

## CHRISTINA H. PEER



**Christina H. Peer** is a partner who focuses her practice on

education law. She provides counsel to boards of education on numerous matters including student discipline, employee grievances, employee evaluation and discipline issues, the First Amendment, public records requests including Sunshine Laws, records retention policies, social media issues, residency and custody disputes, and the drafting and implementation of board policies.

Christina's practice includes a significant focus on state and federal laws relating to the education of students with disabilities, and she routinely provides training for teachers and administrators on these issues. Her representation in this area includes attendance at Evaluation Team Report (ETR) and Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) meetings, assisting districts with child find and evaluation issues, providing counsel regarding programming for students with disabilities, and reviewing draft documents for legal compliance. Additionally, Christina represents school districts before the Ohio Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights in matters involving students with disabilities. Christina represents school districts in due process proceedings under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, from initial administrative hearings through litigation in federal court.

Christina also represents school districts in a variety of labor and employment matters. These matters include employee discipline, grievance proceedings and arbitration. Christina defends employment discrimination claims brought under Title VII, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act, and other claims arising from terminations. Along with representing employers in federal and state courts, Christina defends employers against complaints of discrimination filed with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the Ohio Civil Rights Commission (OCRC). She regularly provides training to employers regarding compliance with various discrimination laws.

Christina is a former adjunct professor at Case Western Reserve University School of Law, where she taught a course on disability laws.

## **REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS**

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION LAW**

- Represents school districts with respect to the development of legally defensible IEPs and ETRs and all aspects of IDEA compliance
- Attends IEP and ETR meetings on behalf of school districts to provide legal support to teams in contentious situations
- Resolves due process complaints in mediation in a cost-effective and expedient manner
- Represents school districts in all phases of IDEA due process hearings – from the administrative hearing to the U.S. Supreme Court – in matters involving requests for private placement, allegations of denial of Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), and student discipline issues
- Represents school districts in class action complaint proceedings before the Ohio Department of Education’s Office for Exceptional Children
- Represents school districts in cases involving the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights, including issues of disability discrimination, race discrimination, harassment, and bullying
- Assists school districts with development of policies/procedures for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Assists school districts with the development of procedures for independent educational evaluations
- Represents school districts in proceedings before the EEOC and OCRC with respect to claims of race, sex, age, gender and disability discrimination
- Represents clients in federal court involving claims of race, sex, age, gender, and disability discrimination
- Represents school districts in teacher termination and discipline proceedings
- Represents school districts in proceedings regarding discipline and termination of classified employees Counsels clients regarding compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), Age Discrimination of Employment Act of 1967 (ADEA) and other employment laws including those related to student issues
- Represents school districts in student discipline proceedings before boards of education, appointed designees and in appeals to court
- Represents school districts in federal court litigation involving alleged violations of constitutional rights and Section 1983 (e.g., bullying, harassment, etc.)
- Represents school districts in special education discipline situations – including due process hearings involving student discipline issues
- Counsels school districts regarding residency and custody disputes – including matters before the Superintendent of Public Instruction

- Assists school districts with responses to requests for voluminous educational records
- Counsels school districts regarding obligations under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

#### **SUNSHINE LAW / PUBLIC RECORDS**

- Counsels school districts faced with voluminous public record requests and responds on behalf of clients
- Counsels school districts on various aspects of compliance with Ohio's Open Meetings Act
- Counsels school districts on compliance with Ohio's Public Records Act, including the impact of new technologies on public records
- Assists clients with development of record retention schedule in compliance with requirements of the
- Ohio Attorney General and Ohio Historical Society

#### **GENERAL COUNSEL SERVICES**

- Assists school districts with policy review and development
- Reviews contracts on behalf of school districts and negotiates vendor contracts on behalf of school districts
- Represents school districts in mediations involving contractual claims
- Assists school districts with investigations by various agencies including the Ohio Auditor's Office, Disability Rights Ohio and U.S. Department of Justice

#### **PRESENTATIONS**

Christina routinely presents to board members, school administrators and staff via a variety of associations, organizations, school districts and educational service centers. Topics include:

- How to Manage Difficult Special Education Cases
- Real World Application of Endrew F: Goal Writing, Data Collection, and Progress Monitoring
- Student Discipline for Off-Campus Speech
- Staff Use of Technology: Common Pitfalls
- Transgender Students: Common Issues and New Guidance
- Achieving Procedural Perfection – Easier Said than Done!
- Mastering the Skill of Preparing a Procedurally Compliant PR-01
- The Process of Due Process
- The Perils and Pitfalls of Social Media
- Student Discipline Under the IDEA and Section 504
- Residency and Custody Legal Update
- Education Reform Provisions of HB 153
- Emerging Issues in Special Education Law and Compliance
- Serving Emotionally Disabled Students in the Least Restrictive Environment
- What Building Administrators Need to Know About Special Education Documenting
- Student Progress Under the IDEA
- Writing Legally Defensible IEPs

- Surviving Due Process
- Student Privacy Issues and FERPA Compliance
- Student Records, Evaluations and Avoiding Procedural Errors
- Prime Time Title IX: The Tough Issues
- Top Five Special Education Legal Blunders and How to Avoid Them
- Highly Qualified Teachers – Special Attention for Special Education Legal Update for Paraprofessionals Working in School Districts
- Student Attendance – What Schools Need to Know
- Changes to Title IX Regulations

#### **ASSOCIATIONS**

- Member, Ohio State Bar Association
- Member, Cleveland Bar Association
- Member, National School Board Association, Council of School Attorneys
- Member and Former Chair of the Executive Committee, Ohio Council of School Board Attorneys

#### **Contact Information**

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