



THE FUND FOR EAST RAMAPO'S PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

ESTABLISHED BY LATHAM & WATKINS

Latham & Watkins establishes charitable fund to support East Ramapo public school students; Announces initial grant

Nearly \$4M fund created using court-awarded attorney fees arising from voting rights lawsuit

March 17, 2022, New York...Latham & Watkins¹ is pleased to announce the formation of a donor-advised charitable fund benefiting the public school students of the East Ramapo Central School District in the Hudson Valley area of New York, and an opening grant of \$125,000 to the Martin Luther King Multi-Purpose Center for the creation of a one-year "Saturday Academy." *The Fund for East Ramapo's Public School Students, established by Latham & Watkins* (the Fund) was established through the Rockland Community Foundation (RCF) using court-awarded attorneys' fees — US\$3.904 million — awarded to Latham & Watkins as a result of the successful voting rights lawsuit against the East Ramapo Central School District.

In 2017, Latham & Watkins joined the New York Civil Liberties Union to file suit on behalf of the Spring Valley NAACP and several minority voters in the District. Following a six-week federal bench trial, the court ruled in favor of our clients in May 2020, restoring the voting rights of the Black and Latinx communities in the District. The trial court's 77-page opinion found that the District's at-large method for school board elections denied Black and Latinx residents an equal opportunity to elect their preferred candidates under the federal Voting Rights Act. The opinion also instituted a new ward voting system, which ensures that Black and Latinx community members will be able to select school board representatives of their choosing for the first time in over a decade. The Second Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the trial court's decision in January 2021.

An advisory board comprised of individuals with a deep commitment to and knowledge of the East Ramapo public school community and its students will review proposals and make funding recommendations to a fund advisor, who will make recommendations to RCF. RCF will administer the fund and is responsible for approving all grants. Members of the advisory board will serve staggered terms of three years each. Latham & Watkins partner Andrew Clubok will serve as fund advisor and the advisory board includes:

Corey Calabrese

Associate, Latham & Watkins

Co-lead counsel, *NAACP Spring Valley Branch et al v. East Ramapo Central School District et al*

Olivia Castor

East Ramapo graduate

Witness, *NAACP Spring Valley Branch et al v. East Ramapo Central School District et al*

Student, Harvard Law School

Oscar Cohen

Co-chair, Education Committee, NAACP Spring Valley Chapter

Chevon Dos Reis

Plaintiff, *NAACP Spring Valley Branch et al v. East Ramapo Central School District et al*

Community Services Worker II (Spanish Speaking), Rockland County Department of Social Services

Jean Fields

Co-chair, Education Committee, NAACP Spring Valley Chapter

Brandon J. Holmes

Hudson Valley Regional Director, New York Civil Liberties Union

Son of East Ramapo public school teacher

Russell Mangas (Chair)

Associate, Latham & Watkins

Co-lead counsel, *NAACP Spring Valley Branch et al v. East Ramapo Central School District et al*

The Fund’s opening grant will be awarded to the Martin Luther King Multi-Purpose Center of Spring Valley, NY, a nonprofit community center providing after school and summer programs for young people attending East Ramapo Central public schools. The \$125,000 grant will establish a “Saturday Academy,” supporting the supplemental education program during its first year, and enabling the MLKMPC to provide English lessons for students and their families, tutoring, STEM programming, and related support including hot meals and health programming.

To be considered for funding, projects must aid in the education and enrichment of East Ramapo public school students. [Grant applications and additional information](#) will be available in the coming weeks.

Those involved in the case and the Fund offer the following commentary on today’s announcement:

Latham & Watkins: “We took this case pro bono to rectify a gross injustice. The court agreed, and today the East Ramapo School Board is democratically elected, following the tenets of the law. We are honored to further support the East Ramapo community by establishing The Fund for East Ramapo’s Public School Students,” said Latham & Watkins partner Andrew Clubok, who helped guide the associate-led team that litigated the case.

Rockland Community Foundation: “The cornerstone of the Rockland Community Foundation is to seek and stimulate permanent endowment building and to help ensure that today’s and tomorrow’s charitable needs in Rockland are met, including the needs of our children. The Fund for East Ramapo’s Public School Students will benefit generations to come, enabling them to shine ever-more brightly,” said Julie Sadowski, Executive Director.

Martin Luther King Multi-Purpose Center: “The Martin Luther King Multi-Purpose Center is honored to receive the Fund’s initial grant. We are grateful for the opportunity to offer East Ramapo public school students resources to help them attain the skills to achieve personal success and contribute to a stronger, sustainable society,” said Lisa Kaess, Co-President of the Center’s Board of Directors.

“Thank you for entrusting us to help make this long sought-after dream a reality,” added Nathan Mungin III, the Center’s Executive Director.

NAACP, Spring Valley Chapter: “At its heart, this was a case about access to education. Through the Fund, East Ramapo students will be able to access the futures they deserve, and that will benefit our entire Rockland County community,” said Oscar Cohen, Education Committee Co-chair, NAACP Spring Valley Chapter

NYCLU: “The needs of the public-school community in East Ramapo, who are overwhelmingly students and families of color, have been ignored and even undermined by district leaders for far too long. Our case rectified one crucial part of a deep and longstanding injustice. Now this fund will allow the community to invest in itself and in other long-term solutions. Black and Latinx students deserve a voice, and the NYCLU is proud to be in the fight for their future,” said Brandon Holmes, Hudson Valley Regional Director of the New York Civil Liberties Union.

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Latham & Watkins delivers innovative solutions to complex legal and business challenges around the world. From a global platform, our lawyers advise clients on market-shaping transactions, high-stakes litigation and trials, and sophisticated regulatory matters. Latham is one of the world’s largest providers of pro bono services, steadfastly supports initiatives designed to advance diversity within the firm and the legal profession, and is committed to exploring and promoting environmental sustainability.

Notes to Editors

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