



Education

Effective school leaders combine lessons learned with creative solutions. Hinshaw can help.

For generations, quality public and private schools have served as a launching pad for personal and professional achievement. Today, they also sit at the epicenter of many of the legal, social, economic, and cultural challenges facing communities across the country.

Hinshaw provides comprehensive counsel to higher education institutions, and K-12 school districts, school boards, and administrators on legal and regulatory compliance issues across the spectrum, from traditional labor and employment, business and governance matters, to rapidly emerging areas such as COVID-19-related policies, transgender student and faculty concerns, the use of medical cannabis, and data privacy protection and breach response.

While school districts share a common set of government-mandated requirements, they also have distinct goals, operate under varying circumstances and access to resources, and are responsible to students and parents from unique communities and cultures. Our guidance is tailored to meet the needs of our clients: Best practices are always applied when appropriate, but our solutions are never one-size-fits-all.

We take a cross-disciplinary approach to address the broad-ranging and often complex legal, compliance, business, and human resources issues facing school districts and universities. This enables us to spot potential concerns and develop proactive, preemptive solutions before such issues become crises. When necessary, we draw on the skills of a deep bench of highly qualified attorneys and litigators from across the firm to resolve disputes with thorough analysis in the most efficient manner possible.

Areas of Focus Include:

Student Rights and Disciplinary Matters

We provide guidance on Title IX compliance, bilingual and alternative education matters, curricular changes, desegregation and discrimination claims, abuse and neglect cases, and free speech and assembly issues.

Special Education

We have broad experience advising on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and related state laws. Our school law attorneys routinely represent clients in mediation, complaint and due process

Industry Area Contacts

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Related Services

Government

Labor & Employment



proceedings and assist with procedural compliance, student eligibility, Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and reasonable accommodation determinations, placements in least restrictive environments, parental cooperation and more.

Labor, Employment and Immigration

We represent school districts in matters involving personnel rules, policies, and employee and management handbooks; teacher contracts, certification and tenure issues; visas for non-citizen personnel; terminations, lay-offs, reductions in force and suspensions; wage, OSHA, employment discrimination, and harassment claims and investigations. We also advise clients on collective bargaining and negotiations, unfair labor practice claims pension, and health, welfare, and other employee benefits matters.

Digital Privacy

We help school districts ensure compliance with the rapidly growing list of privacy laws that apply to educational institutions, including state laws such as the Illinois Student Online Personal Protection Act and Biometric Information Privacy Act, and related federal data-privacy requirements.

Board Governance

We help school boards understand and fulfill their fiduciary duties involving meeting minutes and related documentation, Open Meetings Act compliance and parliamentary procedures; work with superintendents and other school leadership; develop and foster positive relationships with parent and teacher associations, and community groups; and oversee investigations and disputes.

School Business Matters

School districts operate under tight budgets and complex financial rules. We help clients negotiate effective contracts with vendors and other third parties, manage grant development and tax-anticipation warrant issues, handle public-bidding processes, respond to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, negotiate and close real estate acquisitions and sales, resolve disputes involving property tax and other assessments, and address other business and financial matters.

Dispute Resolution and Litigation

In addition to defending districts in complaints before federal and state equal opportunity and human rights agencies, we have represented clients in numerous trials and appeals in federal and state courts. We regularly conduct investigations into staff and student matters and counsel clients on appropriate reporting of findings and defending against allegations of improper or illegal conduct. We also advise on general and bond elections and election contests.

News

[Hinshaw Recognized as "Distinguished in Litigation" in BTI Consulting's Litigation Outlook 2024 Survey](#)
November 16, 2023

[Scott Seaman Discusses Insurance Coverage for Back-to-School Hazing Events](#)
October 3, 2023



Events

[Hinshaw's Laura Knittle and Vincent Rizzo to Present at the Illinois Association of School Personnel Administrators \(IASPA\) 2023 Annual Conference](#)

January 27, 2023

DoubleTree by Hilton Lisle-Naperville, Illinois

[Navigating the Stop W.O.K.E. and Don't Say Gay Acts](#)

Friday, October 28, 2022 | 4:00 p.m. EDT | 3 p.m. CDT |

Fort Lauderdale, Chicago, Virtual

[Hinshaw's Laura Knittle and John Anders to Present a Legal Workshop for the Northeastern Illinois Association of School Business Officials \(IASBO\)](#)

September 2, 2022

White Deer Run Golf Course, Vernon Hills, IL

[Hinshaw's Annmarie Giblin and Laura Knittle Discuss Cyber Insurance Protection at the 6th Annual EdTech Conference for Independent Schools](#)

June 23, 2022

Virtual Event

[The Gaysayers? Recent Anti-LGBTQ+ and Other Social Legislation](#)

Wednesday, May 11 | 11:00 a.m. PST | 1:00 p.m. CST | 2:00 p.m. EST

New York, Chicago, Virtual

[Hinshaw's Laura Knittle to Present at the Illinois Association of School Business Officials \(IASBO\) Annual Conference](#)

May 4, 2022

Renaissance Hotel & Convention Center, Schaumburg, Illinois

[Hinshaw's Aimee Delaney and Laura Knittle to Present a Legal Workshop for the Illinois Association of School Administrators \(IASA\)](#)

April 4, 2022

Virtual Event

[Cyber and Privacy Law for School Districts: An Overview of the Legal Issues and Risks](#)

February 17, 2022

Virtual

[Team of Hinshaw Attorneys to Present at the IASPA Fifteenth Annual Conference](#)

January 20-21, 2022

Double Tree by Hilton in Lisle, Illinois

[Laura Knittle and Vincent Rizzo to Present an Illinois ASA Workshop on Navigating the Open Meetings Act](#)

December 9, 2021

[Laura Knittle to Present at Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education Fall Conference](#)

October 21-22, 2021

[LGBTQ+ Youth and Bullying: Understanding Issues and Addressing Solutions](#)

Wednesday, October 13, 2021 | 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. Central

Webinar

Publications

[Two Executive Actions by Biden Administration Seek to Provide Relief to Immigrant Families and Job-Seeking Dreamers](#)

June 18, 2024



Insights for Employers