Paper", printed and widely distributed in 2012. The document reviewed public education in the United States and North Carolina and examined, in depth 6 critical existing challenges: Poverty, Funding and Equity, the Imperative of High Quality Teaching, Curriculum Issues, Privatization and Re-segregation of Schools. Subsequently in May, 2013, League members from across the state caucused at the LWVNC State Convention and through discussion, validated that these challenges are statewide issues.

The LWVPT Public Education Roundtable Position

After extensive study, the LWVPT Public Education Roundtable believes that for quality education to exist and thrive locally for all children pre-K through grade 12, the following principles must be the foci of the League: funding equity, integration, high quality teachers and principals, support service to include teacher assistants and small class size especially in high poverty schools. Public tax dollars

must be used only for public school education with accountability and transparency required in all educational settings. Therefore, the LWVPT endorses the following principles to form its Public Education Policy. 1. Opposition to vouchers, tax credits, scholarships, or other uses of public tax dollars to fund private or parochial school attendance. 2. Support for fully funding public pre-K for all children and providing support for families of pre-K children suffering physical, emotional, and other traumas that negatively and possibly permanently affect their ability to succeed in school. 3. Provision of highly qualified effective teachers and principals in all schools that includes professional staff development, support staff and adequate classroom equipment and materials and salaries competitive with the national average. 4. Holding charter schools that receive public dollars to the same educational accountability and transparency standards as traditional public schools.