



Keeping our Promise to All Children.

NEWS is a coalition of 430 education organizations, including 203 school districts representing 90 percent of Washington students

"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

January 14, 2015

The Honorable FirstName LastName

Address1

PO Box 40600

Olympia WA 98504-0600

Dear Representative LastName:

We know being a legislator isn't easy. You must consider many things, including the majority will of voters, the overall good of our state, the mandates of court orders, and the constitutional rights of Washington citizens. As you begin the 2015 legislative session, the Network for Excellence in Washington Schools – the 430-member coalition that filed the *McCleary* lawsuit along with the McCleary and Venema families – would like to thank you for serving in what is often a thankless job.

We also recognize the challenges you will face as you work to develop a budget to address our state's priorities. On behalf of the students, parents, civil rights groups and public schools in our statewide coalition, we ask you to remember at least three points as you deliberate and decide upon a new two-year state budget:

- When you take your oath of office, you swear to support our State Constitution. Our Supreme Court reaffirmed in *McCleary* that our Constitution "confers on children in Washington a positive constitutional right to an amply funded education."
- Our Constitution unequivocally establishes K-12 public education as the State's paramount duty – which *McCleary* reaffirmed means you must amply fund K-12 schools first, before any other state program or operation.
- The State has already been found in contempt of court because of the Legislature's failure to obey court orders. The sanctions that will follow if the 2015 Legislature fails to make significant progress toward full funding by the 2017-2018 school year – as the State has promised the Supreme Court – should not be taken lightly. We teach our children to obey the law and court orders. Please be the role models our students deserve.

We look forward with great anticipation to your success in providing Washington's 1 million public school students the amply funded education our Constitution promises.

Sincerely,

Nick Brossoit, Ed.D

President, Network for Excellence in Washington Schools

Superintendent, Edmonds School District #15