

WILLIAM J. MCPARTLAND

CO-CHAIR, SPECIAL EDUCATION LAW PRACTICE GROUP
SHAREHOLDER



AREAS OF PRACTICE

School Leaders' Liability
Public Entity & Civil Rights Litigation
Employment Law
Automobile Liability
Property Litigation
Fraud/Special Investigation

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ADMISSIONS

New Jersey	
2004	
Pennsylvania	
2004	
U.S. District Court District of New Jersey	
2005	
U.S. District Court Eastern District of Pennsylvania	
2005	
New York	
2006	
U.S. District Court Western District of Pennsylvania	
2006	
U.S. District Court Middle District of Pennsylvania	
2010	
U.S. Court of Appeals 3rd Circuit	
2011	
U.S. District Court Northern District of New York	
2014	
U.S. District Court Western District of New York	
2014	
U.S. District Court Southern District of New York	
2016	

OVERVIEW

Will is a member of the Professional Liability Department and handles matters on behalf of both insured and self-insured clients. He concentrates his practice in areas involving special education due process, civil rights, employment matters and claims involving the Political Subdivision Tort Claims Act. Will represents both government and private employers in state and federal court in ADEA, ADA, Title VII, FMLA and PA Veterans Preference Act claims. He also handles general liability matters involving automobile accidents, premises liability claims and special investigations matters, which often involve claims of suspected arson and insurance fraud.

Prior to joining Marshall Dennehey, Will worked for defense firms in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. He also served as a law clerk to the Honorable Ralph L. DeLucia, Jr. in the Superior Court of New Jersey, Trial Division, in Passaic County.

Will earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Miami in environmental planning, an interdisciplinary degree with an emphasis on science and civil engineering. While at Miami, he was the starting fullback for the Hurricanes and received All Big East Football Academic Honors. He later attended the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, earning his *juris doctor* in 2004.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

98 Marshall Dennehey Attorneys Recognized in the 2026 Editions of The Best Lawyers in America® and the Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch® in America

August 20, 2025

Marshall Dennehey is proud to highlight the firm's 98 attorneys who have been recognized in the 2026 editions of The Best Lawyers in America® and the Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch® in America. Less than 6% of all practicing lawyers in the U.S.

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Legal Update for Special Education Law – Case Law Update

Pittsburgh
Harrisburg
School Leaders' Liability

July 1, 2025

U.S. Supreme Court Clarifies Standard for Disability Discrimination Claims in Education Under Section 504 and ADA Legal Update for Special Education Law – July 2025 is prepared by Marshall Dennehey to provide information on recent legal developments of interest to

Legal Update for Special Education Law – Updates from the U.S. Department of Education

Harrisburg
School Leaders' Liability

February 1, 2025

In Tennessee v. Cardona, 2025 WL 63795, a Kentucky federal judge issued an opinion vacating the new Title IX regulations. Legal Update for Special Education Law – February 2025 is prepared by Marshall Dennehey to provide information on recent legal developments of interest

Legal Update for Special Education Law – Updates from the U.S. Department of Education

Harrisburg
School Leaders' Liability

December 1, 2024

Update Regarding OSEP Guidance for Functional Behavioral Assessments Legal Update for Special Education Law – December 2024 is prepared by Marshall Dennehey to provide information on recent legal developments of interest

Educating Students During the Coronavirus Pandemic

School Leaders' Liability
March 30, 2020

This bulletin is in reply to recent questions we have received about educating students during the coronavirus epidemic.

EDUCATION

University of Pittsburgh School of Law (J.D., 2004)	
University of Miami (B.S., 2000)	

HONORS & AWARDS

The Best Lawyers in America®, Insurance Law	
2023-2026	

YEAR JOINED

2007

RESULTS

Dismissal Affirmed by the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania

Public Entity & Civil Rights Litigation

July 25, 2025

We successfully convinced the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania to affirm the Court of Common Pleas of Wayne County's grant of our preliminary objections and dismissal of the plaintiff's complaint in mandamus. In its complaint in mandamus to the Court of Common Pleas, the plaintiff argued that our client's letter denying its plan and application for the development of solar panels was insufficient under the Municipalities Planning Code, thus entitling it to a deemed approval of its plan.

Summary Judgment Obtained in Complicated Case Brought Against Two Pennsylvania School Districts

School Leaders' Liability

September 27, 2024

We obtained summary judgment on behalf of two school districts in a matter brought by various plaintiffs against the Career and Technology Center of Lackawanna County (CTC) and four of its sending school districts. The plaintiffs had asserted claims under Title IX, the 14th Amendment, and Section 8542(b)(9) of the Pennsylvania Political Subdivision Tort Claims Act based on their sexual abuse by an automotive technology instructor at CTC.

Summary Judgment Secured in First Amendment Retaliation Case

Public Entity & Civil Rights Litigation

January 31, 2024

We obtained summary judgment in a First Amendment retaliation claim where the plaintiff, an employee of the Borough, alleged that she was terminated by the president because of her affiliation with the minority of the supervisors. In granting summary judgment, the court found that the statements of one council member cannot constitute a policy of the council, unless she is delegated authority by the entire board. Summary judgment was entered in favor of the individual board member, as she did not have the authority to fire the plaintiff without approval from the majority of the board.

Unanimous Defense Verdict in Excessive Force Jury Trial

Public Entity & Civil Rights Litigation

September 13, 2023

We achieved a defense jury verdict in a 4th Amendment civil rights trial in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania. The plaintiff alleged that two officers of our Northeastern Pennsylvania Police Department client used excessive force to transfer him from the police station's processing room to a holding cell.

Federal Rehabilitation Act suit against a school district dismissed.

School Leaders' Liability

November 1, 2022

The plaintiffs filed a complaint stemming from the school district's alleged violation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Defense counsel prepared a F.R.C.P. 12(b)(6) motion to dismiss, arguing that the plaintiffs' pleadings were insufficient to show that the student was disabled under the Act, that the district did not discriminate against the student, and that an isolated incident or comment from one teacher does not impart liability in violation of Section 504. The motion was first evaluated by a U.S.

SIGNIFICANT REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS

Successfully defended a school district at a Special Education Due Process Hearing where plaintiffs claimed that the district failed to provide the student with a Free Appropriate Public Education pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act related to a request for assistive technology.

Successfully defended a school district in the first trial in Pennsylvania challenging a student drug testing policy under Article I, Section 8 of the Pennsylvania Constitution.

Obtained a defense verdict in a slip and fall case before the Court of Common Pleas of Lackawanna County brought by a tenant alleging she fell on ice caused by the paint used on the stairs as well as a leaking gutter.

Obtained a defense award for school district at Special Education Due Process Hearing regarding a disciplinary matter and the district's manifestation determination hearing.

Obtained dismissal of a claim against a school district alleging failure to protect a student from abuse by a third party.

Obtained dismissal of claims of trespass and negligence against a landowner related to the use of an easement which was adjacent to his property.

Obtained dismissal of a 14th Amendment state created danger claim against a school district arising out of a fight between two students.

Obtained dismissal of a plaintiff's challenge to a sale of land by a school district under the Donated and Dedicated Property Act and the Public Trust Doctrine.