



*"It is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders..."*

Article IX, Section 1, Washington State Constitution

## WHAT COMES NEXT IN *McCLEARY*?

January 2018

### What we've achieved together so far

Two courageous families — the McClearys and the Venemas — along with six school districts and a few organizations like the State PTA, League of Women Voters and Washington Education Association came together to launch the *McCleary* coalition in 2005. Today, our coalition is 440 members strong, with 207 school districts representing 90+ percent of Washington's K-12 students. Following victories in the trial court in 2010 and the State Supreme Court in 2012, NEWS's continued diligence and advocacy has resulted in billions of dollars in new funding to school districts. Thanks to your commitment, Washington is one of only a handful of states to actually realize some increase in school funding over the past several years.

### What remains to be done

While the Legislature adopted new funding formulas for basic education components including transportation, MSOCs, class size, all-day kindergarten, special education, etc., it failed to meet its own deadline for amply funding compensation that attracts and retains competent school personnel. The Court ordered the Legislature to add what the State admitted is \$1 billion in additional funding for salaries by the end of the 2018 regular session on March 8. NEWS will vigilantly monitor the Legislature's actions this session and stands ready to urge the Supreme Court to take bold action should the Legislature fail to appropriate the additional \$1 billion in compensation funding.

In addition, the Legislature chose to fund part of its new investment in K-12 education by taking more than \$2.5 billion in levy dollars away from school districts. It also imposed new unfunded mandates and requirements, such as requiring districts to provide four additional credits for high school graduation. These actions will result in many school districts actually receiving less funding than before. The mandates, along with NEWS's concerns regarding the adequacy of funding for other basic education components, put in doubt the question of whether the State is actually "fully" and "amply" funding education.

### The big question: Is it enough?

A key victory in the *McCleary* case was the Supreme Court's affirmation that an amply funded education ("considerably more than just adequate") for "each and every child" is a constitutional right in Washington. Will the State's new funding formulas enable every school district to provide students with that right? According to the Supreme Court, "At this point, the court is willing to allow the State's program to operate and let experience be the judge of whether it proves adequate."

### What comes next

The fight isn't over. And it won't be over until the experience of Washington school districts confirms that State funding provides all students with a realistic opportunity to learn the skills and knowledge they need to live and compete in a democratic society. The NEWS Board of Trustees will monitor whether the new funding truly funds the full costs of transportation, of paying salaries that attract and retain educators, of MSOCs, and of all the other costs of providing a basic education to students. We urge you to share your experiences with us so we may determine what actions we must take in the future. Our coalition remains strongly committed to taking whatever steps may be necessary to ensure that Washington State lives up to its paramount duty. We will remain in touch this year and report back to you on next steps in the 2018-19 school year.