



What Candidates Need to Know

PDE Action interviewed eight parental rights advocates about the issues they face headed into 2024. Their top concerns included:

<p>Safe Schools for All</p>	<p>“When you have an erosion of discipline in the classroom like we’re seeing, you’re hurting the future success of all the kids in the classroom, especially those who want to learn. And that’s one of the main reasons teachers are leaving the classroom,” Will said.</p> <p>When asked about the top issues Americans have with the education system, Jeff from Oregon said, “disruptions and violence in schools.”</p> <p>Parents Defending Education polling from July found that only 17 percent of voters believe schools are properly enforcing discipline policies.</p>
<p>Parents Must Know</p>	<p>Quisha said her main focus is “helping parents understand what’s actually happening to their children in the public schools.”</p> <p>Julie, a mom, said “The mental health, the transgender ideology, and pushing all of this onto kids, with the extra component of parental rights,” is her top priority. “And in a state like Washington... laws allow the schools to transition kids without the parents even knowing.”</p> <p>More than 1,000 school districts have parental expulsion policies, which say parents may not be notified if their child asks to use another name or pronouns at school.</p>
<p>End Learning Loss</p>	<p>“What other industry do we spend more and more and more money and get worse results and say it's just a money problem, that we need more money? What other industry would put up with that?” Will asked.</p> <p>When discussing public school funding, Erin Lee, a Colorado mom, said “We spend too much money on all these things that are <i>not</i> academics.” One Georgia mom agreed: “People don’t realize how much we do spend—just on the wrong things.”</p> <p>The need for accountability extends to student performance: “Our kids writ large are not performing academically.” Denisha noted.</p> <p>Post-pandemic test scores show kids lost roughly 20 years of progress in reading and math. Only 13 percent of students performed above or at the NAEP proficiency level in history.</p>

What parents need from politicians:

“Part of what our leaders can be talking about more is, **when far less than half of kids are at grade level, proficiency, in reading and math, what does that mean for their future success...** What kind of citizens are we creating here? What is the future of our country going to look like when we have people who can’t do basic rudimentary skills?” Will asked. —

“From a political standpoint, **what I’ve seen universally is... transparency, accountability, and then adding to that, safety, seem to be the three primary things that all parents can get on board with** and agree upon, no matter their religious or political background,” Erin said. “Everyone wants to be involved in their kids' lives, know that they are safe when they are at school, and they are calling for accountability and transparency.”

Voters are prioritizing education as an issue, Julie said. “**Even people who don’t have kids, or grandparents who don't have kids in school, people are still concerned** because these kids are graduating that are not meeting requirements, are not ready to be graduated and they are going to be running our country.”

In Brief:

- ✓ All students deserve a distraction- and violence- free school.
- ✓ Parents must be told what is going on with their child in school.
- ✓ We must fund priorities that will make up learning loss and bring focus back to ABCs and 123s.
- ✓ The only solution cannot be private or homeschooling. Most families will rely on public schools regardless of the options available to them.
- ✓ Teachers and parents should work hand in hand to meet the educational needs of America’s children.