

Statement of Support

All children bear the image of God. Because of this reality, every congregation in North Carolina is encouraged both to participate in the annual Public Education Sabbath and to reach out to local public schools in concrete and clear ways to support public education.

The well-being of all children is our central concern. Public schools provide the primary route for most children to participate fully in our economic, political and community life. Public schools seek to offer all children an education that develops their capacities to serve as creative and responsible people in the common life. Our public schools have been and continue to be both an avenue of opportunity and a major cohesive force in our ever more diverse society. People of faith have a moral responsibility to support, strengthen and participate in the mission of public education for the good of the whole community.

We welcome the fact that many public schools now teach about diversity and the role of religion in human life and history. We applaud the schools' efforts to promote those virtues necessary for good citizenship in a pluralistic democracy. We encourage schools, parents and other to ensure that public schools treat all faith traditions with fairness and respect. Public schools have been a cornerstone of our democracy. Our religious heritage leads us to defend the public schools, and to rejoice when they reflect the racial, ethnic and religious diversity of our country.



Convictions

The Public Education Committee Holds These Convictions:

A well-rounded education of high quality for all God's children is the responsibility of a just and free society and indispensable to the political, economic, and spiritual health of every community.

The faith community is particularly charged with doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with God. We therefore have a particular responsibility to see that all children are afforded equity in education so that all students can reach their fullest potential.

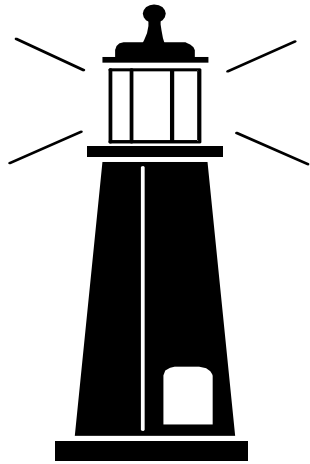
All children can learn if given the necessary attention at home, in school, and in the community, as well as the resources of proper instruction to meet different learning styles and any special needs, including those of students who live in poverty, have physical or mental handicaps, or are especially gifted and talented.

Responsible stewardship demands that we provide the concern, attention, skills, and talents as well as material resources necessary to offer a public education of high quality to every child.

Because education is more than schooling, we are concerned with home, community, business, and congregational life as well as with the public schools. We recognize the many external factors that act as barriers to quality education, and we call on faith communities to work to solve those problems rather than relying solely on schools to shoulder the burden or using the schools as scapegoats

God's concern is for all peoples of the world. Public education must educate for global awareness and prepare students to work to remove barriers and live in a world marked by growing interdependence. Our schools also work to educate about various cultures within our society, teaching children and young people to value difference and work with others.

Local communities of faith must work toward long-term good as opposed to the instant gratification so often demanded by society. In the long run, quality education can help manage societal issues (juvenile justice, health care, poverty, criminal justice, etc.).



To contact the Public Education Committee or to find out more about the North Carolina Council of Churches:

Phone 919-828-6501
E-mail nccofc@nccouncilofchurches.org
Web www.nccouncilofchurches.org
Mail 1307 Glenwood Ave., Suite 156
Raleigh, NC 27605

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What Local Congregations Can Do

We call on congregations to bring their resources, public concern and moral authority to support the public schools by reaching out to children, parents and guardians, as well as to teachers, administrators and staff. Local congregations can and should emphasize the importance of education and of public schools. They can support education by:

Initiating programs in cooperation with the public schools to provide after-school and vacation help, enrichment, and adopt-a-school programs, literacy and reading emphases, and lunch buddy and tutoring experiences; and also by reflecting on the systemic concerns raised in these hands-on approaches;

Honoring teachers as role models for young people and as answering a call by God to serve children and the larger society;

Honoring teachers as professionals in our communities;

Providing parenting classes to emphasize the special responsibilities of families to schools and school-aged children;

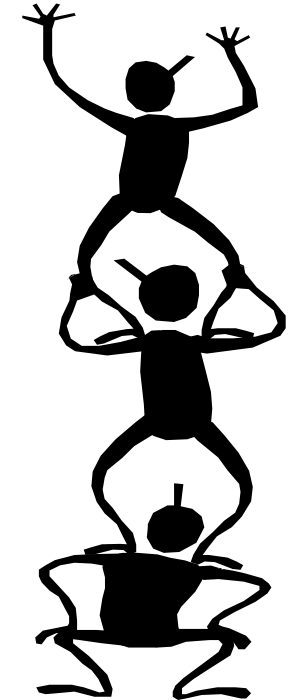
Encouraging the use of curricula in all schools that reflect the role of the many religious, racial and ethnic groups in the history and culture of the United States;

Supporting thoughtful reform and innovation in local schools to improve teaching and learning at all levels;

Advocating at all levels for adequate school funding and equitable distribution of state funds and encouraging informed decisions and action about local funding ballot issues; and by

Recognizing the role that local, state and national policies play in public education and working with groups on all levels that advocate for just and equitable schooling.

Congregations And the Public Schools



A Statement
of the
Public Education
Committee,
North Carolina
Council of
Churches

www.nccouncilofchurches.org