

November 12, 2021

## Statement on Leandro Ruling from NC Early Childhood Organizations

North Carolina early childhood organizations commend the November 10<sup>th</sup> ruling in the case of *Leandro v. State of North Carolina*. This landmark case affirms every child's state constitutional right to a sound, basic education beginning in early childhood. For more than 25 years, North Carolina lawmakers from both parties have failed to meet this constitutional obligation. We support court-ordered compliance with the Leandro Comprehensive Remedial Plan to ensure that every child – regardless of race, family income, or zip code – has a foundation for success in school and in life.

The Leandro Plan was developed thanks to the work of state and national nonpartisan education and early childhood experts, and it details the policy, programmatic, and budgetary changes necessary to fulfill this constitutional obligation. The Leandro Plan is measured, evidence-based, and it is affordable.

The Leandro Plan recognizes the urgent need to expand funding to ensure that all children, especially children of color and children from underserved and marginalized communities, have access to a sound, basic education beginning in early childhood. The Leandro Plan includes funding for many policies and programs that have been and continue to be our top priorities, including Smart Start, Child Care WAGE\$ and other workforce compensation initiatives, NC Pre-K, Child Care Subsidy Assistance, early intervention, and much more. These programs support young children and working families, the early childhood workforce, child care programs, and communities across North Carolina.

Leandro is an opportunity for our state to advance equity, change systems, and deliver on the promise of an opportunity for every child to fulfill their potential. This is an investment that we can't afford *not* to make. We stand in support of the court's order to fulfill the obligation to provide every child with a sound, basic education beginning in early childhood.

### ***The undersigned early childhood organizations support this statement:***

NC Early Education Coalition  
Child Care Services Association  
MomsRising  
National Domestic Workers Alliance  
NC Association for the Education of Young Children  
NC Child  
NC Early Childhood Foundation  
NC Justice Center  
NC Partnership for Children  
Western NC Early Childhood Coalition