

# KCSO: Ex-high school basketball coach arrested in child sexual predator sting

BY ISHANI DESAI  
idesai@bakersfield.com

A former McFarland High School basketball coach was arrested on suspicion of contacting a minor intending to perform lewd acts and other charges this past month — an offense similar to another for which he had previously served time, according to the Kern County Sheriff's Office.

Fernando Pruneda was arrested Nov. 13 during a “decoy operation” to apprehend “child sexual predators,” said KCSO spokeswoman Danielle Kernkamp in an email.

The Kern County District Attorney's Office is reviewing the KCSO investigation and it is under review for charges before Pruneda's Dec. 6 hearing, As-

sistant District Attorney Joseph Kinzel said in an email.

Pruneda also pleaded guilty Nov. 19 to violating his post-release community supervision, according to Kern County Superior Court records.

“It appears Mr. Pruneda has not learned his lesson,” said Matt Clark, a partner with Chain, Cohn, Stiles, in a news release.

The law firm filed a civil complaint in March 2019 against McFarland Unified School District, claiming the school should have known about Pruneda's actions and acted on them.

The McFarland Unified School District hasn't “suffered any repercussion whatsoever,” Clark said Wednesday to The Californian. “You don't want it to happen to another kid.”

The law firm is seeking an unspecified amount of damages. Clark said no amount of money would satisfy a parent when their child received salacious text messages from a teacher.

Pruneda was first arrested for a 2018 incident in which he promised a 15-year-old boy a position on the varsity basketball team in exchange for sexual favors, according to previous reporting by The Californian.

The former basketball coach shared a bed with a student during a basketball tournament and inappropriately massaged him, according to KCSO reports filed in court. He pleaded no contest to contacting a minor for sex and was sentenced to serve two years in 2020 at Wasco State Prison.