

## CHRISTOPHER J. CONRAD

CO-CHAIR, SPECIAL EDUCATION LAW PRACTICE GROUP  
SHAREHOLDER

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### AREAS OF PRACTICE

School Leaders' Liability  
Employment Law  
Public Entity & Civil Rights  
Litigation  
Real Estate E&O Liability  
Insurance Agents & Brokers  
Liability  
Non-Profit D&O  
Accountants' Professional Liability  
Miscellaneous Professional  
Liability

### CONTACT INFO

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**[CJConrad@mdwcg.com](mailto:CJConrad@mdwcg.com)**

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Camp Hill, PA 17011

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## **ADMISSIONS**

New Jersey

2001

U.S. District Court District  
of New Jersey

2001

Pennsylvania

2006

U.S. District Court Middle  
District of Pennsylvania

2006

U.S. District Court Eastern  
District of Pennsylvania

2007

Maryland

2018

U.S. District Court District  
of Maryland

2018

U.S. District Court  
Western District of  
Pennsylvania

2018

U.S. Court of Appeals 3rd  
Circuit

2021

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## **EDUCATION**

Penn State Dickinson Law  
(J.D., 2001)

Pennsylvania State  
University (B.A., 1998)

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## **HONORS & AWARDS**

AV® Preeminent™ by  
Martindale-Hubbell®

Susquehanna Valley  
Select Lawyers™  
2014

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## ASSOCIATIONS & MEMBERSHIPS

Cumberland County Bar Association, Member, Fee Dispute Committee

Knights of Columbus Council 13100 and Saint Martin's Assembly 2708

Middle District of Pennsylvania Chapter of the Federal Bar Association

Pennsylvania Bar Association

Pennsylvania Bar Association, Legal Services for Exceptional Children Committee

Professional Liability Defense Federation, Vice Chair, Municipal, School Leaders and Miscellaneous Liability Committee

Saint Thomas More Society

Certified Mediator, U.S. District Court, Middle District of Pennsylvania

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## YEAR JOINED

2006

## OVERVIEW

Chris is a member of the firm's Professional Liability Department, and he devotes a significant portion of his practice to the representation and defense of school districts, intermediate units, career and technology centers and other academic institutions in all manner of employment, civil rights and special education litigation. As a member of the Professional Liability Defense Federation, Chris currently serves as Vice Chair of the Municipal, School Leaders and Miscellaneous Liability Committee.

Chris is Co-Chair of the firm's Special Education Law Practice Group, and his special education practice focuses on counseling clients and defending due process litigation involving a wide range of issues including claims of child find violations, denial of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), manifestation determinations and student discipline, appropriate educational programming and placement, and parents seeking private school placement at public expense. Chris has presented on a number of special education topics for school districts as well as for PBI's Exceptional Children Conference, Lehigh University's Special Education Law Conference and the National Business Institute.

Chris also represents public and private employers and their directors, officers, management and employees, in a variety of employment practices litigation under federal and state law, including defending claims of harassment, discrimination and retaliation, as well as whistleblower claims.

Additionally, Chris represents and defends licensed and certified professionals, including real estate agents and brokers, real estate appraisers, insurance agents and brokers, home inspectors, architects, engineers, surveyors, attorneys and accountants in E&O and related matters throughout Pennsylvania and Maryland.

Chris is a graduate of The Pennsylvania State University and The Pennsylvania State University Dickinson School of Law. During law school, Chris clerked for the Hon. Robert J. Woodside in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania. Chris also served as judicial law clerk for the Hon. Ronald B. Graves in the Civil Division of the Superior Court of New Jersey.

Chris is a certified mediator, and he works as a *pro bono* mediator for the Middle District of Pennsylvania mediation program and the Cumberland County Bar Association Fee Dispute Committee. For many years, Chris served as an adjunct instructor at the Penn State Dickinson School of Law for its Problem Solving I/ Law Practice I - Critical Skills course, and he assisted Dickinson's National Mock Trial Team as both a judge and sparring attorney. Chris also devotes a portion of his time as a volunteer for the Wills for Heroes Program. Additionally, Chris is a Member of the Knights of Columbus Council 13100 and Saint Martin's Assembly 2708.

# THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

## **The Office for Dispute Resolution’s Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2024 Details Due Process Filings, Bureau of Special Education Complaints**

**School Leaders' Liability**

**March 5, 2026**

In late November 2025, the Office for Dispute Resolution (ODR) released its annual report for fiscal year 2024 (July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025). In the report, the ODR provided detailed inform

## **When Is a Symbol of Hate Not a Material Defect in Property?**

**Harrisburg**

**Real Estate E&O Liability**

**February 1, 2026**

Daniel and Lynn Rae Wentworth purchased a home in Beaver County, Pennsylvania from Juergen Steinmetz.

## **Legal Update for Special Education Law - Case Law Update**

**Harrisburg**

**School Leaders' Liability**

**January 1, 2026**

Court Upholds Hearing Officer’s Decision and Grants Full Attorneys’ Fees After School Misses IDEA Appeal Deadline A.L.L., A.L. v. Laboratory Charter School, 2025 WL 3269941 (E.D. Pa. Nov. 24, 2025)

## **Legal Update for Special Education Law - Updates from the U.S. Department of Education**

**Harrisburg**

**School Leaders' Liability**

**December 1, 2025**

The Dismantling of the U.S. Department of Education Continues

## **Legal Update for Special Education Law - Case Law**

# **Update**

## **Harrisburg**

### **School Leaders' Liability**

**October 1, 2025**

Federal Court Remands IDEA Case for Reconsideration of Compensatory Education *Mobley v. Laboratory Charter School*, 2025 WL 2621303 (E.D. Pa. Sept. 11, 2025) Legal Update for Special Education Law – October 2025 is prepared by Marshall Dennehey to provide information on recent legal developments of interest

## **CLASSES/SEMINARS TAUGHT**

*Civil Rights Litigation, The Courts and the Community: An Educational Series for the Public*, April 1, 2026

*Left Behind? Today's U.S. Department of Education and the Potential Impact on Special Education and Disability Services*, PBI's Exceptional Children Conference. October 24, 2025

*Hot Topics in Employment Law*, PBA Law Firm Administrators Conference, April 30, 2025

*From Complaint to Appeal And Beyond: Litigating a Special Education Due Process Case*, PBI Exceptional Children Conference, October 18, 2024.

*UNCivil Discourse: The 1st Amendment and Regulating Speech at Public School Board Meetings*, Professional Liability Defense Federation (PLDF) 2024 Annual Meeting, September 26, 2024

*Extended School Year - It's Not Summer School*, PBI Exceptional Children Conference, October 13, 2023

*Special Education Litigation: Best Practices for Avoiding Liability, and Strategies for a Successful Defense*, Professional Liability Defense Federation Annual Meeting, September 2022

*Why Schools Need to Be Thinking About Title IX: Effectively Navigating the Evolving Legal Issues Surrounding Gender Identity*, Professional Liability Defense Federation Annual Meeting, October 2021

*Federal Law and the Art of Email Maintenance: When Must Emails Be Produced Under IDEA and FERPA*, PBI Exceptional Children Conference, October 2019

*Navigating the Bermuda Triangle: The Intersection of Workers' Compensation, the FMLA and the ADA*, County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania, March 2019

*The Risks of Failing to Report School Leaders Liability Claims*, Pennsylvania Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, October 2017

*The Thin Blue Line in School*, Lehigh University Special Education Law

Conference, May 2017

*Dyslexia: Much More Than What We Thought*, Lehigh University Special Education Law Conference, May 2016

*Advanced Functional Behavior Assessments and Behavior Support Plans*, PBI Exceptional Children Conference, October 2015

*Successfully Handling Disciplinary Actions for Special Needs Students*, National Business Institute, December 2014

*Best Practices for Technology and Social Media in the Workplace*, Estate Planning Council of Central Pennsylvania, Inc., February 2014

*Insurance Agents and Brokers Best Claims Practices in Claims Administration and Underwriting*, Liberty Mutual Insurance, December 2013

*Avoiding Liability in Special Education*, Central Dauphin School District, August 2013

*PBA Malpractice Avoidance Program*, Perry County Bar Association, April 2013

*Avoiding Legal Malpractice*, PBA Malpractice Avoidance Program, Adams County Bar Association, April 2012

*Avoiding Liability as Sellers' Agents in Residential Real Estate Transactions, Particularly with Regard to the Disclosure of Material Defects in the Property*, Educational Development School of Real Estate, March 2012

*Malpractice Avoidance Program*, PBA Malpractice Avoidance Program, Mifflin and Juniata County Bar Associations, October 2011

*PBA Malpractice Avoidance Program*, Dauphin County Bar Association, August 2011

*Avoiding Liability in Special Education*, Pottsville Area School District, August 2011

*Avoiding Liability in Special Education*, Palmyra Area School District, August 2010

## **PUBLISHED WORKS**

"Let's Give a Cheer for Free Speech: U.S. Supreme Court Holds School District Cannot Discipline Cheerleader for Off-Campus Snapchat Posts," *Professional Liability Defense Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 2021

"Bullies In the Schoolyard and Beyond: Avoiding and Defending Federal Bullying Claims Against Schools and School Leaders," *Professional Liability Defense Quarterly*, Vol. 13, Issue 1, 2021

"Educating Pa.'s Special Needs Students During the COVID-19 Pandemic," *The Legal Intelligencer*, May, 2020

"This Is Exhausting! Parents of Special Needs Children Who Allege Educational Harm Must Exhaust Administrative Remedies Under the IDEA Before Filing Lawsuit," *Lorman*, August 2017

"This Is Exhausting! Parents of Special Needs Children Who Allege Educational Harm Must Exhaust Administrative Remedies Under the IDEA Before Filing Lawsuit," *Defense Digest*, Vol. 23, No. 1, March 2017

"The IDEA Statute of Limitations (Finally!) Explained," *Defense Digest*, Vol. 21, No. 4, December 2015

"Does At-Will Employment Still Exist in Pennsylvania?," *The Legal Intelligencer*, Labor & Employment Supplement, June 24, 2014

"State Courts May Exercise Jurisdiction in Legal Malpractice Actions Arising Out of Patent Litigation," *Defense Digest*, Vol. 19, No. 2, June 2013

"The Third Circuit Holds That Private Employers Are Not Prohibited By Bankruptcy Code From Denying Employment To Individuals Who Previously Filed For Bankruptcy," *Defense Digest*, Vol. 17, No. 2, June, 2011

"Forum The Bell Tolls: Plaintiffs Lose Challenge To Validity Of Forum Selection Clause In Their Auto Insurance Policy," *Defense Digest*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 2010

"Ninth Circuit Holds Private Tuition Is Reimbursable Under IDEA Even Though Student Never Received Special Education From School District," *Defense Digest*, Vol. 14, No. 4, December, 2008

"Remedies for Disabled Students Curtailed," *New Jersey Law Journal*, Vol.

CXCI, No. 2, Jan. 14, 2008

"School's Out: The Third Circuit Precludes Use of 42 U.S.C. 1983 to Remedy Violations of IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act," *Defense Digest*, Vol. 13, No. 3, September, 2007

"Pennsylvania Superior Court Limits Duty Of Insurance Brokers," *Defense Digest*, Vol. 12, No. 4, December, 2006

## RESULTS

### Summary Judgment Obtained for a Homeowners' Association

#### **Non-Profit D&O**

**June 19, 2025**

We secured summary judgment for a homeowners' association. The plaintiff owned an apartment in a planned community and sought to drill a hole through the exterior wall of the building to vent an HVAC unit. The HOA denied his request, and the plaintiff asserted claims of negligence and breach of the duty of good faith and fair dealings, alleging that the HOA treated him unfairly by denying his request.

### Secured Dismissal of a Suit Against a Dauphin County School District

#### **School Leaders' Liability**

**September 4, 2024**

We achieved dismissal of a suit against a school district by way of preliminary objections. The Dauphin County case involved allegations that the district deprived the plaintiffs of certain educational rights, premised on procedural due process violations, negligence and subornation of perjury. Preliminary objections were filed to the plaintiffs' original complaint on both procedural and substantive grounds. Following the filing of an amended complaint and additional preliminary objections on similar grounds, argument was held.

### Successfully Defended a School District in a Special Education Case

#### **School Leaders' Liability**

**March 12, 2024**

We defended a school district in a special education matter involving a high school student identified with a specific learning disability and ADHD. The student sought out a peer during the school day, went into the peer's classroom and physically attacked her, punching and kicking her several times. After the incident, the student's Individualized

Education Program team determined the conduct was not a manifestation of the student's disabilities. The student and her parent disagreed with this determination and requested an expedited due process hearing.

## Motion to Dismiss Granted in Hazing Lawsuit Filed Against a Pennsylvania School District

### **School Leaders' Liability**

**October 3, 2023**

We prevailed on a motion to dismiss a hazing lawsuit filed against a school district. The plaintiff, who was a member of his high school football team, alleged he was subject to hazing and physical abuse by several other members of the team while attending a dinner at the home of one of his teammates. The plaintiff claimed that the school district had been aware of the hazing, but failed to prevent it. He asserted claims against the school under Title IX for emotional distress damages and punitive damages.

## Summary Judgment Secured in Fourth Amendment Civil Rights Case

### **School Leaders' Liability**

**September 14, 2023**

We secured summary judgment in a Fourth Amendment civil rights claim involving an unlawful search and seizure. The plaintiff, a former social worker employed by a school district, alleged that the assistant superintendent and Right to Know Law officer conducted an illegal search of her work space, who then produced these records to the plaintiff's estranged husband, with whom she was in the midst of a contentious divorce.

## **SIGNIFICANT REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS**

*Godfrey v. Southern York County School District*, 2019 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 96736 (M.D. Pa. 2019) (summary judgment in favor of school district dismissing ADEA age discrimination and retaliation claims by former teacher)

Defense verdict following jury trial representing insurance agency and its owner in case involving claims of professional negligence.

*K.E. v. Lincoln Intermediate Unit*, 2017 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 163489 (M.D. Pa. 2017) (summary judgment dismissing claims against intermediate unit by former student alleging Title IX and 1983 civil rights violations)

*Rohrbaugh v. Lincoln Intermediate Unit*, 255 F. Supp. 3d 589 (M.D. Pa. 2017) (dismissal of claims against intermediate unit by student under 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973 for failure to exhaust administrative remedies)

*Judge v. Shikellamy School District*, 2017 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 65694 (M.D. Pa. 2017) (summary judgment dismissing claims by former principal alleging violation of Procedural Due Process rights, breach of employment contract and constructive discharge).

Defense award at arbitration in declaratory judgment action brought against condominium association.

*A.V. v. Capital Area Intermediate Unit*, ODR File No. 18090-1617 (successful defense of intermediate unit in special education due process hearing)

*Hollinghead v. York City Sewer Authority*, 2014 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 43202 (M.D. Pa. 2014) (Summary judgment dismissing Title VII, PHRA and 1983 claims by a City employees alleging race discrimination and retaliation).

*Schuback v. Law Office of Phillip S. VanEmbden*, 2013 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 18379 (M.D. Pa. 2013) (Judgment on the pleadings in favor of attorneys sued for alleged violations of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act).

*Thomas v. Thomas*, 2012 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 83320 (M.D. Pa. 2012) (Dismissal of 14th Amendment claims against an attorney for alleged abuse of process and wrongful use of civil proceedings).

*Munir v. Pottsville Area School District*, 2012 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 82966 (M.D.

Pa. 2012) (Summary judgment dismissing action by parent against school district under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Rehabilitation Act).

*Hocker v. CitiMortgage*, 2012 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 76867 (M.D. Pa. 2012) (Dismissal of claims against mortgage lender under the federal Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act by alleged victim of a housing fraud scam).

*Baltimore v. Harrisburg Parking Authority*, 2010 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 59508 (M.D. Pa. 2010) (Summary judgment dismissing action against parking authority by former employee who claimed she was terminated from her employment in violation of her 1st and 14th Amendment rights).

*Gregory v. Derry Township School District*, 2010 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 1875 (M.D. Pa. 2010) (Summary judgment dismissing claims against school district, administrators and school board members in action by former teacher who alleged she was terminated from her employment in violation of her federal civil rights).

*Walsh v. Dallastown Area School District*, 2009 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 71266 (M.D. Pa. 2008) (Summary judgment dismissing claims by parent and students against school district, administrators and staff members of claims brought under federal and state wiretap laws and 4th Amendment).

Defense award at arbitration in negligence action brought against insurance agency and owners of the agency.