

## Sweetwater district employee who lost in court files for bankruptcy

April 23, 2011

Following a loss in court against the Sweetwater Union High School District and a trustee, district administrator Charlene Lemons-Shivers has filed for bankruptcy.

A 16-year district employee and Del Mar resident, Lemons-Shivers claimed \$562,800 in assets and \$873,300 in liabilities to 18 creditors, including attorney Dan Shinoff, who represented the district and trustee Bertha Lopez as defendants in the lawsuit.

Shinoff was seeking \$21,000 in attorney fees and some \$5,000 is owed to Lemon-Shivers' attorney, [Josh Gruenberg](#), according to the filing.

A judgment in the lawsuit was issued in January in favor of the district and Lopez. Lemons-Shivers filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy March 19.

While serving as director of alternate education, Lemons-Shivers filed the lawsuit July 8 alleging she suffered retaliation, civil harassment and emotional distress after reporting a subordinate was working unapproved overtime. Lemons-Shivers alleged Lopez was a friend of the employee and retaliated against her by visiting the alternative education department unannounced and asking pointed questions. Lopez said she was doing her job as a board member.

More than \$83,000 was spent by the district on the case, with \$40,000 spent on a consultant for an investigation and report on the matter. The report, by Puente Consulting, concluded there was no evidence Lopez acted inappropriately or that she knew the employee in question. It also said Lopez asked questions about the alternative education program months before the overtime issue arose.

According to the bankruptcy filing, Lemons-Shivers listed a leased 2008 Mercedes Benz CLK currently worth a reported \$21,255 as both an asset and a liability. The monthly payment is \$477. Her largest monthly expenditure is \$3,577 for the mortgage on a rental home in Chula Vista valued at \$600,000, followed by the cost of her son's private school.

Her expenditures reportedly exceed her income by \$2,000 a month. She claimed \$127,600 in annual earnings in her current post as director of education technology supervising seven people. Lemons-Shivers is set to meet with creditors on April 25. Both Lemons-Shivers and Shinoff could not be reached for comment.

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