



## NEWS

# Supreme court sets deadline | Education Funding

by SARAH WEHMANN, Bonney Lake-Sumner Courier-Herald Reporter  
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The Washington Supreme Court is hoping to “foster dialogue and cooperation in reaching a goal shared by all Washingtonians” with the [McCleary v. State](#) ruling on Jan. 9.

In the ruling, it stated the legislature had the chance to take a step forward when they entered into a short session in 2014.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction submitted a \$461 million budget regarding basic education funding, according to the order documents.

“The need for immediate action could not be more apparent,” the document stated.

“The McCleary decision has made us hopeful in the Sumner School District,” Debbie Campbell executive director of business services said. “Hopeful that adequate funding will eventually be a reality, however, it isn’t yet.”

With a deadline of April 30, the state has to submit a plan “fully implementing its program of basic education for each school year between now and the 2017-18 school year.”

There are three areas that the plan must address including a schedule for phasing in the funding of basic education.

Submitting a long term plan, will allow districts to coordinate current and future budgets in order to maximize students programs, Campbell said.

The cuts that were made during the recession have not yet been reinstated, she said but this decision will stop any future cuts in the K-12 budget.

In the 2013 legislative session, the Sumner School District was told it would receive funding for two elementary schools to provide staff for full-time kindergarten, Campbell said.

After that decision was made, she said, the district decided to use levy money to fund two additional schools to provide full-time kindergarten to those students.

With the McCleary ruling, the promise is by 2018 funding will be provided for full-time kindergarten to all students, she said.

“Knowing that the state ‘should’ be sending funding for our remaining buildings has allowed Sumner and many other districts to make a short term plan to use local or program dollars to provide this opportunity for all kindergarten students and their families,” Campbell said.

Campbell said voters in the Sumner School District approved the technology levy that goes into effect in 2015.

The levy dollars will provide a large amount of funding to the cost of computers but also under the McCleary decision, Campbell said, the district will be able to spend more to prepare classrooms for the technology.

Once the deadline for the state’s report approaches, the court will be able to step up the pace in order to make progress with regards to education in the state of Washington.

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