



## Shawn Olson Brown

she/her/hers

Partner

Oakland

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### What can I solve for you?

Drawing on my extensive experience in education law and a deep knowledge of the regulatory arena in this dynamic area, I can address virtually any issue that arises in special education, charter school and student matters. I also conduct training sessions and spearhead the firm's popular, twice-yearly Special Education Symposium.

### What's it like to work with me?

My clients often bring me questions and matters that fall within gray areas. In those instances, I avoid being prescriptive and giving yes-or-no answers. Instead, I bring them along on my thought process by helping them understand the intricacies of the issues and involving them in the problem solving. My listening skills, approachable style and ability to connect on a personal level strengthen our working relationships and produce the best possible resolutions.

## Overview

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Shawn Olson Brown guides public agencies in special education, charter school and student matters. In addition to conducting discrimination investigations, she represents clients in Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) meetings, in litigation and in due process hearings before various governmental organizations. Focusing her practice on large, urban Bay Area school districts, Shawn considers herself an enthusiastic advocate for the best possible administration of public education.

As a well-respected advisor, Shawn keeps her eye on the big picture at all times and recognizes how issues interconnect and with other aspects of education law. She draws on more than two decades of experience in this legal arena to direct clients in a range of topics, from uniform complaints to expulsions to due process issues. Emphasizing problem prevention and mitigation, Shawn strives to obtain practical early resolutions. If matters start to head off track, she quickly gets them back in alignment.

With excellent writing skills and intricate knowledge of special education and Section 504 implementation across all public education settings, including in charter and non-traditional school settings, Shawn authors education law articles and is a popular and in-demand presenter at conferences and seminars. She also designs and delivers training on these topics to school leaders throughout Northern California and co-chairs the firm's Special Education Symposium (SES), which instructs and informs approximately 1,000 educators twice per year.

Shawn's rich background greatly enriches her current work. Previously, she practiced at two other education law firms. In addition, she taught the law module for the University of Washington's Danforth Educational Leadership Program, which provides training for school administrators. With a master's degree in educational leadership and policy studies and a bachelor's degree in cultural anthropology, Shawn has conducted extensive research on the inclusion of students with disabilities in technology-based learning and testing.

Throughout her academic and professional career, Shawn has demonstrated a commitment to public service and education. As a graduate student, she was a research assistant with Project PRAISE and the Center for Educational Renewal. Shawn was also a bargaining team member with the Graduate Student Employee Action Coalition, a legal intern with the Northwest Justice Project, and research analyst with the Washington State Commission on Student Learning.

## After School

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I'm the mother of two young adult kids who both attended California public schools. In my free time I love hiking, traveling, gardening and other outdoor activities.

## Education

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- University of Washington (J.D.)
- University of Washington (M.A., Education)
- University of California, Berkeley (B.A.)

## Admissions

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### Bar Admissions

- California
- Washington

## Related Services

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- Special Education
- Student Rights & Discipline
- Title IX

## Related Clients

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- Independent & Private Schools
- Public Education K-12

## Publications

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- Author, “A Statewide Review of the Use of Accommodations in Large Scale, High Stakes Assessments”
- Published in *Exceptional Children* and “Investigating American Sign Language as an Accommodation during Standards-Based Assessments”
- Published in *Assessment for Effective Intervention*

## Languages

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- Spanish