

Letter: Education funding can't be ignored

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As a state representative for the 49th District, I was pleased to read the Dec. 6 story, "[McCleary 101](#): State lawmakers struggle with 'paramount duty' of funding education." Stories like these shine a bright light on a major problem facing the state that has yet to be solved.

The vast majority of K-12 spending in our state — over 88 percent — goes directly toward teaching and building expenses. But even though we're allocating our K-12 dollars efficiently, the state is still not spending enough to meet our constitutional obligation to fully fund public schools.

The state is, however, heading in the right direction. Thanks to work by House Democrats in 2009, Washington now has a solid public education funding framework in place.

The challenge now is adequately funding our K-12 schools. The state has added nearly \$2.5 billion in new K-12 investments since 2011, but there's still more work to do.

Some lawmakers may try to distract the public from the real issue by criticizing the courts or by advocating for major policy reforms before agreeing to fully fund schools. Those arguments are red herrings. The McCleary decision is about one thing and one thing only — fully funding basic education.

Blame is not a solution. False debates are not a solution. "No" is not a solution. This session, you'll see lawmakers fall into two camps: Those who want to create — and fully fund — a quality education system that works for everyone, and those who want to ignore the problem.