

## Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services



### Education Law Advocacy Project Expansion

SMRLS is currently engaged in an expansion of the Education Law Advocacy Project (ELAP) by placing a greater emphasis on increasing client access outside the metropolitan area. Many schools and communities outside the metropolitan area, once relatively homogeneous, have experienced large increases in populations of immigrants, refugees, and students of color. These students often face barriers to an adequate education. The ELAP was created to address these barriers and to advocate for equal educational opportunity. ELAP's priorities include:

- **Addressing discrimination in schools;**
- **Securing equal educational opportunity for English Language Learners;**
- **Enforcing the rights of students facing suspension or expulsion;**
- **Obtaining appropriate services for children with disabilities; and**
- **Ensuring greater parental involvement in schools.**

Consistent with the SMRLS' Strategic Futures Plan, ELAP provides direct representation to income eligible families throughout the 33 county SMRLS service area on critical civil legal needs. ELAP also provides training and other assistance to parents and community leaders to empower them to advocate for more equitable educational outcomes.

Atlee Reilly, a former elementary school teacher and Equal Justice Works Fellow, will be coordinating the expansion effort. Please contact him with referrals, and requests for training or other assistance.

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