



## **CALIFORNIA SCHOOL FINANCE LITIGATION**

### **Robles-Wong v. California**

- California's broken school finance system is unconstitutional.
- As a result, students are being denied the opportunity to master the educational programs that the State requires. Education is a fundamental right of every child in California. California's constitution requires a school system that prepares students to become informed citizens and productive members of society.
- California has set clear requirements for what schools are expected to teach and what students are expected to learn. By doing so, the State has an obligation to provide the resources necessary to meet the required standards, but has failed to do so.
- The State's failure to support the required educational program adversely affects all students. Academic achievement measures show California's broken school finance system denies students the opportunity to become proficient in the State's academic standards.
- This lawsuit seeks to remedy the broken school finance system by (1) declaring that it is unconstitutional and (2) requiring State lawmakers to uphold their constitutional duty to design and implement a school finance system that provides all students equal access to the required educational program.
- This lawsuit declares that:
  - The unsound, unstable and insufficient school finance system is neither aligned with required educational programs nor with student needs.
  - The amount of funding provided to education is not enough to deliver the required programs to all students so that they meet the State's educational goals.
  - The funding system causes unequal learning opportunities.
- Filing this lawsuit was a last resort. The Governor and lawmakers have known for some time that the current school finance system is harming students, and they have done nothing to remedy the crisis.

## **Additional Information**

### **Because of California's broken school finance system, students are being denied the opportunity to master the educational program set by the State.**

- California's school finance system is:
  - Unsound, because it is an outdated system relying on archaic formulas that bear no relationship to the current education program or the needs of students; and
  - Unstable, because volatile and unpredictable funding levels prevent districts from providing the required education program with consistency and continuity; and
  - Insufficient, because funding amounts do not support the programs and services necessary to give all students the opportunity to become proficient in the State's academic standards.
- The State has a constitutional obligation to provide every student with the opportunity to be proficient. However, due to the State's broken finance system, districts are denied the ability to provide students with the very programs that ensure student success. This lawsuit seeks to guarantee that all students have the opportunity to have the education that will enable them to become informed citizens and productive members of society.
- All students have a right to attend schools with reasonable class sizes, qualified teachers and access to appropriate resources. A constitutional school finance system will enable districts to provide the resources necessary for the success of future generations.
- California's unique revenue and expenditure system makes our schools almost completely dependent on the State, and yet the Governor and the Legislature have failed to make education a priority. In fact, the Constitution requires the State to "first set apart" the money necessary to support schools.
- The most important capital we have is human capital, especially our children. California cannot afford to continue squandering that capital and our future.

### **The need for reform is clear**

- Numerous studies, including those commissioned by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, legislative leaders and independent researchers, have concluded that the State's school finance system is broken and requires fundamental reform.

- Despite the facts, the Governor and the Legislature have failed to remedy the serious deficiencies in the state's educational school finance system, threatening future generations of students and the State's long-term economic productivity.
- We need both investment and reform to make our school finance system function properly. We need a school finance system that is sound, stable and sufficient. Failing to make that investment is a choice our students and economy cannot afford.
- This lawsuit is about making an honest prediction of the resources our schools need so that students can meet high academic expectations; then determining how much it will cost to provide those resources in the most effective and efficient manner possible. It is also about making sure that the school finance system is responsive to differing student needs so that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed in the State's educational program.
- The recent \$17 billion cuts have made a dire situation even worse. The instability and insufficiency of funding rob students of their constitutional right to an education.
- Ongoing cuts to education funding have reached a crisis. Thousands of teachers and staff have been cut, class sizes are growing, vital academic programs have disappeared, and California ranks nearly last in per-pupil funding. These cuts are symptoms of California's unstable and unconstitutional school finance system.
- California voters want the Governor and Legislature to protect education now. Our children cannot wait to get the education they need.