Overview of Leandro v. North Carolina



– Case Background of Leandro v. North Carolina?

Leandro v. North Carolina is a lawsuit filed in 1994 by five low-wealth school districts who claimed that they did not have enough money to provide an equal education to their students.

In 1997, the NC Supreme Court ruled that the state's students have a constitutional right to a "sound, basic education."

The courts subsequently ruled that to meet its constitutional duty, the state must:

- Staff each classroom with a competent, well-trained teacher
- Staff each school with a competent, well-trained principal
- Identify the resources necessary, including access to early education, to ensure that all children, including those at-risk, have an equal opportunity to obtain a sound, basic education.
 - » These resources include access to early education.

The suit has continued over time, with Superior Court regularly reviewing state efforts to comply with the constitutional requirements.

In 2017, the parties agreed to work toward a resolution in the case. The court hired a consultant, WestEd, to develop recommendations to achieve compliance, and Gov. Roy Cooper additionally created a Commission on Access to a Sound Basic Education to assist in creating a plan for the state to meet the *Leandro* requirements.

Late in 2019, WestEd and the Commission each released their recommendations for the state, with WestEd recommending \$1.1 billion in new investment for early childhood over eight years. The court then ordered the parties to develop a joint plan based on those recommendations.

In June 2020, the parties filed their first action plan outlining actions for FY 20-21 for North Carolina to meet its obligation to provide a sound, basic education.

- Key Early Childhood Actions for FY 20-21 to Provide a Sound, Basic Education

Smart Start \$10M to begin scaling up Smart Start.

1994

2000

2017

2019

2020

-NCPre-K

\$10.5M to increase the rate per slot by \$200 and raise the administrator rate to 10% for NC PreK.

WORKFORCE-

\$7M to expand early childhood salary supplements like WAGE\$ and AWARD\$.

EARLY INTERVENTION \$7M recurring and

\$7M recurring and \$650K nonrecurring to expand and strengthen the NC Infant-Toddler Program/early intervention.

CHILDHOOD DATA

\$500K to build an early childhood education workforce data system including degrees, licensure, demographics, place of employment, and wages.

- HIGH QUALITY LEARNING FOR BIRTH TO THREE

A feasibility and cost study for a birth-to-3 program modeled on NC PreK and a study to develop alternatives to NC's current market rate model. Currently grant funded. -KINDERGARTEN TRANSITIONS-

Pilot program to support greater information sharing between families, prekindergarten, and kindergarten teachers and align the Kindergarten Entry Assessment with birth through third grade. Currently grant funded.