



DISABILITY RIGHTS

NEW YORK

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact: Forest Cotten
518-603-0684**

DRNY FAVORABLY SETTLED FEDERAL LAWSUIT AGAINST THE SACHEM CSD THAT DENIED A STUDENT'S USE OF HIS SERVICE DOG FOR NEARLY FIVE YEARS

Brooklyn, New York – March 17, 2017 – After nearly five years of litigation, a child with autism is now able to have his service animal with him in class and at school activities at Sachem Central School District (Sachem) in Ronkonkoma, NY. DRNY favorably settled a lawsuit against Sachem for illegally denying the child 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 on May 19, 2015, charged that Sachem, 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 receive Federal funds. A "service animal" includes a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. The child's service dog is trained to perform many tasks to help the child manage his disability. Since 2012, Sachem 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.

Today, this family's fight against Sachem is over because the school will no longer deny the child his legal right to be with his service animal on campus. "For years this school district has illegally refused to allow our client to bring his service dog to school," said Timothy A. Clune, DRNY's Executive Director. "We are excited for our client to begin this next chapter in his education with his service animal."

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

###

DRNY is supported by the U.S. Department of Human Services, Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities; Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration; U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration; and, the Social Security Administration. This press release does not represent the views, positions or policies of, or the endorsements by, any of these federal agencies.

725 Broadway, Suite 450
Albany, New York 12207
(518) 427-6561 (fax)

25 Chapel Street, Suite 1005
Brooklyn, New York 11201
(718) 797-1161 (fax)

44 Exchange Blvd, Suite 110
Rochester, New York 14614
(585) 348-9823 (fax)

mail@DRNY.org • www.DRNY.org
(800) 993-8982 (toll free) • (518) 432-7861 (voice) • (518) 512-3448 (TTY)