



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Parents and Students Challenge Cancellation of Summer School
by Bakersfield City School District**

BAKERSFIELD, CA - Yesterday, California Rural Legal Assistance Inc., Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance and the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, representing Bakersfield students and parents, filed a lawsuit against the Bakersfield City School District (BCSD) to force the district to reinstate its summer school programs at all school sites for Summer 2019.

Until recently, BCSD planned to hold summer programs at all campuses starting in just a few weeks. However, the district abruptly cancelled summer school, putting BCSD students at risk of falling behind academically. BCSD's summer school cancellation violated the law because the district made its decision without seeking input from the parent advisory committee or any other stakeholder groups. The Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)—the state-mandated school budgeting and planning process—prohibits the district from making such decisions without public input and accountability.

“This move by the District will adversely impact many of our client families, especially low-income and English Learner students, who need these programs to stay on track academically,” **said Lyndsi Andreas, staff attorney with Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance.** “The District should immediately reinstate all of the cancelled summer schools and provide a public accounting for why they circumvented the legal process.”

Before the district's about-face, the 2017-20 LCAP provided for a program every summer with the goal of accelerating academic achievement for the district's at-risk students. The LCAP allocated \$1,655,634 for STEAM-focused summer school programs that teach science, technology, engineering, arts, and math for 2018-19. The BCSD School Board slashed the budget and plans to use only \$50,572 of the \$1.6 million. They will use money from a separate



grant, designed to supplement the other LCAP funding, for summer school at only four sites and by invitation only. The vast majority of BCSD students will be excluded from the program.

“Originally, the District spoke of deficits from other programs and indicated this money would go into reserves,” **said Cynthia L. Rice, Director of Litigation Advocacy & Training for California Rural Legal Assistance.** “Now they are saying it will be spent on Academic Academies next year, but parents have been given no information about those academies or why \$1.6 million dollars in summer school money should fund them. Parents and students deserve more.”

In a further violation of public accountability, the District, Board, and Superintendent did not include any information about how the remaining \$1.6 million dollars will be used when revising its 2018-19 LCAP. This money is supposed to be spent this school year to address underachievement of economically disadvantaged, foster youth, and English Learner students who are more likely to experience education achievement gaps. This suggests an indifference not only to the concerns of parents and community organizations, but also to the district’s obligations under the law.

“The LCAP process was intended to be an inclusive one,” **said Deborah Escobedo, an attorney with the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights.** “All stakeholders, including parents and teachers, should be meaningfully involved in such a decision. Through its unilateral actions, the District has made a mockery of the LCAP and has raised serious concerns about how they actually spent the money.”

The parents and students demand summer school be reinstated at all sites. The California Department of Education explicitly states, “Research spanning 100 years shows that children experience learning loss when they do not engage in educational activities during the summer (White, 1906; Entwisle & Alexander, 1992; Cooper et al., 1996, Downey et al., 2004)...Summer learning loss is cumulative. Over time, the difference between the summer learning rates of low-income and higher-income students contributes substantially to the achievement gap (Sloan, McCombs, Schwartz, Bodilly, McCinnis, Lichter, Cross, 2011) Research has shown low-income children to be nearly three grade equivalents behind their more affluent peers in reading by the end of the fifth grade as a result of summer learning loss (National Summer Learning Association [NSLA], 2009).”¹

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¹ <https://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/summerlearning.asp>



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 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 OF THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

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.