

It is the **paramount duty** of the state to make **ample provision** for the **education** of **all children** residing within its borders, without distinction or preference on account of race, color, caste, or sex. It is the **paramount duty** of the state to make **ample provision** for the **education** of **all children** residing within its borders, without distinction or preference on account of race, color, caste, or sex. It is the **paramount duty** of the state to make **ample provision** for the **education** of **all children** residing within its borders, without distinction or preference on account of race, color, caste, or sex.

*Inside: McCleary & WEA's fight for
amply funded K-12 public schools*

On McCleary, we can't back down now

Our students deserve the **great, amply funded education** that is their constitutional right



Kim Mead

As WEA members, we are proud of our continued leadership role with the historic McCleary court case for our students. It started with us, in 2004, engaging families and coming together to ensure the rights of students are met in Washington state. After decades of empty promises, it was time – past time – to hold the state accountable for meeting its paramount duty to amply fund education for every child. Our Representative Assembly passed a business item that led to forming NEWS – the Network for Excellence in Washington Schools.

Understanding what the McCleary lawsuit is about is critical as we prepare for the 2017 legislative session.

McCleary is about kids. Providing all children with an amply funded education. Our constitution states it is the paramount – above all else – duty of our state. It is the strongest constitutional language of any state in the nation. It should mean that we have the most amply funded schools in the nation.

Instead:

- Students still face an opportunity gap dependent on their ZIP Code.
- Students receive less individual attention because they are in some of the most crowded classrooms in the nation.
- Students see great educators leave the profession because their pay ranks last on the West Coast.
- Students' families and communities are forced to provide much-needed school supplies.
- Students' school days are dictated by bus schedules instead of commonsense opportunities.

These are just a few of the ways that underfunding affects Washington students.

We have seen some politicians do the very least they can – instead of what is needed for students.

That is why we – the educators who make up the Washington Education Association – must stand with our community partners to achieve ample education funding.

It is shameful watching others trying to define this landmark case to meet their own interests. Stand for Children and other pseudo-reform groups like the League of Education Voters and the Washington Roundtable are spending millions to promote ideas that will only drain funds from public education – more charters, more testing, and more ideas that go to the public for a vote instead of finally addressing a true solution for students.

When you read this special issue of *We 2.0*, take time to really understand what the McCleary lawsuit means for kids. As you cast your vote, support pro-education, pro-labor candidates. Visit www.washingtonea.org/OurVoice to learn more about candidates endorsed by your fellow educators.

Help elect people who will think first about kids and what McCleary means for their public education. Join us in staffing phone banks or knocking on doors for pro-public education candidates. Email us at wea@washingtonea.org and we'll make sure you are connected.

I look forward to seeing you in January and throughout the legislative session, and hope you will join me as we continue the fight for our kids' paramount duty. We've come so far, we can't back down now.

– Kim Mead, WEA President

... we – the educators who make up the Washington Education Association – must stand with our community partners to achieve ample education funding.



Student Bill of Rights

"It is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders, without distinction or preference on account of race, color, caste, or sex."

– Washington Constitution, 1889

Washington's 1.1 million public school students have a constitutional right to an amply funded public education, regardless of their ZIP code or family background. Quality public education is a civil right in our state.

As parents, educators and community members, we demand that the 2017 Washington Legislature comply with the Supreme Court's McCleary decision and amply fund the basic education the constitution guarantees our students.

We believe all Washington public school students have the following rights:

All students have a right to well-maintained schools, current curriculum, safe transportation and adequate school supplies. Students must have access to 21st century technology. Special education, gifted, learning assistance program, and transitional bilingual education for English language learners are essential.

This requires fully funding a high-quality, well-rounded basic education so all children have equal opportunity to succeed.

All students have a right to small class sizes and professional support services that provide the individual one-on-one attention they need.

This requires fully funding smaller K-12 class size ratios and additional support services as required by voter-approved I-1351.

All students have a right to be taught by caring, committed and qualified teachers and education support professionals.

This requires fully funding competitive, professional base pay and benefits to attract and keep high-quality K-12 school employees, and maintain flexibility for school districts to supplement educators' pay beyond the base state salary to meet local needs.

All students have a right to learn in clean and safe school facilities, including ample classroom space equipped with modern technology.

This requires fully funding school construction to modernize existing schools, build new schools and expand classroom capacity.

All students have a right to attend local public schools that have the flexibility to meet their unique needs.

This requires fully funding basic education while ensuring that parents, educators and community members have a voice in shaping their public schools, including the ability to approve levies to support enrichment programs beyond basic education.

The WEA Board of Directors approved this student bill of rights, which is based on WEA's McCleary school funding recommendations to the state. Cut this out and share it with colleagues, parents and anyone who cares about public schools and students.

We, the people of the State of Washington ...



WEA's McCleary school funding recommendations to the state

As part of WEA's McCleary school funding recommendations to the state this summer, we recommended specific class sizes and starting salaries. These are the starting salaries based on the state's own research into other professions requiring similar education and experience (adjusted for inflation). The class sizes are based on Initiative 1351, which voters approved in 2014 and is now law. These class sizes are in the state's definition of basic education, which also requires hiring additional education staff associates and education support professionals.

2017-18 School Year (Recommended K-12 staff salaries)

BEGINNING SALARY	
Beginning Teachers and other Certificated Instructional Staff	\$ 54,718
AVERAGE SALARIES	
Instructional Aide/ Paraprofessionals	\$ 51,006
Office Support	\$ 46,021
Custodians	\$ 44,340
Classified Staff - Safety	\$ 49,494
Family Involvement Coordinator	\$ 51,006
Technology	\$ 93,565
Facilities, Maintenance, Grounds	\$ 56,257
Warehouse, Laborers, Mechanics	\$ 41,045
Central Office - Classified	\$ 63,356

(Compensation Technical Working Group Recommendations
- Adjusted for Inflation since 2012 report)

Class sizes as required by law (I-1351 plus current funding of lab sciences)

GRADE	NON-HIGH POVERTY (students)	HIGH POVERTY (students)
K-3	17	15
4	25	22
5-12	25	23
Lab Science Grades 9-12	19.98	19.98
Career and Technical Education	19	19
Skills Centers	16	16

“Our support staff and classified units have been underfunded for years. The work they do is critical for our students. I can't do my job without them and I see the McCleary funding finally getting them the compensation they deserve so they can afford to pay their own bills and so we can have continuous support for our students.”

– Michelle Burdick
Veterinarian
Assisting Instructor
NEWTECH Skills
Center, Spokane

2004

RA votes to form a coalition to **sue the state for failing to meet its constitutional duty** to amply fund public education.



2007

McCleary v. State filed in King County Court.

2010

Court finds for plaintiffs, declaring that **the state of Washington is in violation of its constitutional mandate** to make ample provision for the education of all children.

2004

2005

2006

2007

2008

2009

2010



2004 - 2007: NEWS Coalition – Network for Excellence in Washington Schools – established; partners join.



2009

McCleary trial heard in King County Superior Court.



WEA leaders send a message about school funding on the steps of the Supreme Court after the Sept. 7 McCleary hearing.

In the coming months, WEA members, parents and community members have the chance to shape what full funding for basic education looks like in Washington. It's up to us to take action, support pro-education legislators and then make sure they do the right thing for our students. Here are some of the opportunities we have to influence what happens:

- ❑ **Sept. 7:** Supreme Court McCleary hearing; Does the state have a plan for funding K-12? Our side says "NO."
> *The next Supreme Court McCleary decision; What will the court do? Increase fines? Repeal tax breaks? Close schools? A decision could come anytime.*
- ❑ **Nov. 8:** General election: WEA members help elect a pro-public education, pro-labor legislature!
- ❑ **Nov. 14:** Student Bill of Rights Week; Highlight a different right each day, starting with smaller class sizes.
- ❑ **Dec. 15:** The Governor releases his budget; We're counting on him to amply fund basic education, including smaller K-12 class sizes, in this budget proposal, which is the first one to be released and sets the stage for others.
- ❑ **Jan. 9: 2017** Legislative session starts; School funding is the top issue.
- ❑ **Jan. 16:** Student Civil Rights Day; Celebrate MLK Jr. Day by standing up for the civil rights of students in Olympia and other locations
- ❑ **March 11:** Local school funding meetings with legislators; Invite parents!
- ❑ **April 21:** Regular session ends; Is 105 days enough time to pass a state budget?
> *Special legislative session; Legislature goes into overtime if there's no budget.*
- ❑ **June 10:** Carter McCleary graduates from Chimacum High School; He's the last member of the McCleary family in K-12 public schools. Another class of students graduates without the amply funded public education the constitution guarantees.

“Educators are first-class professionals, and legislators need to start treating public education like a first-class profession. If we are to recruit and retain highly trained, caring, and committed educators, we must fully fund K-12 education with competitive professional wages for our educators in Seattle and across the entire state of Washington. Ample state funding for compensation would allow more educators to live in the same community where they work.”

— Michael Tamayo, Seattle EA, vice president



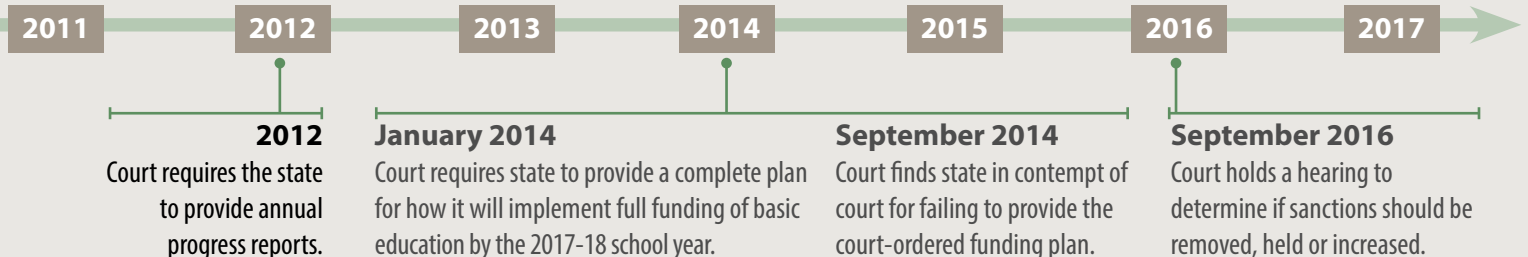
2011
State files appeal in State Supreme Court and Court holds hearing on McCleary v. State of Washington.

2012
Washington State Supreme Court provides unanimous ruling that **the state is violating the constitutional "paramount duty" to provide for the ample funding of education for K-12 students.** The court retains jurisdiction until 2018 to ensure that the ruling is enforced.

August 2015
Court institutes sanctions of \$100,000 a day for **the state's ongoing failure to provide the funding plan;** proceeds to be deposited into an education account.



Venema and McCleary families



What members are saying about fully funding Washington's schools



"If public schools are fully funded, we would have reduced class sizes. There would be more time and resources for teachers to help their students and students would come to school knowing that they are a priority. The state needs to realize that we should put our money into what is important. Children are important. They are the future. They are worth it. We need to put our money on them and the teachers who will help them achieve their potential."

— Judy Radcliffe, first-grade teacher, Brouillet Elementary Puyallup



"If our state finally fully funded our schools I really feel that our staff would be able to teach our students material that would be beneficial

and prepare them for life after high school. Our state has some amazing individuals who are doing incredible things with what they create, collaborate and introduce. Imagine how much better things would be if the financial boundary was removed."

— Andre Wren, counselor Chiawana High, Pasco

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If education were fully funded

my students would be in a classroom with running water and in a building with clean, fully-functioning bathrooms. Their basic human needs would be met during the school day. If education were fully funded a single student would only have to share her teacher with 20 other peers instead of 30. When that student was struggling, her teacher would be able to spend 1:1 time in class to meet her individual needs. When I, as a teacher, have 27-plus students in an elementary classroom, it is not possible for me to differentiate my instruction to meet every child's need. There is an untold emotional exhaustion that goes into overcrowded classrooms. As a teacher you want to help every student succeed. When underfunded, systemic conditions do not allow you to do that, you take the blame onto yourself. Many teachers leave the profession when they realize they cannot live up to these superhero expectations. Our students suffer when experienced teachers leave the profession and year after year they get new, inexperienced teachers trying to fill these big superhero shoes.

— Nicole Grambo, fifth-grade Spanish dual language teacher Hilltop Elementary, Burien

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"I'm very happy about McCleary money coming in first to class sizes where it should be because class sizes matter. Still, I look forward to more funding coming soon because, as a custodian, new classrooms create a lot more work for those of us who are in charge of making sure our schools are safe, clean and healthy for all of our students and staff."

— Troy Chaffee, head custodian Finch Elementary, Spokane



"My family and I feel that Washington is the most beautiful state in our country. I am equally in awe of full-day kindergarten class offerings and the exhausted underpaid teachers working their hardest to handle overcrowded classrooms and still provide the one-on-one help for struggling children. In the same way in which Washington state values and cares for its natural resources, it should love and care for its most precious resource — our children — by fully funding public schools."

— Lisa Phinisee, attendance secretary, Hazen High, Renton

“

Being an elementary school counselor, I see the importance of smaller class sizes in my work every day. A lot of what I do is to make sure our kindergartners and first-graders are ready for school. It's imperative for counselors to have the ability to help every child be ready for school so our teachers can get down to the business of helping our students learn.

— Mark McCune, counselor, Sheridan Elementary, Spokane

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Local bargaining pays dividends — and it's at risk

Through local collective bargaining, WEA members across the state have negotiated significant increases in educator pay this year.

Several local unions negotiated locally funded annual pay raises of 5 percent or more, and Columbia EA in Walla Walla negotiated a 7.2 percent increase over the state COLA. Education support professionals in Northshore will receive a 19 percent pay increase over four years, and in University Place, starting pay for office professionals is increasing by \$3.15 an hour this year.

In Evergreen, near Vancouver, WEA members organized to bargain a 14.5 percent increase over three years.

Despite success in negotiating pay raises, our freedom to collectively bargain compensation with our employers is under attack.

Politicians and political groups, including school boards, school administrators and the Freedom Foundation, are



lobbying the Legislature to eliminate or limit local bargaining for Time, Responsibility and Incentive (TRI).

They want to force all K-12 school employees to negotiate pay and benefits with the state instead of their local school districts.

Given the state's dismal track record on school

funding, WEA members are adamantly opposed to statewide bargaining. If it weren't for locally bargained pay and benefits, we'd be even further behind. McCleary requires the state to increase funding for basic education — it does not require limiting our local bargaining rights.

"I don't trust the state to do its job, and neither does our community," said Rob Lutz, president of the Evergreen Education Association. "Community members want to invest their local tax dollars to attract and retain the best educators in the area. With a teacher shortage right now and with Portland in our

backyard, statewide bargaining would severely hurt the education of our children."

Evergreen EA members' persistence and doggedness helped bring a three-year agreement to fruition late August. The new contract grants teachers significant pay raises and improvements in areas such as securing enough substitute teachers by offering higher pay, additional counselors and more support for special needs students.

... our freedom to collectively bargain compensation with our employers is under attack.

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McCleary is about one thing ...

Amplify funding basic education

Some politicians and political groups want to make McCleary about anything other than increasing state funding for basic education. WEA members remind legislators that:

- McCleary **is not** about levy reform.
- McCleary **is not** about increasing state control over public schools or reducing local flexibility and decision-making.
- McCleary **is not** about restricting how teachers are paid.
- **McCleary is about the Legislature keeping its constitutional promise to our children and fully funding basic education.**

WEA submitted its school funding recommendations to the state in July. Groups representing school boards and

administrators recommended limiting local collective bargaining over pay and health benefits, moving to a centralized system based in Olympia. Some groups want to restrict the ability of local voters to approve levies to supplement basic education. The League of Education Voters and others are promoting plans that would divert local levy money to the state budget (aka, the levy “swap” or “swipe”).

Groups like Stand for Children and the Freedom Foundation also have entered the funding debate — and their corporate-driven agenda is at odds with what educators themselves have said they need to be successful.

Those proposals do nothing to help students, and they ignore the real problem, which is the state’s continued failure to amplify fund quality basic education for all students.

As educators, we need to make sure lawmakers and other officials are focused on what matters most — our students.

