



***Leandro: A Generational Chance for  
Resource Adequacy, Equity and  
Opportunity for Children***



NORTH CAROLINA  
JUSTICE CENTER

# *Leandro v. State of NC*

- ▶ Lawsuit filed in 1994 by five low-wealth school districts (Hoke, Halifax, Robeson, Vance and Cumberland)
- ▶ Suit claimed that districts did not have enough resources to provide an adequate education to their students
- ▶ NC Supreme Court ruled in 1997 and 2004 that the state's students have a constitutional right to an opportunity for a "sound, basic education" and that the state is not meeting that standard



## *Leandro v. State of NC*

- ▶ **November 2021** – Judge Lee Orders Treasurer and Controller to release funding from state reserves to fund years 2 &3 of Comprehensive Remedial Plan
- ▶ **December 2021** – Court of Appeals overturns November ruling and blocks transfer of funds
- ▶ **November 2022** – North Carolina Supreme Court overturns Court of Appeals and orders the release of funding for years 2&3 of Leandro Plan

## Excerpts from Justice Hudson’s Landmark Ruling:

- ▶ “[F]ar too many North Carolina schoolchildren, especially those historically marginalized, are not afforded their constitutional right to the opportunity to a sound basic education. ... [T]he State has proven — for an entire generation — either unable or unwilling to fulfill its constitutional duty.”
- ▶ “Our Constitution is the supreme law of the land; it is not optional. ...

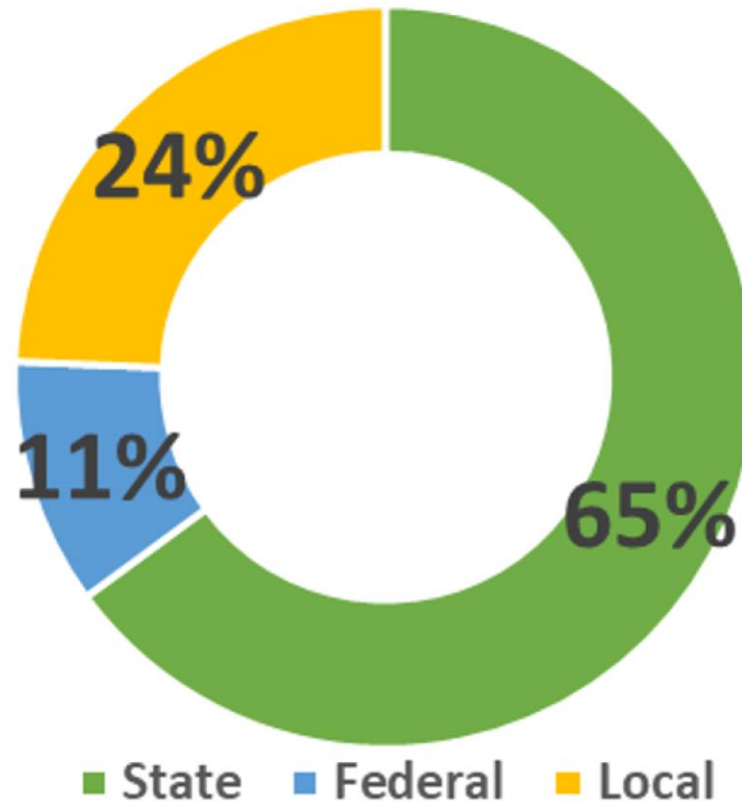
- ▶ ... For twenty-five years, the judiciary has deferred to the executive and legislative branches to implement a comprehensive solution to this ongoing constitutional violation. Today, that deference expires. ...
- ▶ ... Further deference on our part would constitute complicity in the violation, which this Court cannot accept. Indeed, ultimately “[i]t is the state judiciary that has the responsibility to protect the state constitutional rights of the citizens.”



## On Arguments Made by Legislative Intervenors:

- ▶ These claims unequivocally fail. They are untimely, distortive, and meritless. At best, they reveal a fundamental misunderstanding of the history and present reality of this litigation. At worst, they suggest a desire for further obfuscation and recalcitrance in lieu of remedying this decades-old constitutional violation.

## Current Expense Expenditures by Source of Funds – FY 2017-18



Source: DPI Statistical Profile

## Communities for the Education of Every Child NC



# Every Child NC

[www.everychildnc.org](http://www.everychildnc.org)

[info@everychildnc.org](mailto:info@everychildnc.org)

[@everychildnc](https://twitter.com/everychildnc)

[#LeadWithLeandro](https://twitter.com/everychildnc)



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# Communities at the Center





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**7 Organization, Member-Led Coordinating Committee  
and 40+ Organization Partners**

## What We Believe

- ▶ Multi-racial coalition building and investing in partnerships
- ▶ Community- centered decision making
- ▶ Focus on system level policy change
- ▶ Long- term engagement

**Will lead to more equitable outcomes**

## 2022 Accomplishments

- ▶ Outreach & Education (community, elected officials, media) *film series, Unpack the Plan, Leandro Days*
- ▶ Legislative advocacy (June 29th Advocacy Day)
- ▶ 144 sign-ons to *Leandro* Amicus Brief
- ▶ Month of Action leading up to August 31st Supreme Court hearing
- ▶ NC Supreme Court win

# Questions?

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