

Editorials SEPTEMBER 15, 2015

Our Voice: Charter schools deserve quick resolution to ruling

What will become of our state's charter schools is uncertain.

The state Supreme Court ruled earlier this month that the schools are unconstitutional.

That leaves the fate of the eight schools operating in Washington with an unclear fate. Charter schools are publicly funded but privately operated. The court says the schools are not "common schools" because they are governed by appointed, not elected, leaders and, therefore, are not eligible for the state funding they receive.

Washington voters narrowly approved charter schools in 2012. Forty-two other states operate charter schools. Our state court's ruling was the first in the nation to knock down a charter school law in its entirety.

A legislative fix is clearly needed in order to uphold the will of the people and allow the schools to continue to serve the students who choose to attend.

Attorney General Bob Ferguson has called the court's decision into question and is expected to file a motion to ask that it be reconsidered.

Ferguson said that along with charter schools, the court's ruling "also unnecessarily calls into question the constitutionality of a wide range of other state educational programs" like Running Start and the state's 14 skills centers or vocational schools.

The details of his motion won't be known until it's filed with the Supreme Court. Ferguson has until Sept. 24 to get that done, and folks on all sides and from a much broader scope than those involved in charter schools will surely be adding their voices to his argument.

One thing that the court's ruling makes clear is to reinforce that the education system in our state is a mess.

Folks are clamoring for a special session to address the charter school issue. While Gov. Jay Inslee has said he will not call a session specific to that topic, he may convene one in November to tackle school funding.

The state Supreme Court, dissatisfied with lawmakers' attempts to adequately fund education as a result of the McCleary decision, have imposed a \$100,000 per day fine.

Inslee has asked a bipartisan group of lawmakers to try to tackle the funding question, and they will meet this month. Our hopes are not high for a resolution on funding since the Legislature couldn't get that done in multiple sessions this year. Inslee has said he wants their focus on the funding issues, and not charter schools.

So as of right now, charter schools can't be funded with public money in this state. Where does that leave them? Our state can't adequately fund education to satisfy the Supreme Court, either, and fines are being racked up daily.

It's a mess. And probably only something that can be fixed by the Legislature.



MORE EDITORIALS

You May Like

Sponsored Links by Taboola

Haircut Inspiration: 350+ Gorgeous Short Hairstyles

SheKnows

Are You Ignoring This \$15k Social Security Bonus?

The Motley Fool

4x4 Dodge Ram vs Tree Stump - Watch What Happens Next!

Man-Break

Meet The Man Who Is Disrupting a \$13 Billion Razor Industry

Dollar Shave Club