

Wiley Secures Victory for Disability Rights Maryland in Pro Bono Lawsuit Against Prince George's County Public Schools

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Washington, DC – Wiley Rein LLP secured an important victory on behalf of Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) in a lawsuit against Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS), stemming from allegations that the school system disproportionately subjected students with disabilities to inappropriate and exclusionary forms of discipline.

In a March 24 decision granting DRM's motion for summary judgment, the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland ordered PGCPS to provide DRM with contact information for the parents or guardians of students who are eligible for special education in the school district, and who have received a suspension of more than three days or were expelled since January 2019.

Wiley Pro Bono Partner Theodore A. Howard represents Disability Rights Maryland in this case in collaboration with Luciene Parsley and Megan Berger of DRM's legal staff. DRM is a nonprofit organization designated as the State of Maryland's Protection & Advocacy agency. DRM is "federally mandated to advance the civil rights of people with disabilities," and provides free legal services to individuals in Maryland with all types of disabilities who live in facilities or the wider community, or who are homeless.

DRM's unsuccessful requests for parent or guardian contact information came after it received over 85 complaints against PGCPS related to exclusionary discipline and educational neglect of students with disabilities. As noted in the court's ruling, DRM investigated many of the complaints and concluded that "PGCPS frequently violated the educational rights of students with disabilities."

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Practice Areas

Litigation

When PGCPs refused to voluntarily provide the contact information DRM sought, Wiley filed an action for declaratory and injunctive relief on DRM's behalf in November 2021 under the applicable federal protection and advocacy statutes and regulations.

The court agreed with Wiley's argument that DRM is entitled to production by the school system of the information it has requested as a matter of law, and firmly rejected the various arguments interposed by the school system to prevent that outcome.