

Resolution Urging the State to Fulfill its Constitutional Duty to Provide Every Child Access to a Sound Basic Education

WHEREAS, for more than 25 years, North Carolina lawmakers from both parties have failed to meet their constitutional obligation to provide all children in the state with a sound basic education;

WHEREAS, far too many students, particularly students of color, students from economically-disadvantaged families, students with disabilities, English learners, and rural students have been denied the opportunities promised to them under the North Carolina Constitution;

WHEREAS, the State Constitution and North Carolina General Statutes place the responsibility to fund a public school system that provides every child in the state with access to a sound basic education with the State of North Carolina, both the executive and legislative branches;

WHEREAS, adequate educational opportunities cannot realistically be provided without adequate education funding;

WHEREAS, on March 15, the State submitted to the court a long-term comprehensive remedial plan (“Leandro Plan”) detailing specific steps State leaders must enact to remedy the ongoing constitutional violations in our public school system and ensure that all students have access to the education they are owed under the State Constitution;

WHEREAS, the Leandro Plan represents the bare minimum of the steps State leaders must take to fulfill their constitutional duties and is not a menu from which policymakers may select their preferred initiatives;

WHEREAS, Governor Cooper’s Budget Recommendations for 2021-23 demonstrate that the Leandro Plan can be fully implemented within existing State resources;

WHEREAS, on June 7, Judge W. David Lee ordered the state to implement the Leandro Plan “in full and in accordance with the timelines set forth therein;”

WHEREAS, district leaders, including school board members, stand ready to direct additional State resources to the students and schools with the greatest needs, such that all children have an equal opportunity to realize their full potential;

WHEREAS, receiving a quality education is paramount to catalyzing the full growth and self-actualization of students, families, communities, and our State as a whole;

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Orange County Board of Education request(s) that the North Carolina General Assembly fully enact the policy and funding reforms included in the Leandro Plan to ensure that all North Carolina students have access to a sound basic education by the 2028 school year.

Adopted by the Orange County Board of Education this 27th day of September, 2021.

Hillary MacKenzie, Chair
Orange County Board of Education

Dr. Monique Felder, Superintendent
Orange County Schools