



NEWS is a coalition of 420 education organizations, including 198 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

May 1, 2013

Dear Lawmakers:

The purpose of this communication is to place in context the three K-12 budget proposals we have seen thus far, and to ask you to do better.

We appreciate that there appears to be a commitment to make a step in the right direction for K-12 funding in response to the *McCleary* ruling as these funds are desperately needed by schools and students. Still, it is important that lawmakers and our public are clear about this "step" and that you do everything possible to make it as large as possible in this special session.

The State's recent Pivot Tables compare the State's K-12 education funding increases next year under the proposed budgets of Governor Inslee, the Senate (PSSB 5034), and the House (ESSB 5034). Those education funding increases for the 2013-14 school year would equate to less than the following per pupil amounts for 1 million students: \$764 per student (Gov. Inslee), \$718 per student (House), and \$512 per student (Senate).

Unlike the budgets in the initial years after the State enacted ESSB 2261, these proposed budgets do propose an overall increase rather than cut K-12 funding. But these proposed budgets do not come close to a level of education funding consistent with what the State told the *McCleary* court. To catch up to the level of education funding required for "steady progress" under the State's representations to the *McCleary* court, these proposed budgets would have to add over \$3,000 per student in State funding this coming year. When asked how I rank the State's education funding proposals to date, I respond as follows:

- 1st place:** The State's testimony to the *McCleary* court – because, as noted above, it requires significantly more than any budget currently being considered.
- 2nd place:** Governor Inslee's proposal – because it is the least meager of the State's three current proposals.
- 3rd place:** The House proposal – because it is the second-least meager of the State's three current proposals.
- 4th place:** The Senate proposal – because it is the third-least meager of the State's three current proposals.

– OVER –

NEWS letter to legislators
May 1, 2013

We appreciate that you have different political views as to how to fund, as well as where and how to invest in K-12 education. Might I also suggest in your work during this special session that you increase the overall amount for K-12, too. When both the State and we (NEWS representing the plaintiffs in the *McCleary* case) file our post-budget briefs with the State Supreme Court later this summer, you will want to have made more progress at reducing the "compliance gap" by increasing K-12 funding above the levels of the current proposals. If we can be of further assistance in your understanding of these matters, please let us know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nick Brossoit". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nick" being more prominent and the last name "Brossoit" following in a similar style.

Nick Brossoit, Ed.D
President, Network for Excellence in Washington Schools
Superintendent, Edmonds School District #15