



DISABILITY RIGHTS

NEW YORK

New York's Protection & Advocacy System and Client Assistance Program

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Disability Rights New York Files Federal Lawsuit against the Sachem Central School District for denying a student with a disability use of his service dog.

Albany, New York June 22, 2015 – DRNY filed a lawsuit against Sachem School District for illegally denying a child with Autism the use of his service dog in school and at school functions. The federal lawsuit, filed on behalf of the child and his parents in the Eastern District of New York, charges that the Sachem Central School District, as well as the District's Board and Superintendent, discriminated against the child by repeatedly refusing to allow the service dog on school property.

An individual with a disability is legally entitled to use a service animal in schools that are federally-funded. A "service animal" includes a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. This service dog is trained to perform many tasks to help the child manage his disability. Since 2012, the School District has repeatedly refused to allow the service dog anywhere on campus, including at extra-curricular activities, after-school events, and even when the parents pick their child up from school.

"For years this school district has wrongfully refused to allow our young client to bring his service dog to school," said Timothy A. Clune, DRNY's Executive Director. "We are continuing the family's fight for his right to be accompanied by his service dog at school."

DRNY is the federally mandated Protection & Advocacy System which provides free legal and advocacy services to people with disabilities in New York State.

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