



Summer D. Dalessandro

she/her/hers

Partner

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What can I solve for you?

School district clients across California appreciate my extensive experience and legal acumen in all aspects of special education law and practices. They know I'll provide strategically sensible advice to get them through the challenges they face in educating diverse populations of students.

What's it like to work with me?

I view my job as helping school district administrators do their jobs at the highest level possible. They've committed their lives to education, and it's an honor to work with them. I first establish rapport with those I represent, partnering with them to understand the specific nuances of their educational community. Then, I study their organizations and circumstances to gain a comprehensive view of the big picture, including any holes that need to be filled. Together we fashion practical approaches and creative solutions that enable them to avoid or overcome problems and disputes.

Overview

Highly respected education law attorney Summer Dalessandro advises and defends Southern California public school districts and institutions in a variety of special education and student issues. Drawing on her substantial knowledge base, Summer guides clients in procedures such as administrative hearings, mediations, and litigation, including federal court appeals, as well as in governance and leadership matters.



A popular and in-demand public speaker, Summer frequently presents at education-related conferences and symposia, where she shares her insights on a broad spectrum of special education topics and on subjects including student discipline, board governance, investigations, the Brown Act, and public records requests. In addition to frequent District-level trainings, she's conducted presentations at a wide range of organizations, including the California School Boards Association (CSBA), Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), and the California Council of School Attorneys (CCSA).

With her passion, intelligence, and credibility, Summer adeptly advocates for clients while working to find common ground that prevents litigation and engenders solutions acceptable to both sides. She provides training and counsel at the school site and administrative levels to keep clients compliant with their legal obligations, mitigate risk, and stave off complaints and lawsuits. Whether she's writing an amicus brief, mediating a dispute, litigating a matter in the courtroom, or advising districts on the slew of student behavior-related problems, Summer relishes using her skills to help clients help the kids they serve.

As the daughter of a former teacher and veteran school board member, Summer brings the highest level of commitment to public education and the social contract. She firmly believes that children are at the core of her practice and is gratified to enable public school organizations to provide them with excellent educational opportunities.

Experience Highlights

- Lead counsel in Amicus Curiae Brief to 9th Circuit Court of Appeals on behalf of California School Boards Association's Education Legal Alliance regarding ramifications of procedural violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Successfully represented an elementary school district from IEP team meetings, to a hearing with the Office of Administrative Hearings, through a final decision from Federal District Court in a residential treatment case in which the student had been unilaterally placed out of state at a facility with potentially dangerous practices
- Lead counsel in Amicus Curiae Brief to 9th Circuit Court of Appeals on behalf of California School Boards Association's Education Legal Alliance regarding issues related to responsibility of school districts for residential treatment of students in foster care
- Represented a school district where the alleged effects of COVID shutdowns were minimized at hearing due to District re-opening
- Regularly represent school districts in sizes ranging from single schoolhouse to single-District SELPAs
- Successful representation on a parent-filed OCR investigation that took almost two years to resolve



After School

As a San Diego native, I have always loved walking on the beach. Although I have lived in New York City and the San Francisco Bay Area, San Diego is home. My husband and I have three young children who keep us very busy. We're all into soccer, and can be found cheering on the San Diego Wave when they are in town. Like my father, I've always loved to work with my hands. Whether I'm baking, making art with my kids, or designing and creating something personalized, I find it very enjoyable and relaxing to get lost in the creative task in front of me.

Education

- University of San Diego School of Law (J.D.)
- Oxford University (Summer Study Abroad)
- Comparative Constitutional Law
- Cornell University (B.A.)

Admissions

Bar Admissions

- California
- Minnesota

Court Admissions

- Supreme Court of California
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit
- U.S. District Court, Central District, California
- U.S. District Court, Northern District, California
- U.S. District Court, Southern District, California

Related Services

- Special Education
- Student Rights & Discipline



Related Clients

- Public Education K-12

Presentations

- Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), presenter
- California Association of School Business Officials (CASBO), presenter
- California Council of School Attorneys (CCSA), presenter