



MQEC is the “Constitutional Guardian” of Article X of the Montana State Constitution, working for public school students and their communities. We advocate for, pursue, and defend the need for adequate funding that provides quality education for each of Montana’s public school students.

The Value of MQEC – Increasing Each Year

In 2001 after years of stagnant funding, the Montana education community joined forces in search of rational, adequate funding for public schools. The Montana Quality Education Coalition was formed with the core purpose of fulfilling Article X of the Montana Constitution which states that “*The legislature shall provide a basic system of free quality public elementary and secondary schools.*” MQEC was the driving force behind the 2002 lawsuit *Columbia Falls Public Schools v State of Montana* which alleged that due to inadequate funding, the state failed to meet its constitutional obligations under Article X.

Following a trial in 2004, the state District Court and the Montana Supreme Court found that the current mechanisms indeed failed to provide adequate funding for Montana’s public schools. MCA 20-9-309, the Montana public school funding formula, was enacted in 2005 in direct response to the Court decision.

The chart below demonstrates the positive impact of the *Columbia Falls v State* lawsuit on public school funding in Montana. Without intervention, historical funding would have likely continued at a pace below inflation, indicated by the yellow trend line. Actual funding from 2005 to present is shown in green. The difference between actual and historical funding is significant and widens each year. **For FY14, this difference amounted to \$839 for each public school student in the state of Montana.**

Your annual membership in MQEC ensures continued advocacy for rational and adequate funding for public schools, with court action an option if constitutional issues arise. Solidarity and a common voice are critical in our advocacy efforts. Membership at the district, organizational, or individual levels supports the present and future work of MQEC, safeguarding our constitutional right to quality public education.

