



## **Public School Forum Statement on April 2026 Leandro Ruling**

Today the North Carolina Supreme Court issued its fifth ruling in the decades-long Leandro lawsuit. Among other considerable impacts, this opinion vacates the 2022 ruling ordering the transfer of \$1.75 billion to our public schools. While significant and harmful, the Leandro V ruling does not change our state's constitutional obligation to fully fund our public schools.

North Carolina's students have for too long born the consequences of ongoing disinvestment in their schools. This ruling further delays action to ensure that students across our state have access to the educational opportunities that they deserve. But it does not change the underlying principle that has guided this case since 1994. As stated by the Public School Forum's Incoming President and CEO Dr. Tony Jackson, "The North Carolina Constitution guarantees every child the opportunity to receive a sound, basic education. This ruling does not change what we know our students need in order to thrive: well-prepared, supported teachers, effective school leadership, access to high-quality instructional materials and adequate resources for all students, and safe and affirming school spaces."

Concerning the work ahead, Public School Forum Interim President and CEO Dr. Lauren Fox confirms that the fight for our students and school communities will continue.

"Ensuring adequate funding for North Carolina's public school students is not a partisan issue—it's a constitutional one, and the responsibility before us is just as clear as it was before. North Carolina law expressly states that it is the General Assembly's responsibility to provide the resources necessary for every child to have access to a sound basic education," states Fox. "The latest ruling does not change that reality, nor the reality that our state is not meeting that responsibility. We are 50th in the country in per-student funding, to the detriment of our children, communities, and our state's overall wellbeing. Our students need and deserve our full and enduring commitment to great schools for all – not just good schools for a few, and the Forum remains steadfastly committed to realizing this goal."

Across the state, we are seeing the consequences of decades-long underfunding of our public schools play out in local school budget fights. As municipal and county governments strain to fill the budget gaps left by our General Assembly, the need for fully-funded schools for all has never been more apparent.

Our state leaders must fulfill their constitutional obligation to our students by making the necessary investments to ensure that every child in our state receives the quality education they are owed. Our children and the future of our state are dependent on it.