



You may be asking the question, “How is it that the legislature made such a huge investment in K-12 education in Washington State and yet districts are looking at making reductions in staff, programs, and services?”

A little background - the McCleary lawsuit trial was heard during the 2008 - 2009 school year. The court gave the State of Washington a timeline (2018 - 2019 school year) to comply with the Washington State Constitution, Article IX, section 1, “It is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders.”

The “basic education program” included:

- Salaries that attract & retain competent personnel for all prototypical school positions
- Materials, supplies, and operating costs
- Special education for kids with disabilities
- Full-Day kindergarten
- K- 3 classrooms with no more than 17 students
- Student transportation to & from school
- Remediation for struggling students (LAP)
- Advanced instruction for highly capable students
- Transitional bilingual education for non-fluent english speakers (TBIP)
- Increased 24 credit hour requirement for high school graduation (Core 24)
- Funding schools using a prototypical school model

In order to accomplish compliance with the court order, the legislature added new dollars to K-12 education and redirected existing local levy dollars to be used for the “basic education program” instead of locally determined programs and services. The reduction of the levy authority to \$1.50 per 1,000 of assessed valuation or \$2,500 per student (whichever is the lower amount) leaves little opportunity for local decisions about programs and services that are not part of the “basic education program.”

The lower levy amount also makes implementation of the prototypical school funding model very difficult for small school districts. The model is based on a population of 400 students. Many of our rural school districts have 100 - 300 students.

For example, the prototypical model would generate staffing for .2 health and social services staff (nursing) for a north central Washington school district. How is a rural Washington district going to employ a quality nurse to meet the needs of their students for just one day each week? Previously, in this example, this district could use local levy dollars to increase the amount of time a nurse was hired. Under the new model, they will not have the local funds to cover the difference not only for this one categorical position but many. The levy reform enacted, reduces local authority for those decisions of staffing, programs, and services valued by each community.

There is lots of talk about the salary increases for K-12 staff. Why is that?

The Supreme Court ordered the state to add \$1 billion for the basic education program SALARY component by September 1, 2018.

State salaries were previously based on a combination of years of experience and level of education. Instead of adding this \$1 billion to the existing salary schedule, the state salary schedule was thrown out leaving all 295 school districts to negotiate their salary schedule that paid teachers as professionals with a mandatory minimum of \$40,760.

The state previously sent districts the actual cost of the teacher salary. In the new model, they will pay an average salary of \$65,216 with the allocation based on a prototypical school model. The state also chose some districts to get a "regionalization factor." In this new model, small rural districts where borders are next to a district that received "regionalization", can have a salary difference of \$5,000 - \$25,000. Our concern is how will we recruit and retain teachers in our rural communities?

When you look at the compliance requirements of McCleary implementation, the significant change in local decision making with the loss of levy authority, and the lack of salary parameters with the additional \$1 billion for salaries have created the perfect storm for our school districts to navigate.

School superintendents and locally elected school boards have been and will continue to be responsible for the long term fiscal health and stability of their school districts. They will also continue to advocate for your children and your community to work toward equitable funding and support regardless of zip code.

Dr. Michelle Price on behalf of

Superintendents of the 29 school districts in the NCESD171 region

Brewster * Bridgeport * Cashmere * Cascade * Coulee-Hartline * Eastmont * Entiat * Ephrata *
Grand Coulee Dam * Lake Chelan * Mansfield * Manson * Methow * Moses Lake * Nesperlem*
Okanogan * Omak * Orondo * Oroville * Palisades * Pateros * Quincy * Soap Lake * Stehekin *
Tonasket * Warden * Waterville * Wenatchee * Wilson Creek