

## **Policy Priority 1: Statewide Short-Term Suspension Appeal Process**

### **Core Message**

Every student deserves uninterrupted access to education. Yet, some schools repeatedly use short-term suspensions to avoid the oversight tied to long-term suspensions—leaving families with no fair way to challenge lost class time. An appeals process that is state law sets a clear standard for due process and transparency, giving parents recourse while preserving each district's freedom to tailor implementation.

### **Key Messaging Points**

- **Equity:** Black, Brown, and disabled students are disproportionately suspended; a formal appeal process upholds fair treatment.
- **Human Impact:** Parents deserve input on disciplinary actions that disrupt a child's future.
- **Economic Argument:** Reducing suspensions lowers dropout rates, building a stronger workforce.
- **Fiscal Responsibility:** A clear appeals process can avert costly legal challenges.
- **Accountability:** Uniform standards prevent arbitrary decisions and bolster public trust.

### **Implementation Steps**

1. **Legislation Examples:**
  - [HB 1027 \(2024\)](#) – Sponsors: Morey; Quick; Gill; Cervania (Primary)
  - [HB 207 \(2024\)](#) – Sponsors: Elmore; Clemmons; Torbett (Primary)
2. **Standardization & Training:**
  - Collaborate with DPI to create consistent guidelines that districts can adapt to their local context and develop training programs for administrators and staff.
3. **Accountability:**
  - Require districts to collect and report data on suspensions and appeals, disaggregated by demographic factors, ensuring transparency and the ability to identify potential disparities.
4. **Pilot Programs:**
  - Start in districts with high suspension rates to refine strategies and demonstrate cost-effectiveness.

## Messaging to the Majority

- **Fairness & Uniformity:** Ensures all families, regardless of zip code, have access to the same due process.
- **Local Control & Parental Rights:** Empowers parents to address disciplinary actions through an orderly, locally managed process.
- **Legal & Fiscal Safeguards:** A formal process mitigates the risk of lawsuits, protecting taxpayer dollars.

## Other References:

- [\*Legislative Suggestions and Model Language for North Carolina Lawmakers\*](#)
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## **Policy Priority 2: Sanctuary Policies to Protect Undocumented Families**

### Core Message

Schools should remain safe, welcoming environments for all children, including those from undocumented families. Local “safe-school” or “sanctuary” protocols that limit immigration enforcement on campus protect students from trauma and preserve a stable, focused learning environment.

### Key Messaging Points

- **Equity Angle:** Undocumented families face unique barriers; sanctuary policies ensure equal educational access.
- **Human Impact:** Protecting family unity and minimizing fear helps keep students engaged in school and on track academically.
- **Legal Frame:** *Plyler v. Doe (1982)* guarantees K–12 education for all students, regardless of immigration status.
- **Local Control & Clarity:** Defining clear local protocols prevents school staff from getting entangled in federal enforcement, ensuring educators can focus on teaching.
- **Fiscal & Community Stability:** Stable school attendance improves district funding (based on attendance formulas), helps maintain workforce readiness, and keeps families contributing to local economies.

### Implementation Steps

1. **State-Level Action:**
  - Advocate for DPI-issued guidance barring immigration enforcement on school grounds without a judicial warrant.
2. **Local Policies:**

- Encourage school boards to pass local resolutions (“safe-school” or “sanctuary” policies) if statewide efforts stall.
  - **Prohibit staff from sharing immigration status** and train them on responding to ICE inquiries to limit liability and protect students’ privacy.
3. **Community Resources:**
- Partner with immigrant advocacy groups for know-your-rights training and resource toolkits, ensuring families feel supported by local leaders.
4. **Pilot Programs:**
- Implement initiatives in districts with substantial immigrant populations to refine effective protective measures.

### **Messaging to the Majority**

- **Safety & Stability:** Children cannot learn effectively in fear, and strong local control allows schools to maintain a focused academic environment.
- **Community & Family Values:** Stable families are more engaged in children’s education; minimizing disruptions supports student success.
- **Fiscal Responsibility:** Avoiding unexpected enforcement actions on campus preserves district resources that would otherwise be spent on crisis management.

### **References:**

- [WINOOSKI SANCTUARY SCHOOLS POLICY](#)
- [Sanctuary Schools and Sanctuary Employers \(starting on page 205\)](#)
- [NILC: The Legal Authority for “Sanctuary” School Policies](#)

## **Policy Priority 3: Public School Funding and Preventing Privatization**

### **Core Message**

Strong public schools are the foundation of thriving communities. Charter expansions and voucher programs can divert crucial resources from public schools, limiting local oversight and fueling inequities. Fully funding public schools ensures every student has access to high-quality education—key to workforce development and long-term economic growth.

### **Key Messaging Points**

- **Equity Angle:** Privatization often leaves working-class and underserved students behind.
- **Human Impact:** Every child deserves a well-funded neighborhood school, reinforcing family and community bonds.

- **Economic Argument:** Well-funded public schools strengthen the local workforce, attract employers, and build community stability.
- **Fiscal Responsibility:** Privatization can lead to weak oversight of taxpayer funds, whereas publicly governed schools have **transparent oversight**.
- **Local Control:** Keeping public funds in public schools safeguards local control through elected school boards, upholding community values and direct accountability.

## Implementation Steps

1. **Anti-Privatization Legislation:**
  - Introduce or strengthen bills mandating transparency and oversight for charters and voucher programs.
  - Limit public funds for private or for-profit providers lacking local accountability.
  - Require annual reporting on compliance with state and federal education standards for charter schools and private schools receiving vouchers (additional accountability measures upon request).
2. **Funding Equity Reforms:**
  - Advocate for funding formulas that prioritize historically underfunded districts, honoring the directives from the *Leandro* case.
  - Ensure public dollars are spent efficiently, directly benefiting the local workforce and community infrastructure.

## Messaging to the Majority

- **Local Economy & Taxpayer Value:** Public dollars should remain in publicly accountable schools, protecting taxpayer investments.
- **Fairness & Accountability:** Charters and voucher programs often face less stringent oversight, risking fraud and misuse of funds.
- **Community Investment & Parental Rights:** Local school boards—chosen by parents and community members—ensure direct involvement in decisions about how schools are run.

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## **Defensive Priorities to Watch**

1. **Further Erosion of Local Control on Sanctuary Policies**
  - Monitor bills that penalize localities or school districts for adopting “safe-school” or “sanctuary” protocols.
2. **Expansion of Vouchers & Charter School Authorizations**
  - Track broad expansions of the Opportunity Scholarship Program or new proposals for Education Savings Accounts (ESAs).
3. **Limiting Discipline Data Reporting Requirements**
  - Watch for attempts to weaken reporting requirements on race, disability, etc.

4. **Attacks on DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) Initiatives**
    - Be alert to efforts that limit schools' ability to address disparities in opportunity and achievement.
    - Watch for expansions of "Don't Say Gay" bills/policies.
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## **Broader Messaging and Implementation Priorities**

1. **Emphasize Local Control & Parental Rights:** Frame proposals as empowering families and allowing local leaders to tailor solutions without heavy-handed state or federal mandates.
2. **Stress Fiscal Responsibility:** Show how policies reduce legal risks, prevent wasteful spending, and keep taxpayer dollars accountable.
3. **Highlight Community & Family Values:** Underscore that strong schools safe environments, and fair discipline practices enhance family unity and community bonds.
4. **Promote Workforce & Economic Development:** Tie educational success to job creation and business growth, appealing to bi-partisan support for economic prosperity.