

## Why Does Leandro Matter?

Halifax County Schools strive to provide every child with a sound basic education within the limits that we have. Leandro will open doors to academic and personal success. On a larger scale, Leandro impacts our community's social and economic health.

Recently, there has been discussion regarding diploma integrity. State Superintendent Truitt said the "diploma integrity problem" is evident in the number of students who graduate high school but cannot find success in community colleges and universities. She said America must admit that it has a problem and reform education to meet the needs of all students, including preparing more of them for jobs that do not require four-year degrees. State Superintendent Truitt further expresses that a significant barrier to that success is remediation courses and linking such experiences to literacy shortcomings.

Literacy is more than the ability to read and write. Students who do not effectively figure out how to read and compose right off the bat in their academic profession stand a much more severe gamble of falling further behind in later grades. Research shows that students who are not perusing on grade level before the third grade have a higher chance of not exiting high school than their "capable" peers. Secondary school finishing is likewise a solid indicator of better financial and social results. A core element of our vision at Halifax County Schools is to focus on the needs of the students by empowering them to be successful global residents. Success may be defined differently for every student based on their interests, aptitudes, and circumstances. Still, our goal is to ensure that our graduates are college and career-ready when they leave us.

Many students will pursue academic attainment through the university system. In contrast, others will seek additional training in the technical college system, and some will go directly into the workforce or military. It is incumbent upon us to ensure that all students are prepared for whichever path they choose. Our career technical and education (CTE) program is designed to provide opportunities for all students. Our CTE program offers over five career pathways ranging from business, information technology to marketing, family and consumer science, and agriculture. It is now possible for high school students to acquire industry certification in various fields even before graduation. Our work-based learning program affords students the additional opportunity to earn a paycheck while learning job skills in real work environments.

Leandro matters because it will provide the resources necessary to support the effective instructional program in every school so that the educational needs of all children, including at-risk children, have an equal opportunity to obtain a sound basic education. With the additional resources provided by the Leandro Plan, more schools will be able to offer the elective courses, career and technical programs, advanced coursework, afterschool, and enrichment programs that for too long have only been found in larger, wealthier communities. These funds will support expanding pre-k programs, remove caps on support for children with disabilities, expand support for first-year teachers, and add more teaching assistants for the early grades to decrease literacy deficits. Leandro will provide qualified teachers in each and every classroom with continuing professional development so they can be effective instructors in their field. A qualified principal in each school that can lead continuous school improvement and establish a culture where all students feel safe, supported, and challenged. Leandro matters because our children matter.