

Statement on OSPI lawsuit

July 25, 2016

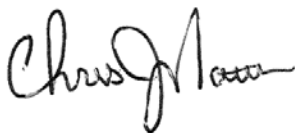
Last week State Superintendent Randy Dorn filed suit against seven school districts, alleging they violated state law and the state constitution by using local levy funds to pay a portion of teacher salaries. WSSDA understands Superintendent Dorn's frustration with current K-12 funding, especially in light of the Legislature's definition of Basic Education and the Supreme Court's McCleary decision. But WSSDA does not agree with the tactics employed in the lawsuit, and we stand in support of the seven districts named in the suit.

The suit cites the Washington Constitution's *paramount duty* statement requiring the Legislature to make ample provision for the education of all children as the basis for the action. It is the state's responsibility to fully fund education, including teacher salaries. Funding from the state falls short of meeting the funding needs in districts, including the shortfall from state funded teacher salary schedules.

These districts acted in precisely the same way as the vast majority of the state's 295 school districts to address the ongoing education funding problem. Those districts don't deserve to be singled out for doing what was reasonable and appropriate, given the inaction of the Legislature.

We understand the intent of Superintendent Dorn's action in filing this suit, but we do not support his approach of resorting to suing school districts. It is the State's responsibility to fully fund education, including teacher salaries, and it should comply promptly with the McCleary decision.

Chris Nation,



Chris Nation

WSSDA President