



CALIFORNIA RURAL LEGAL ASSISTANCE, INC. PRESS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Parent and Students Respond to Misleading Press Release by Bakersfield City School District; Will Pursue Lawsuit Challenging BCSD's Failure to Properly Account for \$1.6 million in Funds Designated to Serve English Learners, Foster Youth and Economically Disadvantaged Students

Bakersfield, CA - The Plaintiff and students who filed suit against the Bakersfield City School District challenging the cancellation of summer school, clarified today that their lawsuit against the District is far from over.

“The District has intentionally misrepresented the court’s ruling,” said Lyndsi Andreas, Staff Attorney with Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance, Inc. “this preliminary ruling does not exonerate the District or in any way resolve the ultimate legal question of whether the BCSD followed the law when it cancelled summer school without first consulting with parents and parent advisory committees.”

The Superior Court, on May 3, 2019 denied the Plaintiffs’ request for extraordinary relief, in the form of a temporary restraining order. This special proceeding does not resolve the case, but was Plaintiffs’ attempt to try and immediately repair the damage done as a result of the District’s disregard of student interests and the legal rights that parents have to be part of the school funding decisions.



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“While we knew that such relief is rarely granted, we had to try given the harm students will suffer this summer without access to summer school programs available to all students,” said Rebecca Buckley-Stein of California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc, in Kern County.

Plaintiffs emphasized that all of the legal and factual issues raised in the complaint remain unresolved. “In particular, we believe that the District’s complete failure to account for the \$1.6 million in special funding violates the law and is completely at odds with the purpose of California’s Local Control Funding Formula Act, which places restrictions on the use of this special grant money, and requires parent involvement in deciding how it is to be used” said Deborah Escobedo of the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights.

“Judge Bradshaw’s decision is not binding on him, and we are confident that when all the facts are before the court, we will prevail,” said Ms. Andreas.

Plaintiffs’ attorneys are particularly concerned by the District’s final threat to seek attorneys’ fees.

“This blatant attempt to frighten parents who want to stand up for their rights is completely unsupported and demonstrates the District’s disregard for parent voices and concerns,” said Cynthia L. Rice of California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc.

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CALIFORNIA RURAL LEGAL ASSISTANCE, INC.

Founded in 1966, CRLA’s mission is to fight for justice and individual rights alongside the most exploited communities of our society. Through a network of regional offices and cross-cutting programs, CRLA provides legal services to nearly 50,000,000 low-income people annually. Our work impacts farmworkers, individuals with disabilities, immigrant populations, LGBT communities, women, children and families in rural areas. For more information on CRLA, please visit: www.crla.org.

LAWYERS’ COMMITTEE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

The Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area, founded in 1968, works to advance, protect and promote the legal rights of communities of color, low-income persons, immigrants, and refugees. Assisted by hundreds of pro bono attorneys, LCCR provides free legal assistance and representation to individuals on civil legal matters through direct services, impact litigation and policy advocacy. For more information, please visit www.lccr.com.

GREATER BAKERSFIELD LEGAL ASSISTANCE, INC

Founded in 1968, GBLA’s mission is to promote social change and justice by providing high-quality legal services to the low-income community of Kern County, California. GBLA assists clients in the areas of housing and homelessness, domestic violence, guardianship, children and family services, health law, consumer law, and others. For more information on GBLA, please visit: www.gbla.org.