

**Students Deprived of Education During Pandemic Reach Landmark Settlement with District to Receive Special Education & Related Services at DC Jail:
*Washington Lawyers' Committee, School Justice Project, and Terris, Pravlik, & Millian win tutoring, counseling, and post-secondary opportunities for incarcerated young people in Charles H. et al. v. District of Columbia***

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(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – High school students with disabilities at the high school at the DC Jail have reached a settlement agreement to remedy the District's failure to provide them with an education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the settlement agreement filed for approval today, the District is committing to fulfilling its obligation under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to educate students at the DC Jail. The District has selected Maya Angelou Public Charter School Academy, an entity experienced in providing education to incarcerated young people, as the educational provider at the DC Jail. In addition, students who were deprived of their education during COVID-19 will receive significant compensatory education packages, which provide them with funding for tutoring, counseling, and post-secondary opportunities. And, the District will regularly report on the provision of education at the DC Jail and fund a third-party auditor to ensure compliance with the settlement agreement.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, D.C. Public Schools stopped providing education to students at the DC Jail, and instead students received inaccessible, inadequate, and inconsistently delivered work packets that they had to complete without instruction or assistance. In April 2021, three students, on behalf of themselves and a class of all other students at the DC Jail, filed a lawsuit challenging DCPS and the Office of the State Superintendent of Education's failure to provide them with education and other services that they are entitled to under federal law.

The Court previously entered a preliminary injunction and later a contempt order, requiring the District to provide all students at the DC Jail with the full hours of special education and related services mandated by their Individualized Education Plans.

Charles H., one of the plaintiffs in this case, says "I'm thankful that I got to help people get the education that they need. I'm going to keep fighting for it to be better."

"This landmark settlement agreement provides an opportunity for young people incarcerated at the DC Jail during COVID-19 to earn their high school diplomas, Kaitlin Banner, Deputy Legal Director at Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights & Urban Affairs says. "A functioning high school at the DC Jail is an essential way to help students thrive and become healthy, successful adults. Without an education, young people struggle to gain critical skills and support themselves."

Kathleen L. Millian, an attorney at Terris, Pravlik & Millian says: “We are thrilled for our brave clients who had the courage and commitment to bring this case to federal court to pursue their education and to pursue the lawsuit for over two years until a settlement was reached. The three named plaintiffs and all the students who were deprived of their education at the DC Jail from March 2020 until the present will receive meaningful relief under the settlement.”

Tayo Belle, Managing Attorney at School Justice Project says: “This historic settlement aims to establish a higher standard for correctional education, both in its rectifying of the harm that was caused to the Plaintiff class during the pandemic, but also for students who will enroll in the high school at the DC Jail in the future. Our clients are excited to access the critical services afforded by this agreement to pursue their educational endeavors.”

This settlement agreement has been filed with the District Court for the District of Columbia and is pending preliminary approval by the court. Following that, the court will schedule a Fairness Hearing and we will seek the court’s final approval of the settlement agreement.

[Settlement Agreement](#)
[Contempt Order & Memorandum Opinion](#)
[Preliminary Injunction](#) & [Memorandum Opinion](#)
[Class Action Complaint](#)

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ABOUT SCHOOL JUSTICE PROJECT: School Justice Project (SJP) is a non-profit legal services and advocacy organization serving DC’s older court-involved students with disabilities. SJP uses special education law to ensure that older, court-involved students with disabilities have access to a quality education, both during incarceration and throughout reentry. SJP works to build racial justice by increasing educational equity and decreasing mass incarceration through direct representation, systemic advocacy, and community outreach and legal training. Using special education law in the juvenile and criminal contexts, SJP aims to spark a system-wide overhaul, transforming the educational landscape for older court-involved students with disabilities. For more information, please visit www.sjpd.org.

ABOUT TERRIS PRAVLIK & MILLIAN: Terris, Pravlik & Millian, LLP was founded in 1970 by the late Bruce J. Terris as a public interest law firm. For over 50 years, TPM has litigated cases in the areas of civil rights, poverty, employment, and environmental law on behalf of those who could not otherwise afford legal representation. Our cases include advocating for special education access for young children in the District of Columbia, ensuring DC Medicaid recipients have access to services, and pursuing the clean-up of hazardous and other waste sites. For more information, please visit www.tpmlaw.com.