

Student Voice Alliance: Uplifting Student Voices for a Better Future

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Student Voice Alliance

- Student Voice Alliance is a student-led organization that aims to uplift student voices for a better future.
- Started in October 2024 as a project for the Senior Student Advisor on the SBE within DPI.
- Sought to fill the gap of a lack of connectivity between student voices throughout North Carolina.



Our Work

- To amplify student voices for a better future, Student Voice Alliance focuses its work in a few projects, including:
 - Student Surveys
 - The Ambassador Program
 - Student Policy Pulse
 - Social Media



The Team

- Student Voice Alliance is student-led and the team of 9 volunteers.
- The central team includes students from 6 LEAs:
 - Alamance-Burlington Schools
 - Gaston County Schools
 - Guilford County Schools
 - Johnston County Schools
 - Pitt County Schools
 - Wake County Public Schools



Student Surveys

Connecting student voices to policymakers.



Past & Current Survey Topics

- Class Rank
- Cell Phones
- Grades and Standardized Assessments
- Advanced Coursework
- Economics Education
- Titles for New Math Courses



Survey Reach

- 449 public school students from 37 LEAs and charter schools have completed a survey.



Benefits of Surveys

- Survey results have been presented to numerous stakeholders in the education policy space.
- Surveys also allow other student advocates, such as the Student Voice Alliance Ambassadors, to leverage data to support arguments that focus around student needs.
- While numerous LEAs survey students regularly on issues, Student Voice Alliance surveys are anonymous, short, and student-created, presenting an alternative collection of data.



The Student Ambassador Program

Strengthening connections between students and local school boards.



What is the program?

- The Ambassador Program is an initiative designed to include students in engaging directly in education policy and school board decision-making.
- Ambassadors will serve as liaisons between their peers and local school boards through attending meetings, reporting outcomes, and ensuring student perspectives are represented.
- Currently applications for the pilot are open until June 10, 2026, and training begins in summer 2026.



The Mission and Goals

- Strengthen student representation in educational decision-making processes.
- Educate students about education law, governance, and civic engagement.
- Create a sustainable channel of communication between students and local school boards.
- Build leadership and advocacy capacity among North Carolina Students.



Summer Training

- Training over the summer includes instruction on:
 - Education policy and governance in North Carolina.
 - The roles and responsibilities of local school boards, the State Board of Education, and the General Assembly.
 - Public speaking, debate, and advocacy skills.
 - Professional ethics and conduct in civic settings.



General Assembly Engagement

- The program aims to establish a regular student presence at the General Assembly.
- Ambassadors will attend House and Senate Education Committee hearings, testifying on bills through public comment.
- Ambassadors also will serve as liasons for student voice, utilizing survey results from their peers in conversations with legislators and committee leadership.



Strategic Plan Connection

"Engage with local boards of education to honor teachers and principals of the year, **expand meaningful advisor roles for students**, teachers and principals at the district and state levels and identify additional ways to publicly recognize educator excellence." [P2.F4.A1]



Student Policy Pulse

Providing student centered education policy briefs.



An Overview

- Student Policy Pulse provides to students updates on education policy with a student-centered focus.
- In addition to publishing briefs on Student Voice Alliance's website, Student Policy Pulse issues a biweekly newsletter to summarize larger policy briefs for busy students to still receive relevant information to education policy.






Mission Connection

- Through making easily understandable briefs on education policy, Student Policy Pulse enables students to be informed of the decisions that affect them the most.

Student Policy Pulse

Student Policy Pulse - Updates about education policy, how it affects you, and what you can do about it. Want to learn more? Join SVA's newsletter [here](#)

Policy Briefs - Summaries of Education Decisions

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|---|--|--|
|  |  |  |
| AI in Classrooms? - Policy Brief | 30 Year Case Ruled On - Hoke v. State Policy Brief | New Math Curriculum? NC Math Revisions Policy Brief |

Current Examples

Hoke County Board of Education V. State

- In this brief, we updated students on the April ruling of *Leandro v. State*, showing its possible effects on school funding through a non-partisan lens.

Hoke County Board of Education v. State - Policy Brief

In the recent landmark NC Supreme Court decision, *Hoke County Board of Education v. State*, the court overturned a 30-year debate over the constitutionality of public education funding, cutting billions of dollars of education funds intended to improve equity in North Carolina Public Schools.

Hoke County Board of Education v. State, also known as the *Leandro* case, had its origins in 1994, when a group of students from low-income public schools brought suit against the North Carolina State Board of Education. The students claimed that “[The State Board of Education] had deprived the students of their rights [to a basic and sound education] enshrined in the North Carolina Constitution.”¹ The *Leandro* case was first ruled on in 1997, where the court held that all students had an unalienable right to a sound and basic education. However, due to a lack of funding and resources, students in Hoke County were not provided with a sound and basic education, despite the 1997 ruling.

Once more, the Hoke County case made its way to the NC Supreme Court, where in a 4-3 decision in 2022, the NC Supreme Court mandated that trial courts in Hoke County could essentially mandate the state to fund the education system to achieve this sound and basic education.² However, in the 2022 midterms, the North Carolina Supreme Court’s composition shifted from a Democratic majority to a Republican majority. This led the court to reevaluate the legitimacy of the 2022 decision.

On April 6th, 2026, the court issued their majority opinion on the legitimacy of the 2022 ruling. With Chief Justice Newby presiding, the court stated that lower courts mandating state funds overstepped the Court’s powers. The majority opinion went on to detail that the grounds of



Why do we do this?

- A development of policy understanding in students.
 - This indirectly allows for informed participation in our government; allowing students to have their voice heard in education.
- For Student Voice Alliance, providing students easily understandable resources allows for better engagement in our activities from students.



Social Media

Making education policy more accessible and understandable for students.



Purpose

- Student Voice Alliance's social media aims to distribute information on public school policy, upcoming student opportunities, and important information to students.
- Social media encourages student awareness as well participation in public school advocacy.
- Currently, Student Voice Alliance can be found on Instagram and TikTok.



Reach and Engagement

- 5,500 individuals view our social media content every 30 days.
- The average post reaches between 200-500 students.
- The average viewer is between 13-17 years old.



Types of Content Posted

- "Legislation In 60 Seconds"
- Survey Promotions
- Student polls/questions
- FAQ Style Videos
- Student Opportunities
- Information Related to NC Public School's Governance

**HOW SCHOOL
BOARD
MEMBERS GET
THEIR SEATS**

An NC overview



Future Goals

- Expand reach to students across North Carolina.
- Increase the engagement rates of viewers.
- Launch an education video series.
- Improve accessibility on our posts.
- Develop stronger student communication.



The Town Hall

- On September 19, 2026, Student Voice Alliance will host a virtual town hall.
- Students statewide can come together to bring up issues they are facing in public schools and collaborate for effective solutions.



The Future

Sustaining the work ahead.



On the Horizon

- Officially register Student Voice Alliance as a 501(c)(3) non-profit.
- Put together a board of directors consisting of public school leaders to ensure sustainment.
- Continue to target smaller LEAs.
- Grow the team of student volunteers to support key organizational needs.
- Collaborate with community organizations in NC.





NORTH CAROLINA
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction