

If teachers were athletes, and more of the week's education news and views

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The McCleary case is seven years old, and counting. Bad economic times yield better teachers. Learning a second language builds brainpower. And a \$1,000 college scholarship for women 40 and over.

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Seven years and counting

That's how long it's been since the McCleary family filed a lawsuit (along with lots of others) arguing that the Legislature was shortchanging the state's public schoolchildren. Back in 2007, the McClearys' youngest child was in second grade; now he's in high school.

They won the case in 2012, but [debate continues](#) over how much funding is needed.

In briefs to the state Supreme Court this week, the two sides reiterated much of what they've said before. The state said it has made progress, and will make more. The plaintiffs argued just the opposite – that despite adding \$1.3 billion to the public-school budget for the next two years, lawmakers still are far, far short of what the state constitution and the justices require.

The justices also may do what they've done before: Give lawmakers a stern warning, and another year. Or they may punish them, which might be unprecedented.

Bad times lead to better teachers?

Researchers at the National Bureau of Economic Research looked at how the economy affects teacher quality. And [they found evidence](#) that teachers hired in down times were more effective (at least in teaching math) as those who enter the profession when the economy is healthy. [As Education Week reports](#), the researchers examined math test

scores from the 2000-01 school year through 2008-09, a period that included a number of economic downturns.

What should we do about this? As Education Week's Stephen Sawchuk noted : "You obviously don't *want* to rely on recessions to improve teacher quality."

Other options? Pay new teachers more, the researchers suggest.

Meanwhile, at the kitchen-table classroom:

It turns out that Washington state has some of the toughest rules when it comes to home-school instructors, requiring them to have passed some college classes. Only 13 states require even a high-school diploma, [the Education Commission of the States reports](#).

Want to boost your child's brainpower — or your own?

Make sure they learn more than one language. People who speak two languages reportedly have more gray matter in the executive-control region of the brain, [a new report says](#), which means they perform better on tasks that require attention and short-term memory.

That adds to growing research about the benefits of being bilingual. [As Education Lab reported last year](#), Stanford University researchers found that students in dual-language programs do better in the long run than students in classrooms where they hear only English. (In dual-language programs, students spend about half the day learning from a teacher speaking their native language.)

This and that:

- George Washington University will no longer ask applicants to submit their ACT or SAT scores, joining 40 other colleges and universities that have done the same.
- King County [appointed a steering committee](#) to study out how to end racial disparities in juvenile detention. Right now, in what is the whitest large county in America, two-thirds of the youth behind bars are ethnic minorities. The committee's members include bigwigs as well as youth who have been in juvenile detention.

- Oregon [got a waiver](#) from many of the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Law, promising to make test scores a “significant” part of teacher evaluations. Washington, as most of you know, got its waiver yanked over that issue.
- Are you a woman 40 or over, who is attending North Seattle College? You could win a [\\$1,000 scholarship](#) from [Crone of Puget Sound](#), an organization committed to supporting older women.

Finally, check out this great comedy sketch that asks: What if we glorified teachers the way we do pro athletes? Watch for the “Teacher of the Year play.”

<http://www.seattletimes.com/education-lab/roundup-if-teachers-were-athletes-and-more-highlights-of-the-weeks-education-news/>

See something interesting that we missed? Share it with Education Lab Editor Linda Shaw at Lshaw@seattletimes.com or on Twitter at [@LShawST](https://twitter.com/LShawST)