

February 3, 2009

Now that bills are being presented in rapid fire in the legislature, these talking points have been created to assist you in answering questions on the position of NEWS.

*What is the position of NEWS concerning the current bills in the legislature?*

Our membership has not met since the bill introductions. As with any organization with over 50 members, we cannot make a statement until our membership meets later this month.

*Now that the bills all address full funding of basic education including a new definition, are you dropping the lawsuit?*

The lawsuit was filed two years ago because the state was not meeting its constitutional duty of funding education – paramount means paramount, ample means ample, and all kids means ALL. The McCleary case is about what was and what is, not what is potentially promised several years down the road.

*There is no money and the bills seem to fix all the NEWS concerns with a plan for finding money over 6 years – when is enough, enough?*

In today's economy, this is very hard for everyone. Our state forefathers mandated education was the paramount duty - to come before all else. This suit is not about potential future promises being made now, it is about what has been and currently is our education system.

*When will NEWS make a statement so you can be part of the process of stakeholder collaboration?*

As you know the legislature moves very quickly, changes are made often and daily. We cannot make a statement until our membership meets later this month.

*Some of the NEWS coalition members are speaking in favor of the current bills “with concerns”. Are they representing the NEWS viewpoint?*

As with all collations each member organization has its own views on the specific pathways to reach the end result – the best education possible for all kids. NEWS agreed as a coalition, that there was no other alternative but to file a lawsuit to force a final resolution. As with any organization with over 50 members, we cannot make a statement until our membership meets later this month.

*NEWS is being run by WEA.*

That is simply not true. Our President is Superintendent of a school district, our VP is President of the Urban League. NEWS has a dozen community groups with over 30 school districts, their EAs, and the WEA. WEA has the same one vote as all organization members.

*Additional comments:*

NEWS is excited about all the activity around education. NEWS is grateful for the hard work of all involved to get to the current dialogue in the legislature and our communities. But, the state has made promises for over 30 years. NEWS wants to assure solid action now, not just more potential promises for later. The current bills have a long journey before final, and we will continue to listen and watch the progress closely – we all want a better education system.