

## League of Women Voters of the Lower Cape Fear

### Statement of Support for the New Hanover County Bond Referendum for Education

September 2014

The League of Women Voters, an activist, grassroots organization founded in 1920, believes that citizens have the power and duty to participate in shaping public policy. The League is proud to be nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government, but always working on vital issues of concern to members and the public. See generally [www.lwv.org/history](http://www.lwv.org/history).

The League believes that an equitable, quality public education is critical for all children pre-K through grade 12 and we therefore support equal access to public education, including adequate and safe physical facilities that are properly equipped to carry out their educational mission. We also recognize that primary responsibility for public education resides with the states and their local political subdivisions. In accordance with the League of Women Voters' position on Equal Rights, we continue to support equity in public education for all through adequate local and state funding sources and mechanisms.

The New Hanover County Board of Education, exercising its authority and responsibility under North Carolina law, has determined that both increased enrollment and current school facility conditions necessitate addressing some of the most critical needs at this time.

“The need to renovate or replace obsolete facilities is ongoing. Decreased capital funding over the past several years has resulted in deferred maintenance, repairs and replacement of essential building systems and components. Major renovations are needed at schools that have not had any significant work since originally constructed an average of 30+ years ago.”

“Student enrollment is at an all time high of over 26,000, and the School System is over capacity by approximately 3,500 students in grades K-12. Enrollment . . . is expected to grow by another 3,000 students within the next seven years. Presently, students are meeting in crowded and inappropriate spaces such as cafeterias, hallways, stages, storage rooms, workrooms, and trailers.” There are currently at least 84 trailers in use throughout our school district, the capacity of which is equal to three elementary schools. These conditions are neither safe for children nor conducive to learning. .” See generally [www.nhcs.net/bond](http://www.nhcs.net/bond).

Reasonable people may differ about the proper way to fund school construction and related facilities improvements, but a bond program is the structure we have available to us for the present. The critical needs New Hanover County Schools face today can no longer wait without severely compromising our children's educations, their futures, and the future of our community that depends on these children to be the leaders of tomorrow.

The League of Women Voters of the Lower Cape Fear therefore recommends that all voters inform themselves about this important issue by visiting [www.nhcs.net/bond](http://www.nhcs.net/bond). After careful consideration, The League of Women Voters of the Lower Cape Fear endorses the Bond Referendum for Education and urges its passage.