

Notable Highlights from North Carolina *Leandro* Rulings

State Constitution Excerpt

“The General Assembly shall provide by taxation and otherwise for a general and uniform system of free public schools, which shall be maintained at least nine months in every year, and wherein equal opportunities shall be provided for all students.” N.C. Const. Art. IX, § 2(1).

1997 Ruling Excerpt

“Every child in North Carolina has a constitutionally-enforceable right to an opportunity for a sound basic education in a public school.” A sound basic education must provide each student with at least a:

- Sufficient ability to read, write, and speak the English language and a sufficient knowledge of fundamental mathematics and physical science to enable the student to function in a complex and rapidly changing society;
- Sufficient fundamental knowledge of geography, history, and basic economic and political systems to enable the student to make informed choices with regard to issues that affect the student personally or affect the student’s community, state, and nation;
- Sufficient academic and vocational skills to enable the student to successfully engage in post-secondary education or vocational training; and
- Sufficient academic and vocational skills to enable the student to compete on an equal basis with others in further formal education or gainful employment in contemporary society.

2004 Ruling Excerpt

An opportunity for a sound basic education requires at a minimum:

- That every classroom be staffed with a competent, certified, well-trained teacher who is teaching the standard course of student by implementing effective educational methods that provide differentiated, individualized instruction, assessment and remediation to the students in that classroom.
- That every school be led by a well-trained competent principal with the leadership skills and the ability to hire and retain competent, certified and well-trained teachers who can implement an effective and cost-effective instructional program that meets the needs of at-risk children so that they can have the equal opportunity to obtain a sound basic education by achieving grade level or above academic performance.
- That every school be provided, in the most cost effective manner, the resources necessary to support the effective instructional program within that school so that the educational needs of all children, including at-risk children, to have the equal opportunity to obtain a sound basic education, can be met.

North Carolina Governor’s Executive Order to Create Commission

Executive Order Excerpt

Commissioner members shall have the following responsibilities:

- a. Work with an independent consultant to gather information and evidence relevant to developing a comprehensive plan to ensure compliance with the Leandro rulings
- b. Formulate recommendations for achieving compliance with the Leandro rulings
- c. Ensure the recommended compliance measures accomplish and address the following criteria:
 1. Staffing Each Classroom with a competent, well-trained teacher; and
 2. Staffing each school with a competent, well-trained principal; and
 3. Identifying the resources necessary to ensure that all children, including those at risk, have an equal opportunity to obtain a sound basic education.
- d. Provide the Governor with advice when requested regarding other issues related to education and compliance with Leandro