

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**LAWSUIT ALLEGES STATE OF VERMONT'S  
EDUCATION FUNDING AND PROPERTY TAXATION SYSTEMS  
VIOLATE CONSTITUTION**

WHITINGHAM. On October 27, 2017, a Twin Valley High School student, a Whitingham resident, and the Town of Whitingham filed a lawsuit against the State of Vermont, alleging that the State's education funding and property taxation systems violate the State Constitution.

Twin Valley student Sadie Boyd and Whitingham resident Madeline Klein joined the Town in alleging in their Complaint that the State is violating Whitingham students' right to equal educational opportunity and Whitingham resident taxpayers' right to not be taxed disproportionately.

The Plaintiffs allege that the State is violating Whitingham students' constitutional right to equal educational opportunity, a right recognized by the Supreme Court of Vermont in the landmark 1997 decision in *Brigham v. State*, by funding their education based on the number of "equalized pupils" rather than on the actual cost of educating students. The Plaintiffs allege that the State's constitutional violation is reflected in the disparity between the courses and other educational opportunities offered by the Twin Valley schools and those offered by larger schools in Vermont.

The Plaintiffs also allege that the State is harming Whitingham resident taxpayers, whose education property tax rate increased by more than 30 cents this year, despite a nearly \$300,000 reduction in education expenditures. The Plaintiffs point to several factors responsible for the increase in the tax rate, none greater than the State's penalty for so-called "excess spending," spending which, the Plaintiffs allege, is necessary to provide Whitingham students with the limited educational opportunities that are also the subject of the lawsuit.

The Plaintiffs are asking for an injunction against the aspects of the education funding and property taxation systems that they allege are unconstitutional, and believe that the changes they seek will benefit students and taxpayers not only in Whitingham, but across Vermont.