



GRASSROOTS CONNECTION/ Court to state: No more delays on K-12 funding

January 5, 2012

Dear advocates,

In a clear win for children, the Washington State Supreme Court ruled unanimously today that the state was violating its constitutional paramount duty to amply fund K-12 education. [The ruling](#)

This is a historic victory, and starting today we have a new conversation. No longer are we going to petition over loss of school days or access to all-day kindergarten.

Starting today, the cuts stop and funding starts.

Starting today, our top priority – a basic education that prepares all kids for college and career -- is also the state's top priority.

Starting today the legislature's job just got a lot harder.

The high court's decision validates all of the work Washington State PTA members put into the passage of ESHB 2261 in 2009 and SHB 2776 in 2010, and with our work this past year to protect all-day kindergarten, highly capable funding and an intact school year.

This decision sets the stage for the next step – finding a stable, adequate source of revenue to meet the needs of schoolchildren.

THE RULING

Not only did the high court point out that ample funding is “considerably more than just adequate,” the court ruled the state was consistently giving districts less money than actual costs. It identified ESHB 2261 as a “promising” reform package that if fully funded would remedy deficiencies in the K-12 funding system.

It reiterated that “ample funding for basic education must be accomplished by means of regular and dependable tax sources.”

Finally, the court said it would stay engaged to help facilitate progress in the state's plan to fully fund basic education by 2018.

THE PLAN

ESHB 2261 defines a basic education as “the opportunity for students to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to meet graduation requirements, intended to allow them the opportunity to graduate with a meaningful high school diploma that prepares them for postsecondary education, gainful employment, and citizenship.” It requires the state to fund:

- 180 full days, grades 1-12

- 180 half days for kindergartners, to be increased to 180 full days
- 1,000 instructional hours in grades 1-12, to be increased to 1,080 hours in grades 7-12
- 450 instructional hours in kindergarten, to be increased to 1,000 hours
- Opportunity for students to complete 24 credits for high school graduation
- Enhanced funding for Learning Assistance Program, Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program, Highly Capable Program and special education for students with disabilities
- 17 to 1 class size ratio in grades K-3

SO, STARTING TODAY, NO MORE DELAYS. We have children to educate and we have a new definition of basic education to roll out.

Washington State PTA is part of Network for Excellence for Washington School (NEWS) and was party to this lawsuit. See full NEWS coverage: [A monumental and historic victory](#). You can learn more about NEWS and its 382 member groups at <http://www.waschoolexcellence.org/>

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