



"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

February 12, 2012

Dear School Board President/Superintendent/Civic Organization Leader,

The victory in *McCleary v. State* gives us all hope. Hope that the State of Washington will finally live up to its paramount constitutional duty to amplify fund education for all K-12 students. Hope that school districts will no longer be unconstitutionally forced to rely on local levies, federal funds, PTA fundraisers and other sources to try to narrow the many gaps between what the State funds and what the State's academic standards demand.

While your school district did not choose to join the Network for Excellence in Washington Schools (NEWS) prior to the Supreme Court decision, the funding provided by districts that did contribute financially enabled us to:

- Successfully prosecute our case. After years of preparation, hundreds of thousands of documents, almost 100 depositions, a seven-week trial, and over a year of Supreme Court proceedings, the efforts of our expert legal team delivered the most positive legal results we could have hoped for.
- Keep NEWS members informed and involved over the six years it took us to secure that ruling.
- Educate and maintain relationships with legislators who must now implement that ruling.
- Engage citizens across Washington via electronic and news media to build public support for our cause.

The Supreme Court's decision to retain jurisdiction unexpectedly gives NEWS a remarkable opportunity – and a remarkable responsibility – as the one entity entrusted by the Court to vigilantly monitor and enforce compliance with the Court's rulings against the State. To make those rulings a reality in public school classrooms across Washington, we must hold legislators' feet to the fire. We must keep up public pressure. We must keep the members of NEWS engaged and well informed. And we must continue the legal fight now that the Court has decided to retain jurisdiction in our case. **We need your financial support to help ensure that the McCleary rulings are enforced.**

Please consider joining us now and making a contribution to NEWS, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. For school districts, that might equal \$1 or more per student – an amount far smaller than the State's unconstitutional underfunding every single year. (A sample resolution is enclosed to assist you in taking this critical issue of NEWS funding to your board.) For citizen associations and civic organizations, we have requested donations of \$1,000, \$2,500 or more.

The first litigation phase of our efforts may be over, but our work is not. Together, we can change the face of K-12 public education forever. But it will take a continued, united front under the banner of the NEWS Network. We thank you for your past support and hope you will join us as we take these next steps. None of us can afford to idly stand by and hope that others do the heavy lifting for us. Each of us has too much at stake.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Blair".

Mike Blair, President, Network for Excellence in Washington Schools
Former Superintendent, Chimacum School District (retired)

Enclosure: NEWS members; Sample board resolution

P.S. Visit **www.waschoolexcellence.org** to find a summary and PowerPoint presentation about the *McCleary* ruling on the website home page.