

# Intermediate Committee SENATE



# SJMUNC XXXVII

Saint John's Model United Nations Conference

# Table of Contents

<i>Letters From the Chairs</i> -----	2
<i>Statement of the problem</i> -----	4
<i>History of the Problem</i> -----	6
<i>Possible Solutions</i> -----	8
<i>Bloc Positions</i> -----	9
<i>Democrats</i> -----	9
<i>Republicans</i> -----	11
<i>Independent</i> -----	13
<i>Bibliography</i> -----	14

## Letters From the Chairs

Dear Delegates,

My name is Ronan Davis, and I am a junior at St. John's High School. I would like to welcome you to SJMUNC XXXVII and tell you that I am very excited to chair this committee alongside Vineeth Gangidi.

This is my third year as a member of Model UN at St. John's and my third year as a part of this conference; however, it is my first time as a chair. I have attended two national conferences at Brown University and the University of Chicago, so I have a decent share of MUN experience, which will only help us have a good time at this conference.

We thought this topic was unique and engaging, and I hope we can all have fun with it. This is primarily a fictional topic, as the US education system will not change anytime soon, as it would take an overt amount of time, money, and dedication. Still, we thought that it was relevant for students like us and could help you learn to think outside the box and try to recreate something with which we are all too familiar.

If you have any questions about this committee or MUN in general, please feel free to contact me, and please email me your position papers once they are completed, as we are requiring them for this committee.

Sincerely,

Ronan Davis '26 [davisr26@stjohnshigh.org](mailto:davisr26@stjohnshigh.org)

Greetings Delegates,

My name is Vineeth Gangidi, and I personally welcome you to SJMUNC

XXXVII. This year, I will be chairing this committee alongside Ronan Davis. We are pleased to have this opportunity and look forward to a great day at SJMUNC.

But first, let me tell you a little about myself. I am a junior here at Saint John's High School, and I live in South Grafton, Massachusetts. This will be my 3rd year participating in MUN and 3rd year participating in SJMUNC. However, it will be my first time as a chair. I am also involved with the Math Team, Robotics, and Track.

At this conference, it is our job to ensure that your experience is one in which you have fun while also learning something new. We have carefully chosen this topic because we feel that it would be relevant and engaging. With any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me at the email below.

Good luck to you all, and we will see you soon.

Vineeth Gangidi '26 [gangiv26@stjohnshigh.org](mailto:gangiv26@stjohnshigh.org)

## Statement of the problem

Students around the United States have become accustomed to the current United States educational system, which has maintained a steady curriculum for years. However, to some, this system is flawed in many ways. These include not taking into account the uniqueness of each student and their interests, not ensuring that students understand the importance of learning, and not ensuring the equal qualification of educators throughout the country. On the other hand, this US educational system has helped craft and develop incredible minds, showing that it works. There must be a way to form a bipartisan solution to the US educational system.

Not everyone is interested in the same things, and students often are uninterested in some school subjects. Two-thirds of students are entirely disengaged in schooling by the 12th grade.<sup>1</sup> This is primarily because they are not learning things that interest them. While there are necessary subjects for students to know in order to survive in the real world, the current basic curriculum may not touch on all of these necessities. Only about 46% of college graduates feel prepared for the workforce<sup>2</sup>, showing that there should be more focus on teaching students about the workforce, especially the specific workforce in which they will be involved and create a career.

The current standardized way of learning throughout the United States has also resulted in a hyperfocus on grades and test scores for students rather than actually learning material. This hyperfocus on grades has caused an unnecessary amount of stress on students, as these grades and

---

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

standardized tests are a significant part of their chances of receiving admission to colleges and universities. In fact, according to a study done at the New Orleans charter school network, students had 15 percent more cortisol, a hormone associated with stress, in their systems during the homeroom period before a standardized test than on days with no high-stakes testing.<sup>3</sup>

Additionally, qualifications for educators in the United States are not federally issued, but rather, they are issued by each state, making it hard for schools to find qualified educators in some instances, especially when schooling to become an educator is scarce. In California, “there are 40% more teachers in poor schools who lack the required qualifications than in the richest school.”<sup>4</sup> This shows that the opportunity for educators to become qualified is not large enough, as only schools with time and resources can hire educators with the correct qualifications.

---

<sup>3</sup> Grace Tatter, “Tests and Stress Bias,” Harvard Graduate School of Education, last modified February 12, 2019, accessed August 4, 2024, <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/ideas/usable-knowledge/19/02/tests-and-stress-bias>.

<sup>4</sup> Diana Lambert, John Fensterwald, and Daniel J. Willis, “Poorer Students Still Get the Least Qualified Teachers, but California Has Made Progress,” EdSource, last modified August 4, 2022, accessed July 31, 2024, <https://edsource.org/2022/poorer-students-still-get-the-least-qualified-teachers-but-california-has-made-progress/676044>.

## History of the Problem

Even though the US education system originated over 100 years ago, many of the flaws seen today can be attributed to the reforms made in the 1980s.

In the 1980s, “every state had defined or implemented academic standards for math and reading. Principals and teachers were judged; students were promoted or retained, and legislation was passed so that high school students would graduate or be denied a diploma based on whether or not they had met the standard”<sup>5</sup> leading to hyperfocus on grades and standardized tests. This was not a bad thing as typically, students who were good at the subject would be able to receive good grades. However, lower grades meant that students would not be able to pass school, and the teachers and principal of the school would have a bad reputation. Wanting to attain national standards in order to pass, some students would be put under massive amounts of stress and may lose interest in subjects that they would like to learn in the future. Despite this, some students would gain interest in subjects due to needing to study them more.

A different reform that was established in the 1980s was higher budgets for schools. New resources would sound like a good thing; however, “Student performance has hardly kept pace with the dramatic increases in resources devoted to public education.”<sup>6</sup> Students could not adapt to the new resources being used in classrooms and were unable to learn. In fact, “Just five percent of 17-year-old

---

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Wendy Patterson, “From 1871 to 2021: A Short History of Education in the United States,” Buffalo State University, last modified December 8, 2021, <https://suny.buffalostate.edu/news/1871-2021-short-history-education-united-states>

<sup>6</sup> John Hood, “The Failure of American Public Education,” Foundation of Economic Education, last modified February 1, 1993, <https://fee.org/articles/the-failure-of-american-public-education/>



high school students in 1988 could read well enough to understand and use information found in technical materials, literary essays, historical documents, and college-level texts.”<sup>7</sup> However, over time, as students got used to these new resources, they would be able to learn more efficiently, as technology could help them correct their mistakes.

On the other hand, another effect of the higher school budget was that it was getting more expensive to run and build schools. Because of this, less fortunate students in more impoverished regions could not afford or attend better schools with all the benefits. Nonetheless, more expensive schools could provide a better education to many students who are able to attend those schools.

---

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*



## Possible Solutions

To solve this problem, both Republicans and Democrats must combine their ideals to create a bipartisan solution that supports the well-being of the minds of the students of the United States of America. The Senate must decide whether the current educational system accomplishes this and how to fix it if not.

Minor changes to improve the US educational system could include how students are provided education. Currently, public school expenses are primarily paid through taxes paid by all members of the United States. Is this the best way to pay for public education, especially because many students attend private schools?

If the US educational system needs significant changes, they could include moving away from standardized learning and toward individualized learning. This could reduce the stress that exists for students, ensuring their well-being when it comes to mental health.

There is a multitude of other possibilities for improving our educational system. Even small changes can make a difference, possibly enough to improve not only students' minds and intelligence but also their mental health and well-being. Please be prepared to compromise with others to ensure that all of the Senate is heard and all students benefit.

## Bloc Positions

### **\*IMPORTANT NOTE\***

This committee will try to maintain the current proportion in the Senate (50-50).

If there is an overwhelming majority, we may kindly ask if anyone is willing to switch their position to ensure progress is not one-sided. While you **WILL NOT** be forced to switch, anyone who does will be looked upon favorably by the chair. This committee **WILL** require bills to pass with at least 60% of the committee voting in favor to ensure compromise between delegates.

### **Democrats**

1. **Chuck Schumer (D-New York)** - Senator Schumer advocates for increased funding to support diverse educational programs and reduce student loan debt
2. **Alex Padilla (D-California)** - Senator Padilla supports policies that enhance STEM education and reduce student loan debt
3. **Elizabeth Warren (D-Massachusetts)** - Senator Warren supports reducing student loan debt and increasing federal funding for public schools to provide equitable education opportunities
4. **Dick Durbin (D-Illinois)** - Senator Durbin advocates for educational equity, access to resources for underserved and minority students, and reducing student loan debt
5. **Joe Manchin (D-West Virginia)** - Senator Manchin calls for investments in technical education and apprenticeships to prepare students for skilled trades

6. **Cory Booker (D-New Jersey)** - Senator Booker supports comprehensive education reform to address systemic inequities and provide resources for disadvantaged students
7. **Amy Klobuchar (D-Minnesota)** - Senator Klobuchar supports increasing funding for special education and programs that address students' diverse learning needs
8. **Ron Wyden (D-Oregon)** - Senator Wyden advocates for expanding access to higher education and reducing financial barriers for students
9. **Richard Blumenthal (D-Connecticut)** - Senator Blumenthal supports initiatives that address student mental health and create safe learning environments
10. **Jeanne Shaheen (D-New Hampshire)** - Senator Shaheen advocates for STEM education and initiatives that encourage girls and minorities to pursue careers in science and technology
11. **Mark Warner (D-Virginia)** - Senator Warner supports workforce development programs that align education with industry needs and future job opportunities
12. **Gary Peters (D-Michigan)** - Senator Peters calls for investments in public schools and initiatives that support teacher retention and development
13. **Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisconsin)** - Senator Baldwin supports policies that promote educational equity and access to quality education for all students
14. **Ben Cardin (D-Maryland)** - Senator Cardin advocates for programs that address the achievement gap and support underperforming schools
15. **Tom Carper (D-Delaware)** - Senator Carper advocates for early childhood education and programs that support the development of young children

16. **Michael Bennet (D-Colorado)** - Senator Bennet supports innovative education models and reforms that improve student outcomes and prepare them for the future
17. **Bob Casey Jr. (D-Pennsylvania)** - Senator Casey is committed to ensuring that all students have access to quality education and resources, regardless of their socioeconomic background

## Republicans

1. **Mitch McConnell (R-Kentucky)** - Senator McConnell emphasizes the importance of local control over educational standards to ensure that curricula meet community needs
2. **Roger Wicker (R-Mississippi)** - Senator Wicker focuses on improving rural education and ensuring equal access to quality education for all students
3. **Lindsey Graham (R-South Carolina)** - Senator Graham advocates for increased investment in teacher training and professional development to ensure high-quality education
4. **John Cornyn (R-Texas)** - Senator Cornyn emphasizes the need for educational programs that align with job market demands and prepare students for careers
5. **Susan Collins (R-Maine)** - Senator Collins supports initiatives that enhance early childhood education and literacy programs
6. **Marsha Blackburn (R-Tennessee)** - Senator Blackburn emphasizes the importance of parental choice in education and supports school voucher programs
7. **Tom Cotton (R-Arkansas)** - Senator Cotton advocates for rigorous academic standards and workforce training in the educational system

8. **Marco Rubio (R-Florida)** - Senator Rubio emphasizes the need for career and technical education programs to prepare students for the modern workforce
9. **Josh Hawley (R-Missouri)** - Senator Hawley calls for education policies that promote civic engagement and prepare students for active citizenship
10. **Mike Lee (R-Utah)** - Senator Lee advocates for educational freedom and reducing federal involvement in local education decisions
11. **John Thune (R-South Dakota)** - Senator Thune emphasizes the importance of broadband access and technology in education, especially in rural areas
12. **Pete Ricketts (R-Nebraska)** - Senator Ricketts emphasizes the importance of local control in education, supporting policies that empower parents and communities to make decisions about their children's schooling
13. **Joni Ernst (R-Iowa)** - Senator Ernst emphasizes the importance of agricultural education and programs that prepare students for careers in the workforce
14. **Mike Crapo (R-Idaho)** - Senator Crapo emphasizes the importance of local control over education and supports policies that empower parents and communities
15. **John Barrasso (R-Wyoming)** - Senator Barrasso emphasizes the need for education policies that support schools and address their unique challenges
16. **Bill Cassidy (R-Louisiana)** - Senator Cassidy focuses on increasing educational opportunities through school choice, advocating for policies that support charter schools and vouchers

## Independent

1. **Bernie Sanders (I-Vermont)** - Senator Sanders calls for comprehensive education reform, including funding for public college, free meals, and the modernization of schools
2. **Kyrsten Sinema (I-Arizona)** - Senator Sinema emphasizes the importance of personalized learning and supports innovative educational approaches



## Bibliography

Dr. Wendy Patterson, "From 1871 to 2021: A Short History of Education in the United States," Buffalo State University, last modified December 8, 2021, <https://suny.buffalostate.edu/news/1871-2021-short-history-education-united-states>.

John Hood, "The Failure of American Public Education," Foundation of Economic Education, last modified February 1, 1993, <https://fee.org/articles/the-failure-of-american-public-education/>.

Lambert, Diana, John Fensterwald, and Daniel J. Willis. "Poorer Students Still Get the Least Qualified Teachers, but California Has Made Progress." EdSource. Last modified August 4, 2022. Accessed July 31, 2024. <https://edsource.org/2022/poorer-students-still-get-the-least-qualified-teachers-but-california-has-made-progress/676044>.

"7 Ways to Improve the Quality of Education in the U.S." Stand Together. Last modified 2024. Accessed July 31, 2024. <https://standtogether.org/stories/education/ways-to-improve-the-quality-of-education-in-the-us>.

Tatter, Grace. "Tests and Stress Bias." Harvard Graduate School of Education. Last modified February 12, 2019. Accessed August 4, 2024. <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/ideas/usable-knowledge/19/02/tests-and-stress-bias>.

<https://www.chuckschumer.com/issues/education/>

<https://www.padilla.senate.gov/about/issues/education/>

<https://elizabethwarren.com/plans/public-education>

<https://www.durbin.senate.gov/issues/education>

<https://www.manchin.senate.gov/about/issues/education>

<https://www.booker.senate.gov/about/issues/education>

<https://www.klobuchar.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/education>

<https://www.wyden.senate.gov/issues/education>

<https://www.blumenthal.senate.gov/about/issues/education>

<https://www.shaheen.senate.gov/about/priorities/education>

<https://www.warner.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/education>

<https://www.peters.senate.gov/about/issues/strengthening-education-and-skills-training->

<https://www.baldwin.senate.gov/help/resources/coronavirus/education>

<https://www.cardin.senate.gov/issues/education/>



<https://www.carper.senate.gov/about/priorities/education/>  
<https://www.bennet.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/education>  
<https://www.casey.senate.gov/issues/education>  
[https://www.cnn.com/2021/04/30/politics/mcconnell-1619-project-education-secretary/index.htm](https://www.cnn.com/2021/04/30/politics/mcconnell-1619-project-education-secretary/index.html)  
[l  
https://www.wicker.senate.gov/education](https://www.wicker.senate.gov/education)  
<https://lgraham.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/labor-health-and-human-services-and-education-and-related-agencies>  
<https://www.cornyn.senate.gov/key-issues/education/>  
<https://www.collins.senate.gov/issues/education>  
<https://www.blackburn.senate.gov/education>  
<https://www.cotton.senate.gov/news/press-releases/cotton-bill-overhauls-workforce-education>  
<https://www.rubio.senate.gov/priorities/rebuilding-the-american-workforce/>  
<https://www.hawley.senate.gov/sen-hawley-introduces-bill-promote-patriotism-love-country-and-push-back-critical-race-theory/>  
<https://www.lee.senate.gov/2023/12/sen-lee-bill-to-put-parents-in-charge>  
<https://www.thune.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2022/6/thune-rural-communities-must-have-access-to-quality-high-speed-internet>  
<https://www.ricketts.senate.gov/issues/strengthening-families/>  
<https://www.ernst.senate.gov/priorities/education>  
<https://www.crapo.senate.gov/issues/education>  
<https://www.barrasso.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2021/2/barrasso-kids-deserve-to-be-in-school>  
<https://www.cassidy.senate.gov/about/issues/education/>  
<https://berniesanders.com/issues/reinvest-in-public-education/>  
<https://www.sinema.senate.gov/sinema-pima-community-college-talk-education-employment-opportunities-arizona-students/>