

Summary of *Moore v. State*

The following bullets provide a brief summary of *Moore v. State*.

- This case was filed in 2004. Plaintiffs sought a declaration that the education system was constitutionally inadequate and underfunded. They wanted education funding doubled – an additional \$1.3 billion.
- The Education Clause of the Constitution requires that the Legislature shall “establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all children in the state.” Article VII, § 1. Plaintiffs argued that this clause required the state to provide an adequate education.
- After a month-long trial in October 2006, the court issued a decision in June 2007. The court held that education was adequately funded, and that the funding formula met the requirements of the Constitution. The court further found that the state’s educational standards and assessments were adequate.
- The court also found, however, that education in some districts in rural Alaska did not provide a “meaningful opportunity to learn” for children whose backgrounds did not prepare them for academic success. As a corollary, the court then held that Alaska’s high school exit exam could not be used to deny a diploma in a district with an inadequate education.
- Because the *legislature* is ultimately responsible for education, the court held that local control of education must give way where local districts either could not or would not address the failure of their children to succeed.
- Therefore, the court found the state in violation of the Education Clause, and ordered that the state provide additional oversight and assistance in underperforming districts.
- In 2012, the parties reached settlement in the *Moore* case.
- The settlement targeted struggling schools. The settlement provided an \$18 million appropriation to be distributed by the Department of Education and Early Development, working with a collaborative committee. Districts with the lowest performing schools applied to receive grant funding, which targeted improvement programs, including early literacy, teacher retention, and remedial efforts to help students pass the then-extant high school graduation qualifying exam. The *Moore* collaborative committee expects to distribute all available grant funding by the end of FY17.