

Minutes

Social Justice Committee Meeting, November 12, 2020

Attendees:

Mike Schley	JD Ice	Katie Hirscher
Karen Schley	Nettie Carson	Stephanie Mitchell
Beth Mielcarek	Lori Edwards	Jessica Brueggeman
Shelley Kane	Harry Hurd	Juan Carmona
John Fisher	Marcia Hurd	Frank Edwards
Marica Fort	Jerry Perkins	Dustin Ingalls
Charlotte Sullivan	Tom Cadwallader	Elizabeth Lusk
Judy Ice	Diane Knauf	

Special Guest: Matt Ellinwood, NC Justice Center

Director since 2016 at NC Justice Center. Leandro has been around for +25 years. This is a case that was filed by low-income school districts in NC in 1994. Local districts claimed that they did not have the tax base to generate enough income to adequately or equally provide education to their students. NC Supreme Court ruled in 1996 that the state's students have a constitutional right to an opportunity for a "sound, basic education". In 2004 Judge Manning ruled that to meet its constitutional duty the state must:

- Staff each classroom with a competent, well-trained teacher
- Staff each school with a competent, well-trained principal
- Identify the resources necessary to ensure that all children, including those at-risk, have an equal opportunity to obtain a sound, basic education.

There is now commitment at various levels of the state that this suit needs to be resolved. Governor Cooper created a commission to implement a workable solution. There is an independent group (WestEd) that is advising the state on best investments opportunity. Matt referenced a study from Northwestern Univ. that looked at schools that increased funding and the resulting opportunity/achievement gap.

In January a consent judgement was settled and an 8-year rollout with short/medium/long term plans were created. State funding in NC is primary: 65%, with Federal and Local funding making up the rest. NC is trailing in both teacher pay and school funding; things are getting worse. Since 2008/2009 almost all funding areas have decreased, especially books (average age of textbook is 13 years), supplies and teacher assistants. Impact on student achievement has seen very little progress in EOG tests, with biggest impact on black and LatinX students. Unfortunately, we are further from the goal of Leandro now than when it started.

Next steps/Change: while schools need to re-open it will be exceedingly expensive to do so and the state is experiencing a funding/tax shortfall. Frequently schools share a nurse among three different schools. The only way Leandro will get fully implemented is through the will of the people, but this is a steep hill to climb. COVID may help with a shift in funding since parents are trying to be teachers and now appreciate teachers more. The business community (local and state Chambers of Commerce, for example) may be the best groups to lead a funding change. Until the business communities get involved it is unlikely that funding will change. School Boards Associations and County Commissioners are another driver.

Meeting:

* **Criminal Justice Issue Group** - Mark LaMantia and Juan Ayala-Carmona: Nothing new to report since last meeting

* **Housing Issue Group** - Lori Edwards and Dustin Ingalls: Committee met this week and they have narrowed focus to evictions. Researching Gov. Cooper's moratorium on evictions; this will end 31 December. Dustin will be monitoring city council. Their focus will be staying local. Section 8 is of particular interest to the group. Moving through the research phase. Mike shared that there is a subcommittee of the Congregations for Social Justice focused on housing. Mike will follow up with instructions on joining.

Stephanie Mitchell shared that the League of Women Voters was holding a webinar on housing in North Carolina at 5:00pm on Thursday, November 19. The link to register is:

<https://www.lwwwake.org/event-page/2020/11/19/affordable-housing-tt>

* **Education Issue Group** - Judy Ice and Sue King: Have a meeting set for Tuesday, 17 Nov. Have been networking in advance to their meeting. Tonight's presentation was very helpful.

* **Program Committee** - Charlotte Sullivan (The committee was formerly called the education committee but was renamed to avoid confusion): Planning for a February program. Perhaps a couple of evenings on Housing and a couple of evenings on Education. Charlotte asked the sub-committees for input on speakers.

* **Research** - Katie Hirscher: Working on CJ and Housing but willing to help others.

* **Connections** - Sherry Hay and Elizabeth Lusk: Not a lot to report; will add groups discussed tonight. Mike asked Elizabeth to distribute the list organizations to the group so we can review and suggest.

* **Communication** - Jessica Brueggeman: Outbound communication has centered around speakers for our meetings. Mike noted that Social Justice will have a page on the new church website due to launch in January. Mike and Jessica will follow up to find out status.

Here is the link to share our November 12 meeting and the presentation by Matt Ellinwood with others:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/641k8gCL0o5qewq7tRabd_F-L3TgdW23yLKDXucQLH-O59oM48EjBk_9jUAtbcR.uvkw2oVmjhqu_o_f

Upcoming Meetings: Dec. 10: Al Ripley, Director of the NC Justice Center's Consumer, Energy & Housing Project will be our guest to talk about Housing. January 14: Daniel Bowes, Director of the Fair Chance Criminal Justice Project at the NC Justice Center will speak to us about criminal justice issues.

Lori Edwards closed the meeting with a prayer at 8:20 p.m.

Minutes taken by: JD Ice