



**PUBLIC INTEREST LAW
CENTER OF PHILADELPHIA**

AFFILIATED WITH THE LAWYERS COMMITTEE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS UNDER LAW

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Lebanon Parents will Finally Receive Reimbursement from School District for Truancy Fines

Judge Officially Approves Settlement in Case against Lebanon School District's Abusive Truancy Fines Policy

Harrisburg, Pa. – The Federal District Court in Harrisburg has officially approved a plan for the Lebanon School District to return more than \$100,000 to parents for excessive truancy fines it collected. The court approved the settlement reached with the Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia on behalf of the NAACP and over 300 parents who will receive refunds.

The approval by Chief Judge Yvette Kane on August 20, 2013 of the Settlement Agreement adopted by the District in February will allow the District to send out notices and claims forms to all persons who paid over \$300 per single truancy fine according to court records. Information will also be available on the District and Law Center's websites. Any parents who believe they are eligible for reimbursement and have moved should contact the District about a change of address. Parents will have six months to submit claims. The District will disperse payment following receipt of claims forms.

"We are very pleased that parents can now get the money they should have gotten a long time ago," said Michael Churchill of the Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia. "Bill Dumas and the NAACP asked the District to fix this problem in 2009, and instead of fixing it back then, the District proceeded to waste the time of numerous parents and attorneys." In approving the Settlement the Court noted that plaintiffs obtained all that they had sought in the suit.

The lawsuit, brought by the NAACP and four mothers who had paid fines in excess of the statutory maximum of \$300 per fine, not only established a restitution fund of \$108,000, but also lead to the reduction by the district magistrate courts of more than \$325,000 in uncollected fines which were also in excess of \$300.

The settlement was made possible by the generosity of the law firm Pepper Hamilton LLP which agreed to waive its fees and recovery of the costs it had paid in acting as lawyers for the plaintiffs along with the Law Center.

More information about the settlement and payments to class members will be available in English and Spanish on the websites of the School District and the Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia at www.pilcop.org.

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