



## Press Release

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**Contact:** Isabel Alegría, Public Advocates, [ialegria@publicadvocates.org](mailto:ialegria@publicadvocates.org); 415-431-7434; 510-541-5428  
David Colker, ACLU of Southern California, [communications@aclusocal.org](mailto:communications@aclusocal.org); (cell) 626.755.4129  
Dannie Tillman, Community Coalition, [Dannie@cocosouthla.org](mailto:Dannie@cocosouthla.org); 323-430-7564

## Settlement Reached with LAUSD to Deliver \$150 Million in New Services for High Need Students

### Community Coalition, Parents Reach Accord to Resolve First Lawsuit Under CA's School Finance Reform

**LOS ANGELES** – Under a groundbreaking settlement, more than \$150 million of additional funds will be distributed among 50 of the highest need schools in Los Angeles over the next three years. The funding will go toward new and increased services for low-income students, English-language learners, and foster youth.

The settlement resolves a 2015 lawsuit filed in Los Angeles Superior Court by Public Advocates Inc., the ACLU Foundation of Southern California, and Covington & Burling LLP against the Los Angeles Unified School District on behalf of parent Reyna Frias and Community Coalition, a South Los Angeles-based social justice organization. It is the first case brought to enforce California's education finance reform law known as the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF).

"We are pleased to have reached a solution that will immediately improve the lives of students across Los Angeles," said Aurea Montes-Rodriguez, executive vice-president of Community Coalition. "While this is a promising victory, it also serves as an important reminder that low-income communities of color remain overlooked in Los Angeles. The time for communities like South L.A. is now, and we must continue the fight for our kids and our future."

"I am overjoyed to see that so many of our kids will be provided with the new services they have been waiting for," said Reyna Frias, an LAUSD parent and plaintiff in the lawsuit. "It has been a long effort, but well worth the time our students and parents dedicated to it."

The complaint alleged that LAUSD was improperly reducing its obligation towards high-need students by crediting itself every year for some \$450 million spent on special education services that were actually part of the district's basic educational program. Over time, the accounting practice would have resulted in more than \$2 billion in lost funds for services targeting high-need students. An administrative decision won by plaintiffs last August from the California Department of Education (CDE) required the district to correct most of those funds going forward, but still left several hundred million dollars of misallocated funds in dispute. The settlement resolves the outstanding funds plaintiffs were still seeking.

"With our previous victory and now this settlement, we're sending a powerful message to school boards across the state that they will be held accountable to meet LCFF's requirement to increase resources equitably on high-need students," said John Affeldt, managing attorney at Public Advocates.

"This settlement is ultimately about children and giving them the resources they need, deserve, and require to thrive," said Sylvia Torres-Guillén, director of education equity at the ACLU of California. "School districts are responsible for their students' success and must properly invest in them as required by law. Only then will education equity have meaning, and will our students be provided with the tools to succeed."

The 50 schools that will receive funds as a result of the settlement represent sites across the district and are primarily located in South and East Los Angeles. The choice of which schools will receive the funds was based on multiple factors, including the number of high-need students, foster youth rates, homelessness rates, math scores, and suspension rates.

Services that could be funded under the settlement include academic, social and emotional support services, drop-out prevention programs, restorative justice programs, and parent engagement efforts.

"Prior to this settlement, a school's ranking as one of the 'highest needs' on the equity index did little to ensure the school would receive the funding necessary to increase or improve services for its students," said Laura Muschamp, attorney at Covington & Burling. "We hope the CDE decision and this settlement can pave the way for reforms to make sure that schools, particularly those in the highest need communities, receive the proper and fair amount of funding."

***For a copy of the settlement, which includes a list of funded schools, click [here](#).***

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