



Department of Justice

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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE REACHES COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT WITH CRESTWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT TO IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

WASHINGTON – The Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice, working closely with the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of Michigan, reached a comprehensive settlement agreement with the Crestwood School District in Dearborn Heights, Michigan to improve educational services for students who are English Language Learners (ELLs), establish a system for recruiting and hiring faculty and staff and ensure that individuals who complain about discrimination do not face unlawful retaliation.

With the district’s cooperation, the department conducted a thorough investigation under multiple provisions of the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 (EEOA) of the district’s policies and practices. Most of the ELL students in the district are native Arabic speakers. The department concluded that the district failed to provide adequate services and materials for ELL students, employed an insufficient number of qualified teachers and administrators and did not monitor and evaluate its ELL program effectively. In addition, the department found significant shortfalls in the district’s communications with Limited English proficient (LEP) parents. Lastly, the department responded to allegations of employment discrimination in the hiring of Arab-American and African-American teachers and claims that individuals who complain about discrimination were subject to retaliation in violation of the EEOA.

The agreement requires the district to implement programmatic changes at the start of the 2014-15 school year and will remain in place for at least four years. Under the agreement, the district will:

- Provide all ELL students, including students with disabilities, with appropriate English as a Second Language (ESL) and sheltered content instruction taught by teachers who are properly qualified and trained;
- Develop a kindergarten through-12th grade ESL curriculum and conduct a comprehensive inventory of the instructional materials to ensure that each school has appropriate resources available;
- Provide ELL students and LEP parents with meaningful access to important information, including discipline and special education materials and procedures;
- Monitor the academic progress of current and former ELL students, and implement protocols to collect and evaluate the data concerning the effectiveness of ELL programs;

- Work with the Department of Justice Community Relations Service to improve parental outreach and community engagement by establishing a community advisory panel and implementing training on cultural competency;
- With the assistance of a qualified consultant, draft a comprehensive recruitment and hiring policy and implement best practices for recruiting, hiring, and retaining a qualified and diverse faculty and staff; and
- Institute internal complaint processes, and designate and train employees to investigate and resolve allegations of employment discrimination and/or retaliation.

“All students, regardless of their proficiency in English, deserve the opportunity to succeed and thrive in school,” said Acting Assistant Attorney General Molly Moran for the Civil Rights Division. “This robust and multifaceted agreement will eliminate barriers that obstruct the path to success for English language learners in the Crestwood schools.”

“Schools have an obligation to provide equal educational opportunities for students from diverse cultural backgrounds,” said U.S. Attorney Barbara L. McQuade of the Eastern District of Michigan. “We will continue to work cooperatively with the school district to monitor its compliance with the agreement.”

The enforcement of the Equal Educational Opportunities Act is a top priority of the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division. Additional information about the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department is available on its website at www.justice.gov/crt.

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