In 1994, five low-wealth school districts sued the State of North Carolina, arguing that students in these districts had been denied their right to an adequate education. Although the NC Supreme Court held in 1997 that the state constitution gives all NC students the right to a "sound, basic education," they also found in 2004 that in some cases, students were being denied that right. In 2017, the plaintiffs continued to argue that the State continued to deny this right to students in low-wealth counties. As a result, Judge Lee appointed WestEd, an independent consultant, to recommend ways for NC to comply with the initial Leandro ruling.

“The people have a right to the privilege of education, and it is the duty of the state to guard and maintain that right.” N.C. Const. art. I, § 15.