



Robbins Schwartz
One Team. Making Your Mission Ours.

School Administrators' Conference

October 9, 2024

Chicago

190 South LaSalle Street, Suite 2550
Chicago, IL 60603
p 312.332.7760
f 312.332.7768

Champaign

301 North Neil Street, Suite 400
Champaign, IL 61820
p 217.363.3040
f 217.356.3548

Collinsville

510 Regency Centre
Collinsville, IL 62234
p 618.343.3540
f 618.343.3546

Lisle

550 Warrenville Road, Suite 460
Lisle, IL 60532-4311
p 630.929.3639
f 630.783.3231

Rockford

2990 North Perryville Road, Suite 4144B
Rockford, IL 61107
p 815.390.7090



Robbins Schwartz
One Team. Making Your Mission Ours.

www.robbsins-schwartz.com

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Schedule at a Glance

8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.	REGISTRATION/BREAKFAST
8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	GENERAL SESSION
Grand Ballroom A/B	Walking A Thin Line: Employee & Student Speech Rights On and Off Campus <i>Presented by: Joseph J. Perkoski and Caroline A. Roselli</i>
10:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.	Break / Switch Rooms
	PLEASE SELECT ONE TOPIC TO ATTEND
10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.	Session 1
Grand Ballroom A	Responding to Employee Leave and Accommodation Requests in the Evolving Modern Workplace <i>Presented by: Kevin P. Noll and Holly E. Jacobs</i>
Grand Ballroom B	Anxiety and School Refusal: Collaboratively Constructing the Path Back to School <i>Presented by: Laura M. Sinars and Hannah M. May</i>
Cyprus Room, Floor 12	Understanding Construction Litigation and Planning for Success <i>Presented by: Matthew J. Gardner, Christopher R. Gorman, and Katie DiPiero</i>
11:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Break / Switch Rooms
11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Session 2
Grand Ballroom A	Employment Rules for Schools: 10 Legislative Updates for HR Professionals <i>Presented by: Catherine R. Locallo and Matthew M. Swift</i>
Cyprus Room, Floor 12	Mastering the Complex World of Public Bidding <i>Presented by: Kenneth M. Florey, Logan K. Sweeney, and Howard A. Metz</i>
Santorini Room, Floor 2	Lunch 1
12:30 p.m. – 12:45 p.m.	Break / Switch Rooms
12:45 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.	Session 3
Grand Ballroom B	Complex Parent Demands: Best Practices and Legal Pitfalls When Responding to Difficult Requests <i>Presented by: Zaria N. Udeh and Hayley A. Willian</i>
Santorini Room, Floor 2	Lunch 2
1:45 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Break / Switch Rooms
2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Session 4
Grand Ballroom A/B	Lessons Learned from Title IX Litigation <i>Presented by: Michelle L. Weber, Nikoleta Lamprinakos, and Aidan C. Falk</i>
Cyprus Room, Floor 12	Labor and Union Issues Affecting School Construction Projects (2:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.) <i>Presented by: Kenneth M. Florey and Howard A. Metz</i>
	Property Tax Disputes and Protecting Your Tax Base (2:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.) <i>Presented by: Brittany Flaherty Theis and Scott L. Ginsburg</i>

General Session | 8:30 a.m.

Walking A Thin Line: Employee & Student Speech Rights On and Off Campus

School administrators continue to navigate challenging First Amendment issues involving students and staff. Our general session will explore the range of thorny issues school administrators are experiencing and can expect to confront related to student and staff expression in classrooms, on school premises as well as on social media. With the political season upon us and significant global issues raging, we can expect ever growing challenges in walking the narrow line that is First Amendment adherence.

Presenters:

[Joseph J. Perkoski](#), Managing Partner

[Caroline A. Roselli](#), Partner

Session 1 | 10:15 a.m.

Please Select One Topic Per Session

Responding to Employee Leave and Accommodation Requests in the Evolving Modern Workplace

The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) obligates districts to provide eligible employees with unpaid leave of up to 12 weeks annually while the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) obligates schools to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities, unless doing so would cause an undue hardship. This presentation provides an overview a district's obligations under both the FMLA and the ADA, and analyzes recent trends with respect to leave entitlement and accommodations in the evolving modern workplace and how the two Acts can often overlap.

Presenters:

[Kevin P. Noll](#), Partner and [Holly E. Jacobs](#), Associate

Anxiety and School Refusal: Collaboratively Constructing the Path Back to School

School districts are increasingly faced with reports from parents that their student's anxiety is preventing them from attending school. We will review several cases where parents have challenged a school district's response to significant school refusal/school anxiety. In this review, we will identify strategies, interventions and plans that have worked and/or offered a FAPE to a student and those where the district's response was deemed inappropriate or insufficient resulting in orders for compensatory and/or private services or placements.

Presenters:

[Laura M. Sinars](#), Partner and [Hannah M. May](#), Associate

Understanding Construction Litigation and Planning for Success

Construction litigation is complex. Regardless of whether an architect's design or a contractor's means and methods are to blame, join Robbins Schwartz's construction lawyers as they provide an overview of construction litigation, from filing the complaint to reaching a favorable settlement or successful judgment--with limited expert fees and lower legal expense.

Presenters:

[Matthew J. Gardner](#), Partner, [Christopher R. Gorman](#), Partner, and [Katie DiPiero](#), Associate

Session 2 | 11:30 a.m.

Please Select One Topic Per Session

Employment Rules for Schools: 10 Legislative Updates for HR Professionals

We continue to see significant legislative changes focused on enhancing employee benefits and rights in the workplace. This session will provide attendees with an in-depth understanding of new or amended laws and regulatory guidance which will impact your workplace.

Presenters:

[Catherine R. Locallo](#), Partner and [Matthew M. Swift](#), Associate

Mastering the Complex World of Public Bidding

Public bidding can be complex, with numerous exceptions, steps, and challenges along the way. Our presentation is designed to help you understand the process and successfully navigate public bidding.

Presenters:

[Kenneth M. Florey](#), Partner, [Howard A. Metz](#), Partner, and [Logan K. Sweeney](#), Associate

Session 3 | 12:45 p.m.

Please Select One Topic Per Session

Complex Parent Demands: Best Practices and Legal Pitfalls When Responding to Difficult Requests

With increasingly unique and complex demands being made by parents/advocates as they relate to educational services, this presentation will explore what these general and special education demands look like, such as requests to record meetings and for specific prior written notice; (2) best practices for responding to such demands; and (3) how to ensure legal compliance when approaching these requests.

Presenters:

[Zaria N. Udeh](#), Partner and [Hayley A. Willian](#), Associate

Session 4 | 2:00 p.m.

Please Select One Topic Per Session

Lessons Learned from Title IX Litigation

Amidst the ever-changing landscape of Title IX, school districts are continuously working to adjust policies, procedures and practices to ensure their schools are in compliance with current laws and regulations. This presentation will examine recent Title IX cases, involving both employees and students, and provide participants with insight into how courts are evaluating schools' responses to sex discrimination claims. The presentation will also highlight best practices and tips for complying with Title IX.

Presenters:

[Michelle L. Weber](#), Partner, [Nikoleta Lamprinakos](#), Partner, and [Aidan C. Falk](#), Associate

Labor and Union Issues Affecting School Construction Projects (2:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.)

School construction projects often involve interactions with local trade unions at different stages of the work. From the initial contract award to potential work stoppages during construction, it is important for school administrators to understand how to handle these situations so as to minimize the impact on the project schedule. This presentation will include an overview of the Illinois Prevailing Wage Act, as well as address issues such as Responsible Bidder Ordinances, Project Labor Agreements, and setting up a proper reserve gate system to keep union picketing activity from bringing your project to a halt.

Presenters:

[Kenneth M. Florey](#), Partner and [Howard A. Metz](#), Partner

Property Tax Disputes and Protecting Your Tax Base (2:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.)

The presentation will explain how property tax appeals can significantly impact a school district's revenue, emphasizing the importance of intervening in these cases to protect financial interests. We will discuss the risks of lost revenue, especially from large commercial and industrial property appeals, and the impact on school funding. By intervening, districts can actively participate in the appeal process, ensuring their concerns are heard and mitigating the losses. The session will include a discussion on the long-term benefits of intervention for maintaining stable budgets and avoiding unexpected financial shortfalls.

Presenters:

[Brittany Flaherty Theis](#), Partner and [Scott L. Ginsburg](#), Partner

Biographies

JOSEPH J. PERKOSKI

MANAGING PARTNER, CHICAGO

312.332.7760

jperkoski@robbins-schwartz.com

Joseph J. Perkosi has built his legal career with a profound focus on representing educational institutions and public sector employers, particularly in board and executive leadership matters. Known for his experience in labor and employment issues, including collective bargaining, grievance arbitration, and contract interpretation, Joseph has become a trusted counselor for his clients.

Joseph finds immense satisfaction in counseling clients to help them achieve their goals and objectives. His strengths as an attorney lie in effective listening and engagement skills and his contributions extend beyond his legal practice with notable publications and presentations. These include labor negotiations and collective bargaining agreement administration.

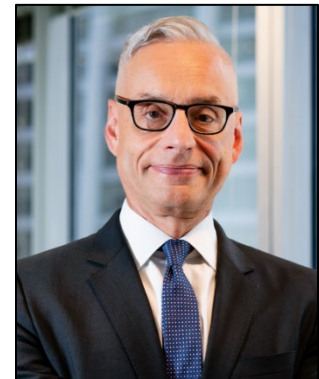
Joseph's excellence in the legal field is underscored by prestigious accolades, including being recognized as a Fellow of The College of Labor & Employment Lawyers and consistently listed in Illinois Super Lawyers from 2008 to 2020. Notably, he holds the title of an Illinois Leading Lawyer in Employment, Labor, and School Law.

Joseph's desire to provide guidance to people and entities facing legal challenges motivated him to become a lawyer. His choice to specialize in education law is rooted in his aspiration to assist educational entities in achieving their objectives.

Before becoming a lawyer, Joseph served as a Human Resources Administrator at The Ohio State University. This role significantly influenced his career trajectory, eventually leading him to become a labor and employment attorney with a specialization in serving educational entities.

Joseph's blue-collar upbringing in a community where education was seen as crucial to advancement profoundly influences his goals, outlook, and approach to the law. Being the first in his family to attend college, he has dedicated himself to education both as a student and as an attorney serving educational entities.

Apart from his legal pursuits, Joseph enjoys writing and outdoor activities. He has been an active supporter of the Chicago Rowing Foundation since 2021, showcasing his commitment to community involvement. A lesser-known fact



PRACTICE AREAS

Board Governance
Education
Employee Benefits
Labor & Employment
Litigation
Municipal
Student Rights

EDUCATION

J.D., The Ohio State
University, The Mortiz
College of Law

M.A., The Ohio State
University

B.A., *with honors*, The
Ohio State University

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

U.S. Court of Appeals for
the Seventh Circuit

U.S. District Court for the
Northern District of Illinois

U.S. District Court for the
Eastern District of
Wisconsin

U.S. District Court for the
Western District of
Wisconsin

about him is his love for poetry, adding a creative dimension to his multifaceted personality.

AWARDS

Fellow, The College of the Labor & Employment Lawyers
Illinois Super Lawyers, 2008-2020
Illinois Leading Lawyer, Employment, Labor and School Law

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Contributing author, "Bargaining Implications of Statutory Leave Rights for Public Sector Employees," *State and Local Government Bargaining & Employment Law Committee Midwinter Meeting*, American Bar Association (2024)

Contributing author, "Labor Issues in the Transactional Side of the Project," *Construction Law: Transactional Considerations*, IICLE (2017)

Contributing author, "Labor Relations: Contract Administration Including ULPs," *Illinois School Law: Personnel and Student Issues*, IICLE (2010, 2012, and 2015)

"Finding a New Way: Subcontracting Revisited," *UPDATE Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2011)

Contributing author, "Labor Issues in the Transactional Side of the Project," *Construction Law – Transaction Practice*, IICLE (2010)

RECENT PRESENTATIONS

The Nuts and Bolts of Employee Sexual Misconduct and Grooming Investigations, Large Unit District Association January 2024 Conference (January 2024)

Legal Update, Illinois Community College Chief Financial Officers Spring Conference (April 2022)

Legal Update, Illinois Community College Chief Financial Officers Spring Conference (April 2021)

Hot Legal Topics, Bargaining in a Post-Covid World, Illinois Community College Chief Financial Officers Spring Conference (April 2021)

Will it Count? Teacher Evaluations in a Hybrid and Virtual World, Large Unit District Association Virtual Fall Conference (October 2020)

Supreme Court of Illinois

Supreme Court of
Wisconsin

Superior Court for the
District of Columbia

ORGANIZATIONS

American Bar Association

Fellow, College of Labor
and Employment Lawyers

Council of School
Attorneys

Federal Bar Association

Illinois Association of
School Business Officials

Illinois Bar Association

National School Boards
Association

Wisconsin Bar Association



CAROLINE A. ROSELLI

PARTNER, CHICAGO

312.332.7760

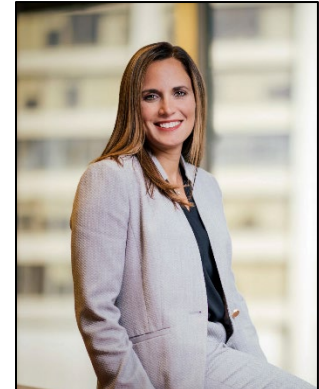
crocelli@robbins-schwartz.com

Caroline A. Roselli is a dedicated attorney specializing in education law, special education and student related issues. Her unwavering commitment is to ensure schools receive the support, advocacy and collaboration they require to deliver quality education to students throughout their programs.

In her practice, Caroline provides invaluable counsel to schools on a broad spectrum of student-related matters. This includes advising on Title IX, discrimination, free speech, student discipline, student records, and related policy development. Caroline's expertise also extends to representation of schools in responding to complaints filed with regulatory bodies such as the Illinois State Board of Education and the Office of Civil Rights.

One of the areas where Caroline excels is representing public school districts at various critical special education proceedings. These include Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings, due process hearings, and alternative dispute proceedings, such as mediations and resolution sessions. Her track record is notable for successfully defending school district decisions and prevailing at due process hearings, particularly on issues related to eligibility, residential placements, transition programming and denial of Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) claims.

Caroline's commitment to the field is further highlighted by her active involvement in the education community. She is a member of the Illinois Counsel for School Attorneys Executive Committee and has been a speaker at annual conferences for both the Illinois Association for School Boards and the Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education. She is also the author and co-author of multiple publications, contributing her expertise to the legal education of her peers and the broader community.



PRACTICE AREAS

Education
Special Education
Student Rights

EDUCATION

J.D., *cum laude*, Loyola
University Chicago School
of Law

B.A., University of Notre
Dame

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

Supreme Court of the
United States

U.S. District Court for the
Northern District of Illinois

Supreme Court of Illinois

ORGANIZATIONS

Chicago Bar Association

Illinois Bar Association

Illinois Council of School
Attorneys

National School Attorneys
Association

Beyond her legal practice, Caroline frequently conducts workshops and in-service programs on various education related topics. Her dedication to educating others within the field demonstrates her passion for promoting a comprehensive understanding of the legal issues facing education institutions.

AWARDS

Illinois Emerging Lawyer, School Law (2017-2018)

Illinois "Rising Star," Super Lawyers Magazine, Schools and Education Law (2012-2017)

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Co-Author, "Special Education," 2024 Edition School Law Personnel and Student Issues, *Illinois Institute of Continuing Legal Education*

RECENT PRESENTATIONS

Dyslexia: A Panel Discussion on the Legal Requirements and Practical Implications of Servicing Dyslexic Students, Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education 2022 Winter Conference (February 2022)

To Attend or Not to Attend: Chronic Absences in a Post-COVID World, Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education 2022 Fall Conference (October 2022)

Navigating the IEP Process when DCFS is Involved, Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education 2023 Winter Conference (February 2023)

Accommodating the High Achieving Student: Where to Draw the Line under 504, Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education 2023 Fall Conference (October 2023)

Transition Programming: Preparing Students with Disabilities for Life After High School, Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education 2024 Winter Conference (February 2024)



KEVIN P. NOLL

PARTNER, CHICAGO

312.332.7760

knoll@robbins-schwartz.com

Kevin P. Noll's practice focuses in the area of labor and employment law. Kevin counsels school districts, community colleges, libraries, park districts and municipalities with issues involving employee discipline, internal investigations, employee leaves of absences, and alleged discrimination and harassment claims. Kevin also defends clients in litigation and administrative charges in federal and state court, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Illinois Department of Human Rights, and the Illinois Department of Labor. In addition to his experience in labor and employment law, Kevin has trained school districts and community colleges pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972.

As an attorney, Kevin strives to cut through complexity to provide clients with practical answers and pragmatic solutions.

Beyond his legal work, Kevin's interests include golf and spending quality time with family and friends.

AWARDS

Illinois "Rising Star," by Super Lawyers Magazine

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Contributing author, "Employee Discrimination," *Illinois School Law*, IICLE (2021, 2024)

"OSHA Pauses Vaccination and Testing ETS Following Legal Challenges," *Employment and Labor Law Flashpoints*, IICLE (2021)

"NLRB Takes New Look at Charter Schools," *Chicago Daily Law Bulletin* (2019)

RECENT PRESENTATIONS

Benefit or Burden: Navigating Ever-Expanding Employee Leave Rules, Illinois Association of Park Districts Legal Symposium (November 2023)

Calculating Overtime: Am I Doing It Right? Illinois Association of School Boards Bookkeepers Conference (March 2023)



PRACTICE AREAS

Education
Labor & Employment
Litigation

EDUCATION

J.D., The University of
Illinois Chicago School of
Law

B.A., Indiana University

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

U.S. District Court for the
Northern District of Illinois

Supreme Court of Illinois

ORGANIZATIONS

Chicago Bar Association

Illinois State Bar
Association

Kane County Bar
Association

Managing Employee Leave Rights Under the FMLA, ADA, and Illinois Law,
IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference (January 2023)

Best Practices for Responding to Harassment and Discrimination Complaints,
IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference (January 2023)

Addressing Employee Mental Health Conditions, Illinois Association of Park
Districts Legal Symposium (November 2022)

Sexual Violence and Harassment on Campus, Illinois Community College Trustees
Association (June 2021)



HOLLY E. JACOBS

ASSOCIATE, CHICAGO

312.332.7760

[hjacobson@robbins-schwartz.com](mailto:hjacobs@robbins-schwartz.com)

Holly counsels employers on many aspects of labor and employment law, including employee discipline, internal investigations, federal and state employment discrimination matters, labor relations, and Title IX investigations and compliance. She represents both private and public sector employers and advises school districts, municipalities, and institutions of higher education.

Prior to joining Robbins Schwartz, Holly clerked at a private higher education firm, interned with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and Chicago Public Schools, and served as a judicial extern for the Honorable Judge Virginia M. Kendall of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. She received her Juris Doctor from Loyola University Chicago, where she also completed a master's degree in Cultural and Educational Policy Studies. Her master's thesis focused on legal reparations and decolonization efforts regarding Indigenous boarding schools in Canada and the United States. During law and graduate school, she served as the Editor-in-Chief of the Loyola International Law Review, and published articles at Loyola University Chicago and Columbia University. Prior to law school, Holly taught English as a Second Language in Nordhorn, Germany.

Holly is a member of the American Educational Research Association, which is a national research society dedicated to advancing knowledge about education and promoting the use of research to improve education and serve the public good. She was selected as a peer reviewer for research paper submissions to AERA's 2024 Annual Meeting.

AWARDS

American Educational Research Association - selected reviewer for submissions to AERA 2024 Annual Conference; Panels reviewed: De/Colonization and Transformative Curriculum Studies; Legal and Judicial Issues for Equity and Access; Decolonial, Postcolonial, and Anti-Colonial Studies in Education; Indigenous Peoples of the Americas; and Law and Education.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Contributing author, "Employee Discrimination," *Illinois School Law*, IICLE (2024)

Jacobs. H (2023). Decolonizing a Settler Colonial State: How Canada and the United States Have Approached Investigations into Indigenous Boarding and Residential Schools



PRACTICE AREAS

Labor & Employment

EDUCATION

J.D., *cum laude*, Loyola University Chicago

M.A., Loyola University Chicago

B.A., *magna cum laude*, University of Montana

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

Supreme Court of Illinois

ORGANIZATIONS

Member, American Educational Research Association

LAURA M. SINARS

PARTNER, CHICAGO

312.332.7760

lsinars@robbins-schwartz.com

Laura Sinars focuses on special education and students' rights law. She counsels and represents public school districts at IEP meetings, due process hearings and mediation. She also represents districts at student expulsion and residency hearings. Laura has defended district decisions regarding evaluations, services, and placement of special education students in due process hearings. She has successfully prevailed in hearings to defend against parents' unilateral private placements. In the area of student rights, Laura has assisted clients with routine student issues related to records, discipline, health and 504 questions. She has also assisted clients with building strong residency and discipline cases which proceed to hearing and has successfully defended districts' decisions in state and federal courts. Laura has represented districts before federal and state agencies including the Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission and the Office for Civil Rights.

AWARDS

Illinois Super Lawyers, 2005-2018

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Contributing author, "Special Education," *Illinois School Law*, IICLE (2005, 2010, 2012, 2015 and 2024)



PRACTICE AREAS

Education
Special Education
Student Rights

EDUCATION

J.D., University of Notre
Dame Law School

B.A., University of Notre
Dame

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

U.S. Court of Appeals for
the Seventh Circuit

U.S. District Court for the
Central District of Illinois

U.S. District Court for the
Northern District of Illinois

Supreme Court of Illinois

HANNAH M. MAY

ASSOCIATE, CHICAGO

312.332.7760

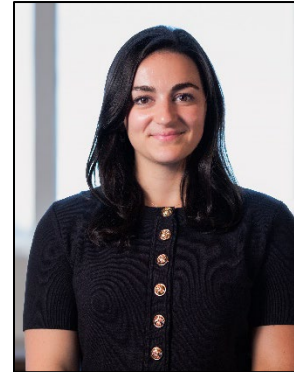
hmay@robbins-schwartz.com

Hannah M. May practices in the area of education law with a focus on special education and student rights. She counsels school districts regarding Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504, student discipline, Title IX, student records issues and policy development. She assists school districts in responding to complaints from the Office for Civil Rights, Office of the Attorney General and Illinois State Board of Education, and she represents school districts at IEP meetings, due process hearings, mediations, student discipline hearings and residency hearings.

While in law school at Loyola, Hannah was a Civitas ChildLaw Fellow with a concentration in education law. Hannah received her 711 license and represented students with disabilities in special education matters and served as a child representative in domestic relations and child protection proceedings. Additionally, Hannah was a senior editor on the Loyola University Chicago Law Journal. She also externed for the Honorable Anna Loftus of the Cook County Circuit Court, Chancery Division, and clerked for the Southern Poverty Law Center in the Children's Rights Practice Group in Miami, FL and the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights in Chicago, IL.

As a graduate of the Chicago Public Schools, Hannah has always been passionate about advancing equity in education and giving back to her educational community. Hannah's upbringing in a diverse Chicago community, coupled with her own experience as a student, has deeply influenced her perspective. She has great respect and appreciation for the dedication of school administrators, teachers, and staff in providing quality education to children in the community. Her unwavering commitment to equity in education is evident in her determination to create positive change both within and beyond the school setting. Her determination to effect change on a broad, community-wide level inspired her to become an attorney.

Outside of her legal career, Hannah values spending time with family and friends, staying active, and nurturing her well-being. She's an avid hiker and cyclist, finds serenity by Lake Michigan while walking her dog, and enjoys hosting home-cooked dinners for her loved ones. Furthermore, she's a certified Yoga Instructor at CorePower Yoga, reflecting her holistic approach to a balanced and fulfilled life.



PRACTICE AREAS

Education
Special Education
Student Rights

EDUCATION

J.D., Loyola University of
Chicago School of Law

B.A., University of
Michigan

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

U.S. District Court for the
Northern District of Illinois

Supreme Court of Illinois

ORGANIZATIONS

Chicago Bar Association

Illinois State Bar
Association

Illinois Council of School
Attorneys

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

"Buried Alive: Gay v. Baldwin and Unconstitutional Solitary Confinement for Prisoners with Mental Illness," Loyola University Chicago Law Journal Volume 52, Article 8 (2021)

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Transition Programming: Preparing Student with Disabilities for Life After High School, Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education (February 2024)

It's Not an Easy A...Developing Legally Sound Grading Practices for Students with Disabilities, Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education (October 2023)



MATTHEW J. GARDNER

PARTNER, CHICAGO

312.332.7760

mgardner@robbins-schwartz.com

Matthew J. Gardner, a distinguished partner at Robbins Schwartz, boasts a multifaceted legal career spanning various practice areas. With expertise in construction, commercial transactions, real estate, and public finance, Matthew has emerged as a trusted advisor to both private and public project owners.

Matthew's practice revolves around guiding clients through the intricacies of construction and real estate projects. From property acquisition to contract negotiation, bidding, project management, and litigation, his comprehensive approach ensures that his clients navigate each phase of their projects seamlessly. Matthew also offers representation to contractors, subcontractors, and material suppliers, addressing payment claims, lien rights preservation, and defending against defect claims.

In addition to his construction and real estate practice, Matthew extends his legal acumen to the realm of education law and data privacy. Representing school districts, colleges, and educational technology companies, he drafts and negotiates data privacy agreements, software license agreements, and service agreements. He has contributed significantly to evolving legal frameworks in education privacy matters and is renowned for his adeptness in addressing risks associated with data breaches or ransomware attacks.

Beyond his legal practice, Matthew is deeply involved in the legal community. He has served as the past Chair of the Chicago Bar Association Construction Law and Mechanics Lien Subcommittee and is an active member of various legal associations, including the Illinois State Bar Association and Chicago Bar Association Judicial Evaluation Committee. Matt also dedicates his time to pro bono services, reflecting his commitment to serving the community.

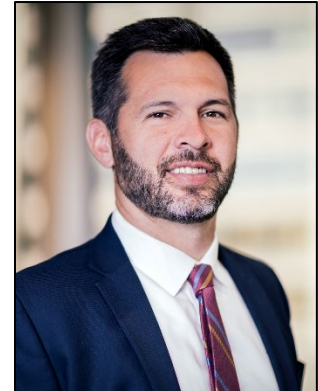
What sets Matthew apart is his genuine passion for collaborating with colleagues to find innovative solutions to clients' challenges. His dedication to excellence and unwavering commitment to his clients have established him as a leading figure in the legal community.

AWARDS

Illinois "Rising Star", by Super Lawyers Magazine, in the area of Construction Litigation (2021-2022)

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Contributing author, "Environmental Issues" *Construction Law: Transactional Considerations*, IICLE (2021)



PRACTICE AREAS

Commercial Transactions
Construction
Public Finance & Taxation
Real Estate Development

EDUCATION

J.D., University of
Wisconsin Law School

B.S., University of Utah

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

U.S. District Court for the
Northern District of Illinois

Supreme Court of Illinois

Supreme Court of Utah

Supreme Court of
Wisconsin

ORGANIZATIONS

Chicago Bar Association

Illinois State Bar
Association

Illinois Association of
School Business Officials

Illinois Council of School
Attorneys

Contributing author, "School Property and Environmental Issues" *School Law: Organization, Finance, and Property*, IICLE (2017, 2021)

Contributing author, "Turner on Illinois Mechanics Liens," *Chapter III – Making a Lien Against Private Property Enforceable* (2019)

Co-author, "School Construction from Start to Finish: A Project Checklist," *School Business Affairs Magazine*, ASBO (2018)

Contributing author, "Top 11 Public Bidding Questions," *UPDATE Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2018)

Contributing author, "Meditation a Win-Win for Clients and their Attorneys in Construction Litigation," *Chicago Daily Law Bulletin* (2018)

RECENT PRESENTATIONS

Data Breaches and Ransomware Attacks: Strategies for Preventing and Responding to Cybersecurity Incident, Large Unit District Association 2024 March Conference (March 2024)

Legal Requirements Schools Must Consider for Data Privacy and an Update on the Evolution of Lawsuits Against Schools Arising From Data Breaches, Secured Schools: K-12 Data Privacy and Cybersecurity Conference (January 2024)

Legal Update for Illinois Community College Chief Financial Officers, Illinois Community College Chief Financial Officers Spring Conference (April 2023)

Best Practices for Safeguarding Data in an Increasingly Digital World, SecurED Schools: K-12 Data Privacy and Cybersecurity Conference (January 2023)

Bidding 101, IASBO Emerging SBO Summit (July 2022)

Legal Considerations Related to Renewable Energy, Illinois ASBO Administrator Academy: Sustainability for PK-12 Schools (May 2022)

School Bidding, Procurement, and Prevailing Wages: From the Basics to the Advanced, IASA Spring Legal Seminar (March 2022)

Making Sense of the Alphabet Soup: FERPA, COPPA, SOPPA, ISSRA, MHDDCA, and PIPA and Strategies for Compliance, Secured Schools K-12 Data Privacy and Cybersecurity Conference (January 2022)



CHRISTOPHER R. GORMAN

PARTNER, CHICAGO & LISLE

312.332.7760

cgorman@robbins-schwartz.com

Christopher R. Gorman practices in the firm's commercial, construction, and real estate practice groups, representing public sector clients in commercial transactions, contracting, construction related transactional matters, and data & privacy law. Christopher has also served in the firm's labor and employment practice group and counseled employers in all aspects of labor and employment law, including labor relations, collective bargaining, grievance and dispute resolution, workplace investigation, employee discipline, terminations and reductions in force, and employment discrimination. Christopher also advises clients on board governance and compliance with the Illinois Freedom of Information Act and Open Meetings Act.

Christopher's strengths as an attorney are evident in his approach to law. He brings a unique perspective to the table, given his background as in-house counsel for not-for-profit organizations and public bodies as well as his comprehensive understanding of various practice areas. He values ethical principles and understands the significance of alternative dispute resolution when it aligns with his clients' best interests.

In his legal practice, Christopher finds the most joy in representing individuals who are deeply committed to their roles in public service, recognizing the significance of their contributions. This alignment of values and a shared commitment to public service underscores the core of his legal practice.

Christopher's decision to become a lawyer was deeply rooted in his passion for government and public service. Prior to joining Robbins Schwartz, Christopher served as in-house counsel for a nonprofit organization, a charter school management organization and a state regulatory agency overseeing higher education financing. In his career, Christopher has overseen labor relations for the first unionized charter school in the country, assisted in the development of state legislation and administrative rules, and influenced the U.S. and Treasury Department's decision to reintroduce the U.S. Savings Bond as a form of tax refund, promoting savings among low-income families.

Christopher's contributions extend beyond the courtroom. He has authored numerous publications, addressing critical legal issues and serving as a valuable resource for the legal community. He has also been a prominent figure in legal presentations, sharing his insights with fellow professionals.



PRACTICE AREAS

Commercial Transactions
Construction
Labor & Employment
Litigation
Municipal
Real Estate

EDUCATION

J.D., University of
Minnesota Law School

B.A., University of
Minnesota – Twin Cities;
Presidential Scholar

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

U.S. District Court for the
Northern District of Illinois

Supreme Court of Illinois

ORGANIZATIONS

Illinois State Bar
Association

Dupage County Bar
Association

Illinois Local Government
Lawyers Association

Illinois Association of
School Business Officials

Beyond his legal career, Christopher is a devoted coach for his children's sports activities when given the opportunity. He finds solace in the great outdoors, enjoys cooking, and maintains a commitment to regular exercise. Moreover, he possesses a deep interest in change management and organizational design, which he's cultivated through certification courses.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Contributing author, "Labor Relations: Contract Administration Including Unfair Labor Practices," *Illinois School Law*, IICLE (2024)

Contributing author, "Competency in ADR: Assuring Ethical Practice through Competency and Communication," *DCBA Brief*, The Journal of the DuPage County Bar Association (2024)

Contributing author, "School District Emergency Purchasing," *UPDATE Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2024)

Contributing author, "Diving into ADR Ethics: Exploring the Ethical Obligations of Attorneys as Advisors, Advocates, and Third-Party Neutrals" *DCBA Brief*, The Journal of the DuPage County Bar Association (2023)

"Navigating Public Bidding Requirements under the Illinois School Code," *Update*, Illinois Association of School Business Officials (2022)

Contributing author, "Labor Issues in the Transactional Side of the Project," *Construction Law: Transactional Considerations 2021 Edition*, IICLE (2021)

"Continuing Controversy Over FCC's Efforts to Improve Broadband Connectivity," *Energy, Utilities, Telecommunications and Transportation Newsletter*, Illinois State Bar Association (2021)

"The Future of For-Profit Online Charter Schools," *Labor and Employment Law Quarterly*, American Bar Association (2016)

RECENT PRESENTATIONS

Best Practices for Safeguarding Data in an Increasingly Digital World, SecurED Schools: K-12 Data Privacy and Cybersecurity Conference (January 2023)

School Bidding, Procurement, and Prevailing Wages: From the Basics to the Advanced, IASA Spring Legal Seminar (March 2022)

Making Sense of the Alphabet Soup: FERPA, COPPA, SOPPA, ISSRA, MHDDCA and PIPA, The Learning Technology Center of Illinois SecurED Schools Annual Conference (January 2022)



KATIE DiPIERO

ASSOCIATE, CHICAGO

312.332.7760

kdiplero@robbins-schwartz.com

Katie N. DiPiero is a versatile attorney who brings focuses her practice on public finance and taxation, commercial law, construction law, and real estate development. Her legal practice primarily centers around assisting and representing school districts, community colleges, and municipalities in public finance and commercial matters. She is also well-versed in tax rate objections, real property taxation, valuation, and assessment appeals before the circuit court, Property Tax Appeal Board, and boards of review. Furthermore, Katie's proficiency extends to drafting and negotiating contracts in commercial transactions, assisting with nonprofits and foundations, as well as handling litigation and alternative dispute resolution.

In her role as an attorney, Katie finds immense satisfaction in writing and negotiating contracts, as well as tackling finance-related issues. Her strengths as a legal professional are exemplified through her exceptional writing and research skills, which have proven invaluable in her career.

Before her role at Robbins Schwartz, Katie assisted clients in tax planning and corporate reorganizations. She also gained valuable experience working for government entities and non-profit organizations.

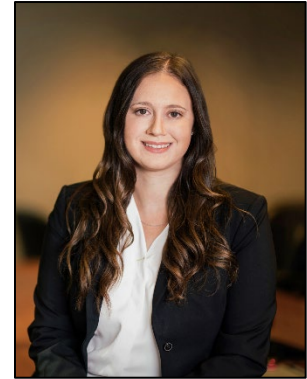
Katie's impressive educational background led her to realize her calling – to assist others in navigating the legal system, particularly those with limited exposure to complex legal processes. Her desire to help people and her love for writing were the driving forces behind her decision to become a lawyer.

Katie's background, characterized by a journey from Kansas to Seattle, followed by work in Washington, D.C., has molded her into a well-rounded and empathetic attorney. Her ability to understand different perspectives, influenced by the myriad of experiences from her travels, significantly contributes to her capacity for finding creative solutions in her legal practice.

Outside her professional life, Katie is dedicated to staying active with her family and is working on refining her golf skills through lessons. An interesting facet of her life that many may not know is her background as a competitive pianist during her childhood.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Contributing author, "Opening Your Mind to Closed Sessions," *UPDATE Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2024)



PRACTICE AREAS

Commercial Transactions
Construction
Public Finance & Taxation
Real Estate

EDUCATION

J.D., *cum laude*, Seattle
University

M.B.A., Seattle University

B.A., University of Kansas

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

Supreme Court of Illinois

Contributing author, "Who Ya Gonna Call? Knowing Your Legal Resources,"
UPDATE Magazine, Illinois ASBO (2024)

Contributing author, "Opening Your Mind to Closed Sessions," *UPDATE Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2024)

Contributing author, "Environmental Issues" *Construction Law: Transactional Considerations*, IICLE (2021)



CATHERINE R. LOCALLO

PARTNER, CHICAGO

312.332.7760

clocallo@robbins-schwartz.com

Catherine R. Locallo, a distinguished legal professional, has devoted her career to the realms of labor and employment law, focusing on education and board governance matters. Her commitment is exemplified by her role as a counselor to employers, offering comprehensive guidance on employment law intricacies, collective bargaining, labor relations, and compliance with various acts, including the Freedom of Information Act and Open Meetings Act.

Catherine's strengths lie in her client-focused approach, problem-solving skills, and the ability to build strong relationships. Her enjoyment stems from problem-solving and the opportunity to foster improved relations between management and labor.

Catherine's journey into law began with a significant role as a paralegal before transitioning to become an attorney. Her early career as a paralegal influenced her decision to pursue law, a path that led her to join Robbins Schwartz in 2004. She worked diligently while attending law school at night and was admitted to the bar in 2009. Catherine's dedication to education law led her to become a partner at Robbins Schwartz in 2017.

Catherine's upbringing, with her father as an attorney, has instilled a strong work ethic that influences her approach to the law. Beyond her legal endeavors, she is a hockey mom, team manager, and a Peloton enthusiast. A lesser-known fact about Catherine is her passion for running marathons, a tribute to her best friend Farrah, who passed away from Leukemia when she was seven years old.

AWARDS

Honorable Gerald L. Sbarbaro Mentoring Award (2023)

Illinois "Rising Star," Employment & Labor Law (2015-2018)

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Contributing author, "Labor Relations: Contract Administration Including Unfair Labor Practices," *Illinois School Law*, IICLE (2024)

"U.S. Supreme Court Resolves Circuit Split for Title VII Claim Related to Job Transfer," *Employment & Labor Law*, IICLE (2024)



PRACTICE AREAS

Board Governance

Education

Labor & Employment

EDUCATION

J.D., *cum laude*, The John Marshall Law School,
Order of John Marshall

B.S., Southern Illinois
University

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

Supreme Court of Illinois

U.S. Court of Appeals for
the Seventh Circuit

U.S. District Court for the
Central District of Illinois

U.S. District Court for the
Northern District of Illinois

"EEOC Releases Proposed Regulations for Pregnant Workers Fairness Act," *Employment and Labor Law Flashpoints*, IICLE (2023)

Co-Author, "Seventh Circuit Addresses Employer Liability for Coworker and Supervisor Harassment and Challenges in Establishing Claims For Retaliation, Defamation, and IIED," *Employment and Labor Law Flashpoints*, IICLE (2023)

Co-Author, "Seventh Circuit Addresses Employer Liability for Coworker and Supervisor Harassment and Challenges in Establishing Claims For Retaliation, Defamation, and IIED," *Employment and Labor Law Flashpoints*, IICLE (2023)

"Each Discrete Statutory Violation of Biometric Information Privacy Act Is Actionable by Employees," *Employment and Labor Law Flashpoints*, IICLE (2023)

"Illinois Employers Ring in New Year with Five New Laws," *Employment and Labor Law Flashpoints*, IICLE (2022)

"Recent Seventh Circuit Case Addresses Declaratory Judgment, Equivalent Job, and Attorney's Fee Awards Under FMLA," *Employment and Labor Law Flashpoints*, IICLE (2022)

"Employee's Loss of Ability to Maintain Privacy Rights Is Not Injury Compensable Under Workers' Compensation Act," *Employment and Labor Law Flashpoints*, IICLE (2022)

"OSHA Pauses Vaccination and Testing ETS Following Legal Challenges," *Employment and Labor Law Flashpoints*, IICLE (2021)

"Chicago Teachers Union Claim Doesn't Survive Summary Judgment on Race Discrimination Claim," *Employment and Labor Law Flashpoints*, IICLE (2021)

"Effective January 1, 2022: Vast Expansion of VESSA," *Employment and Labor Law Flashpoints*, IICLE (2021)

"Illinois Committed to Restrictive Covenant Reform Through Passage of Senate Bill 672," *Employment and Labor Law Flashpoints*, IICLE (2021)

"Plaintiff's Cat's Paw Theory of Liability Failed To Scratch Surface," *Employment and Labor Law Flashpoints*, IICLE (2021)

RECENT PRESENTATIONS

Legal, Legislative and Ethics Update, ICCTA Illinois Council of Community College Presidents Meeting (November 2022)

You're On the Board, Now Elevate Your Game, ICCTA Annual Conference (November 2021)

ORGANIZATIONS

Chicago Bar Association

Illinois Council of School Attorneys

Illinois State Bar Association

National Council of School Attorneys

Second Vice President, Justinian Society of Lawyers

Co-Chair, Justinian Society of Lawyers Endowment Fund Scholarship Committee

Member, Oakton Community College Paralegal Advisory Committee

Member, Triton College School of Business Advisory Legal Committee

President, Board of Directors, Glenview Stars Hockey Association

UNICO National





Robbins Schwartz
One Team. Making Your Mission Ours.

MATTHEW M. SWIFT

ASSOCIATE, CHICAGO

312.332.7760

mswift@robbins-schwartz.com

Matthew M. Swift is a member of the labor and employment practice group. He counsels employers in various aspects of employment law, such as employee discipline, employment contracts, wage and hour laws, and employment discrimination matters under the Americans with Disabilities Act, Family and Medical Leave Act, Age Discrimination in Employment Act, Illinois Human Rights Act, Title VII, and other federal and state anti-discrimination laws. He also helps clients with labor relations matters such as grievances and traditional and interest-based collective bargaining.

Matthew also frequently advises on legal issues that are unique to public-sector clients and educational institutions, including compliance with the Illinois Freedom of Information Act, the Open Meetings Act, the First Amendment, and Title IX. He works with clients on some of their most complex FOIA requests and board governance questions.

Before moving to Chicago for law school or attending college in Texas, Matthew grew up in a California mountain town, about a 20-minute drive from the nearest stoplight. He loves life in the big city—especially the museums and great food—but his more folksy roots still occasionally make an appearance.

Matthew has a soft spot for alliteration thanks to a family tradition—each Swift family member’s first initial matches their middle initial. He enjoys when his work requires careful interpretation or choosing precise language, and he always appreciates a clever turn of phrase.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

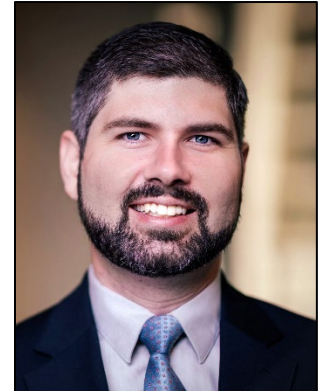
Contributing author, “Employee Discrimination,” *Illinois School Law*, IICLE (2024)

“All Together Now – Employment Law Issues in the New Title IX Rules,” *Chicago Daily Law Bulletin* (2020)

RECENT PRESENTATIONS

Beyond the Redaction Marker: Tools and Strategies for Managing Difficult FOIA Requests, Large Unit District Association Communications Conference (December 2023)

The Open Meetings Act: FAQs and Answers, Community College Trustee Professional Development Training, Illinois Community College Trustee Association Annual Conference (June 2023)



PRACTICE AREAS

Board Governance
Education
Employee Benefits
Labor & Employment
Municipal

EDUCATION

J.D., University of Chicago
Law School

M.P.P., University of
Chicago, Harris School of
Public Policy

B.B.A., *summa cum laude*,
Baylor University

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

U.S. District Court for the
Northern District of Illinois

Supreme Court of Illinois

ORGANIZATIONS

Chicago Bar Association



Turning over a New Leave: Paid Leaves and Paycheck Protection under HB 1167,
ED-RED Member Meeting (April 2022)

Red Light, Green Light? Responding to Recent Decisions about COVID-19
Mitigations, ED-RED Virtual Member Meeting (February 2022)



KENNETH M. FLOREY**PARTNER, CHICAGO & LISLE**

312.332.7760

kflorey@robbins-schwartz.com

Ken Florey concentrates his practice representing public and private clients, including municipalities, school districts, community colleges, townships, libraries, private owners, contractors and design professionals regarding land use, municipal law, construction, tax, finance and litigation. Ken has also started offering his services as a mediator with an emphasis on construction disputes.

Ken was the Chair of the DuPage County Bar Association's Local Government Committee. He was appointed Special Assistant Attorney General to prosecute and defend construction litigation claims on behalf of the Illinois Capital Development Board. Ken is also a member of the Illinois ASBO Service Associate Advisory Committee. He served as a Trustee for the Village of Lombard for eight years and is a member of the Lombard Fire and Police Commission.

MEDIATOR CERTIFICATE: Northwestern University 2017**AWARDS**

Illinois Leading Lawyer, Construction Law; Governmental, Municipal, Lobbying & Administrative Law; Land Use, Zoning & Condemnation Law; and School Law

Illinois Association of School Business Officials, Above and Beyond Award

Illinois Institute for Local Government Law, Litigation Award

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Contributing author, "Competency in ADR: Assuring Ethical Practice through Competency and Communication," *DCBA Brief*, The Journal of the DuPage County Bar Association (2024)

Contributing author, "Navigating Construction Disputes: *The inevitable construction disputes can be navigated with a combination of knowledge, preparation, and outside guidance*," *School Business Affairs* (November 2023)

Contributing author, "Diving into ADR Ethics: Exploring the Ethical Obligation of Attorneys as Advisors, Advocates, and Third-Party Neutrals," *DCBA Brief* (November 2023)

Contributing author, "Joint Purchasing Everything You Want to Know but Are Afraid to Ask!" *UPDATE Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2019)

Contributing author, "How Far Does the Law Allow Schools to Go?" *UPDATE Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2018)

**PRACTICE AREAS**

Commercial Transactions
Construction
Education
Energy
Litigation
Mediation
Municipal
Public Finance & Taxation
Real Estate Development
Zoning, Planning & Land Use

EDUCATION

J.D., DePaul University
College of Law; *Managing Editor, DePaul Journal of Art and Entertainment Law*

B.A., University of Illinois
at Urbana Champaign

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

U.S. District Court for the
Northern District of Illinois

Supreme Court of Illinois

Contributing author, "Top 11 Public Bidding Questions & Solutions" *UPDATE Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2018)

Co-author, "School Construction from Start to Finish: A Project Checklist," *School Business Affairs Magazine*, ASBO (2018)

Contributing author, "Top 11 Public Bidding Questions," *UPDATE Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2018)

Contributing author, "Top 11 Public Bidding Questions," *UPDATE Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2018)

Contributing author, "Meditation a Win-Win for Clients and their Attorneys in Construction Litigation," *Chicago Daily Law Bulletin* (2018)

RECENT PRESENTATIONS

Alternative Dispute Resolution Section MCLE Program, DuPage County Bar Association (February 2023)

Cooperative Purchasing: Are We Doing it Right?, Illinois Association of School Personnel Administrators and Illinois Association of School Business Officials Regional Conference (October 2022)

Building a Construction Team and So Much More to Achieve Success with Your Project, Association of School Business Officials International (August 2022)

Ethics and ADR: Meditation and Arbitration Issues, DCBA (June 2022)

Cooperative Purchasing: Are You Doing it Right?, Illinois ASBO Annual Conference (June 2022)

Bidding Processes & Procedures: Best Practices in a Changing Environment, Illinois ASBO Annual Conference (May 2022)

Contracts and Conflicts: How Did We Get Here & Where are We Going?, Illinois ASBO Annual Conference (May 2022)

Wrapping Up the Year End in the Business Office: Do's and Don'ts, Illinois ASBO School Business Essentials (April 2022)

School Construction and Purchasing Scenarios: Common Problems with Practical Solutions, ASBO International and AC&E (October 2021)



LOGAN K. SWEENEY

ASSOCIATE, CHICAGO

312.332.7760

lsweeney@robbins-schwartz.com

Logan K. Sweeney is a member of the firm's construction, commercial transactions, public finance & taxation, and real estate practice groups. Logan represents private and public project owners, including school districts, community colleges, park districts, and municipalities. She assists with construction and development projects, beginning with property acquisition, zoning, contract negotiation and bidding, project management, and any resulting litigation.

Logan's professional journey revolves around her love for working with clients who are equally passionate about what they do. She finds immense satisfaction in collaborating with individuals and businesses to navigate complex legal matters and to chart a course toward success. Her approach to legal practice is marked by empathy, understanding, and a determination to serve her clients' best interests.

Prior to joining Robbins Schwartz, Logan worked at a transactional law, litigation, and government relations law firm in Chicago, Illinois where she gained experience in a wide array of practice areas. Logan now utilizes her diverse legal background and experience to best serve Robbins Schwartz and its clients.

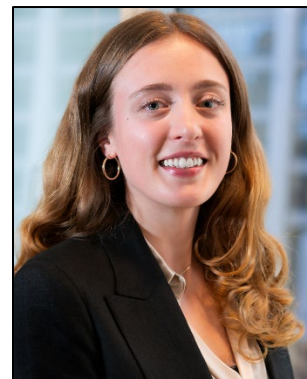
Outside of the legal realm, Logan enjoys embarking on culinary adventures by trying new restaurants, embracing the joy of running, and traveling.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Contributing author, "School District Emergency Purchasing," *UPDATE Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2024)

RECENT PRESENTATIONS

Co-presenter, *Best Practices When Responding to a Data Breach or Cyber Incident*, Secured Schools: K-12 Data Privacy and Cybersecurity Conference (January 2024)



PRACTICE AREAS

Commercial Transactions
Construction
Labor & Employment
Municipal
Public Finance & Taxation
Real Estate
Zoning, Planning & Land Use

EDUCATION

J.D., Loyola University
Chicago School of Law

B.A., University of
Minnesota, Twin Cities

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

U.S. District Court for the
Northern District of Illinois

Supreme Court of Illinois

ORGANIZATIONS

Chicago Bar Association

HOWARD A. METZ

PARTNER, CHICAGO

312.332.7760

hmetz@robbins-schwartz.com

Howard A. Metz is an experienced legal professional known for his expertise in advising and representing various private and public entities, including school districts, community colleges, park districts, and municipalities. His legal practice spans a range of areas, with a primary focus on real estate, commercial transactions, construction law, and land use and zoning matters.

Howard has made significant contributions, particularly in resolving complex construction cases. His expertise includes handling disputes related to architectural fees, construction defects, bidding issues, and construction delays. Additionally, Howard has been actively involved in litigating matters pertaining to zoning laws and municipal control over school property.

Howard's legal practice is diverse and includes areas such as commercial law, construction law, education law, energy law, litigation, municipal law, public finance and taxation, real estate law, and zoning, planning, and land use.

As a prolific writer, Howard has contributed to various publications, sharing his insights on topics crucial to his practice.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Contributing author, "School District Emergency Purchasing," *UPDATE Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2024)

"Navigating Public Bidding Under the Illinois School Code" *UPDATE Magazine*, Illinois ASBO

Contributing author, "Joint Purchasing Everything You Want to Know but Are Afraid to Ask!" *UPDATE Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2019)

Contributing author, "[Public Body Social Media Rules Make Retention, Read Retrieval Imperative](#)," *Chicago Law Bulletin* (2019)

Contributing author, "How Far Does the Law Allow Schools to Go?" *UPDATE Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2018)

Co-author, "[School Construction from Start to Finish: A Project Checklist](#)," *School Business Affairs Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2018)

Contributing author, "Organization, Finance, and Property," Illinois School Law, Illinois Institute for Continuing Legal Education (2017)



PRACTICE AREAS

Commercial Transactions
Construction
Education
Energy
Litigation
Municipal
Public Finance & Taxation
Real Estate
Zoning, Planning & Land Use

EDUCATION

J.D., IIT Chicago-Kent
College of Law

B.S., Political Science,
University of Iowa

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

U.S. District Court for the
Northern District of Illinois

Supreme Court of Illinois

ORGANIZATIONS

Illinois Association of
School Business Officials

Illinois Council of School
Attorneys

"Look Before You Leap: Evaluating Your Joint Purchasing Options," UPDATE Magazine, Illinois ASBO (2016)

Contributing author, *"School Property and Environmental Issues," Illinois School Law, Illinois Institute for Continuing Education Legal Education (2010 and 2012)*

RECENT PRESENTATIONS

Innovative Solutions to Student Transportation Challenges, Illinois ASBO School Business Essentials Lunch & Learn Series (January 2024)

School Bidding, Procurement, and Prevailing Wages: From the Basics to the Advanced, Illinois Association of School Administrators Spring Legal Seminar (March 2022)

Legal Considerations Related to Renewable Energy, Illinois ASBO Administrator Academy: Sustainability for PK-12 Schools (November 2021)



ZARIA N. UDEH

PARTNER, CHICAGO

312.332.7760

zudeh@robbins-schwartz.com

Zaria N. Udeh is a dedicated attorney who focuses her practice on education law, specifically in the intricacies of special education and student issues. Zaria is a trusted counselor for school districts, providing guidance on a broad spectrum of matters, from Individual Education Program (IEP) meetings and 504 accommodations to Office for Civil Rights, Illinois State Board of Education, and Illinois Department of Human Rights complaints. She adeptly navigates due process hearings, residency disputes, student discipline matters, and provides expertise in advising on policy and handbook review, first amendment issues, and student privacy and school records matters. Her expertise even extends to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion compliance.

In her role, Zaria finds joy in the dynamic nature of the work. She thrives on the challenges presented, helping educators and administrators to comply with the law and providing them with the legal tools they need to offer the highest quality educational experiences to students. Her strength as an attorney lies in her exceptional listening skills, problem-solving abilities, and her talent for presenting reasonable options to clients. Zaria's devotion to education and the legal aspects surrounding it has been the driving force behind her career choice. For her, there is immense satisfaction in supporting educational entities in fulfilling their missions. Her commitment to this sector has brought her into the dynamic field of education law.

Prior to joining Robbins Schwartz, Zaria's journey into the field of education law was paved by her role at Chicago Public Schools. There, she represented the district as a special education attorney, where she honed her skills in due process matters and special education disputes. Zaria's roots in New England and her multicultural background have instilled in her the value of educational opportunities. She diligently works to support clients in extending these same opportunities to the students and families they serve.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

"Medical Cannabis at School Wins Legislative OK," Chicago Daily Law Bulletin (2018)



PRACTICE AREAS

Education
Special Education
Student Rights

EDUCATION

J.D., DePaul University
College of Law

B.A., Yale University

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

U.S. District Court for the
Northern District of Illinois

Supreme Court of Illinois

Supreme Court of the
Commonwealth of
Massachusetts

ORGANIZATIONS

Chicago Bar Association

Illinois Council of School
Attorneys

National Council of School
Attorneys

RECENT PRESENTATIONS

Unpacking the 2024 Title IX Regulations, Superintendents' Commission for the Study of Demographics and Diversity Summer Leadership Conference (June 2024)

How to Get Specific: Defensible SLD Eligibility, Goal Drafting & Instruction, Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education 2024 Winter Conference (February 2024)





Robbins Schwartz
One Team. Making Your Mission Ours.

HAYLEY A. WILLIAN

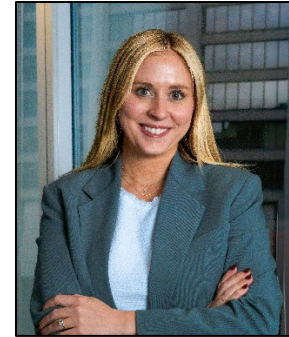
ASSOCIATE, CHICAGO

312.332.7760

hmullen@robbins-schwartz.com

Hayley counsels K-12 school districts and higher education institutions on various issues, including IDEA, student discipline, Title IX, free speech and expression, student disability rights, board governance, and policy development. She assists school districts in responding to complaints from the Office for Civil Rights, Office of the Attorney General and Illinois State Board of Education, and she represents public school districts at IEP meetings, due process hearings, and student discipline hearings.

Prior to joining Robbins Schwartz, Hayley clerked at a private litigation firm, and interned with the Chicago Public Schools Board of Education. She received her Juris Doctor from Loyola University Chicago. During law school, she worked in the Civitas ChildLaw Clinic where she received her 711 license and served as a child representative in domestic relations and child protection proceedings.



PRACTICE AREAS

Education
Litigation
Special Education
Student Rights

EDUCATION

J.D., Loyola University
Chicago School of Law

B.A., *university honors*,
University of Michigan

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

Supreme Court of Illinois

U.S. District Court for the
Northern District of Illinois

ORGANIZATIONS

Chicago Bar Association



MICHELLE L. WEBER

PARTNER, CHICAGO

312.332.7760

mweber@robbins-schwartz.com

Michelle L. Weber practices in education law, with a primary focus on special education and student matters. Michelle brings a wealth of experience to her role at Robbins Schwartz, representing educational institutions, including school districts, community colleges and private schools. Michelle works with clients on a wide range of student-related legal issues, including special education, student discipline, student records, free speech, and board policy development. Michelle is also a member of the firm's *Freedom of Information Act* and Title IX working groups and provides counsel to clients in these areas as well.

Michelle is passionate about education and her strengths lie in finding creative and practical solutions to complex legal issues. Prior to joining Robbins Schwartz, she served as an in-house attorney for Waukegan Public Schools and Chicago Public Schools, focusing on special education. Michelle began her career as a Teach for America Corps Member and middle school language arts teacher; an experience that significantly influenced her career trajectory. Drawing on her experience as a classroom teacher, Michelle offers clients a unique perspective, aiming to partner with them to achieve their goals while prioritizing the best interests of students.

Beyond her legal practice, Michelle actively contributes to the community. She serves on the Board of Directors of North Park Elementary School, expanding her commitment to education and experience in the field. Outside of her professional pursuits, Michelle enjoys running, yoga, hiking, and spending quality time with her family.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

["DeVos Rollbacks Could Hit Schools Hard,"](#) *Chicago Daily Law Bulletin* (2017)

RECENT PRESENTATIONS

Student Discipline and Trauma-Informed Practices for School Boards, Illinois State Board of Education Approved Professional Leadership Development Training (May 2023)

Navigating the IEP Process when DCFS is Involved, Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education (February 2023)

Removals to Interim Alternative Educational Setting for 45 School Days... Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How? Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education Winter Conference (February 2022)



PRACTICE AREAS

Education
Special Education
Student Rights

EDUCATION

J.D., Loyola University
College of Law

M.A., Loyola Marymount
University

B.A., Trinity College

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

Supreme Court of Illinois

ORGANIZATIONS

Chicago Bar Association

Illinois Council of School
Attorneys

National Council of School
Attorneys

Board of Directors, North
Park Elementary School

NIKI LAMPRINAKOS

PARTNER, CHICAGO

312.332.7760

nlamprinakos@robbins-schwartz.com

Nikoleta Lamprinakos is an experienced trial lawyer who concentrates her practice in the defense of government officials and governmental entities in civil rights, employment and tort claims against both governmental bodies and officials, including municipal entities, school districts, police departments and park districts. She has handled a multitude of complex litigation matters in both the federal and state courts.

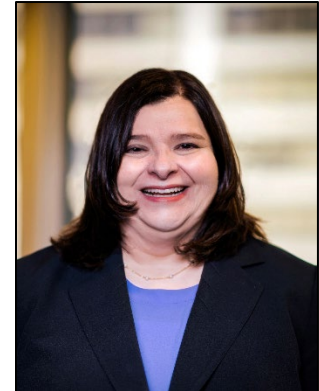
Nikoleta has successfully represented governmental entities and their employees at the trial and appellate level in both state and federal court. She has successfully litigated cases before the Federal District Court for the Northern, Central and Southern District of Illinois as well as the Circuit Courts of Cook, DuPage, Lake and Will, Kane, Kendall, and various downstate venues as co-lead counsel and second chair counsel.

Most recently, Nikoleta was co-lead counsel in a civil rights excessive force and unreasonable search case brought by a mother and daughter against five police officers where she obtained a not guilty jury verdict on all counts on behalf of all officers. Additionally, Nikoleta leads the firm's litigation practice group for associates and helps mentor new associates. She is also consistently demonstrating her professional commitment by annually contributing to the IASB Guide to New Statutes, where she plays an integral role in preparing Litigation Section.

Nikoleta's journey began as a legal secretary and paralegal fresh out of college. This strategic choice allowed her to gain a comprehensive understanding of the legal landscape from multiple vantage points. It was her way of meticulously preparing for the path she had always envisioned - becoming a lawyer.

Nikoleta's background and upbringing further enriched her perspective. Growing up as the child of immigrant parents, she witnessed their relentless pursuit of the American Dream, starting with humble beginnings and culminating in the construction of a good life. Their remarkable journey left an indelible mark on her, instilling values of hard work, determination, and the relentless pursuit of opportunities.

In her commitment to community welfare, Nikoleta is an active member of her church's philanthropic society. Here, her passion for giving back finds expression as they identify worthy causes in need of support. Together, they orchestrate fundraisers to provide meals, shelter, clothing, and financial assistance to those facing adversity.



PRACTICE AREAS

Education
Labor & Employment
Litigation
Municipal

EDUCATION

J.D., Chicago Kent College
of Law

M.P.A., University of
Illinois at Chicago

B.A., University of Illinois
at Chicago

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

U.S. District Court for the
Central District of Illinois

U.S. District Court for the
Northern District of Illinois

U.S. District Court for the
Southern District of Illinois

Supreme Court of Illinois

ORGANIZATIONS

Chicago Bar Association

Defense Research
Institute (DRI)

Hellenic Bar Organization

Illinois State Bar
Association

AIDAN C. FALK

ASSOCIATE, CHICAGO

312.332.7760

afalk@robbins-schwartz.com

Aidan C. Falk is an Associate Attorney renowned for her dedication to advocacy and passion for equality in the legal profession. Through focusing on Litigation, Education Law, and Student Related Issues, Aidan brings a unique perspective to her practice. With a background rooted in sports and a commitment to serving her community, she has become known for her unwavering commitment to her clients and her strong advocacy skills.

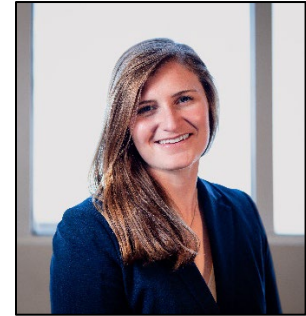
Aidan takes pride in her ability to work hard and ensure her clients receive the fullest degree of representation. Her career highlights include successful motions to dismiss and motions for summary judgment, as well as her continuous improvement in deposition and courtroom skills.

Aidan's journey into law began with a diverse range of experiences. Before attending law school, she worked as a legal assistant in a Real Estate/Estate Planning law firm in Chicago.

Inspired by her father, a litigator in New York, Aidan pursued a career in law to advocate for those who cannot advocate for themselves. She was drawn to the competitive and dynamic nature of litigation and began her journey in the medical malpractice/general liability/insurance defense world. Recently, Aidan shifted her focus to Education Law, particularly Title IX, influenced by her experiences playing softball at the University of Michigan under Coach Carol "Hutch" Hutchins, a Title IX pioneer.

Growing up witnessing her father's zealous advocacy and playing for Coach Hutch at the University of Michigan instilled in Aidan a desire to make a positive impact through her career. She approaches the law with the same dedication and discipline as she did athletics, striving to improve every day and make equality more attainable for all.

Outside of work, Aidan enjoys staying active and spending time outdoors. Her hobbies include running, rollerblading, and Pilates. She cherishes moments outdoors with her dog and finds joy in being surrounded by nature.



PRACTICE AREAS

Education
Litigation
Student Related Issues

EDUCATION

J.D., Loyola University
Chicago School of Law

B.A., University of
Michigan

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

U.S. District Court for the
Northern District of Illinois

Supreme Court of Illinois

ORGANIZATIONS

Chicago Bar Association

Illinois State Bar
Association

BRITTANY FLAHERTY THEIS

PARTNER, Lisle

630.929.3639

btheis@robbins-schwartz.com

Brittany Flaherty Theis has built her career as a dedicated advocate in the realm of school law and related matters. With a focus on representing school districts and taxing bodies, she has demonstrated expertise in a multitude of legal areas, ranging from property tax disputes to board governance, administrative law, personnel matters, and more.

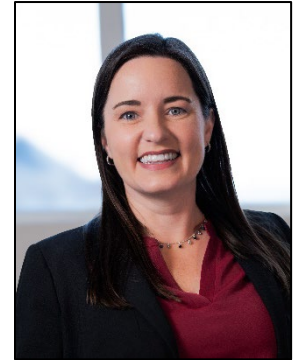
Brittany's practice is marked by a keen understanding of property tax issues in Illinois. Her representation extends to various legal forums, including circuit courts, boards of review, and appellate courts. A significant milestone in her career was her involvement in mediating a billion-dollar property tax assessment dispute, showcasing her prowess in navigating complex legal terrain.

In property tax litigation, Brittany has been instrumental in litigating and negotiating settlements for diverse properties, from nuclear power plants to oil refineries. She defended findings of Freedom of Information Act and Open Meetings Act violations, contributing to a successful appeal in the Fourth District of the Illinois Appellate Court.

Beyond property tax litigation, Brittany provides crucial counsel on school finance matters, including property tax levies, contracts, and bond financings. She is actively engaged in presenting seminars to administrators throughout Illinois, demonstrating her commitment to knowledge sharing in the legal community.

Brittany is dedicated to addressing matters related to student rights, responsibilities, and special education and has served as a hearing officer in student disciplinary hearings. Brittany has navigated policy matters for school district clients, showing a particular interest in evolving issues such as accommodations for transgender students, constitutional questions, school and internet safety, and social media.

Brittany's journey into law was inspired by her parents' commitment to public service. Her inherent strengths lie in research and written arguments, complemented by empathy and genuine care for clients, students, and staff. She finds fulfillment in advising clients and guiding them through challenging situations.



PRACTICE AREAS

Commercial Transactions
Education
Energy
Litigation
Municipal
Public Finance &
Taxation
Real Estate
Zoning, Planning & Land
Use

EDUCATION

J.D., *cum laude*, The John
Marshall Law School,
Order of John Marshall

B.S., *summa cum laude*
Bradley University

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

U.S. District Court for the
Northern District of
Illinois

Supreme Court of Illinois

ORGANIZATIONS

American Bar Association

Illinois State Bar
Association

Beyond her legal endeavors, Brittany is involved in the Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana. Her commitment to community service aligns with her upbringing in a family dedicated to public service. In her leisure time, Brittany finds joy in reading, outdoor activities, and her role as a Girl Scout leader, emphasizing a well-rounded and community-oriented approach to life with her husband and three daughters.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Contributing author, "Opening Your Mind to Closed Sessions," *UPDATE Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2024)

Contributing author, "Who Ya Gonna Call? Knowing Your Legal Resources," *UPDATE Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2024)

Contributing author, "Opening Your Mind to Closed Sessions," *UPDATE Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2024)

RECENT PRESENTATIONS

The Role of Taxing Districts in Assessments, Illinois Property Assessment Institute Legal Symposium (September 2023)

Legal Standards for the Management of School Personnel, Illinois ASBO AAC #820 (June 2023)

Legal Standards for the Management of School Personnel, IASB/IASA/IASBO Joint Annual Conference (May 2022)

Property Tax Refund Recapture & Other Tax Related Laws, Illinois ASBO Annual Conference (May 2022)

Kane County Bar Association

DuPage County Bar Association

National Council of School Attorneys

Illinois Council of School Attorneys

Illinois Association of School Business Officials

Illinois Association of School Administrators



SCOTT L. GINSBURG

PARTNER, CHICAGO

312.332.7760

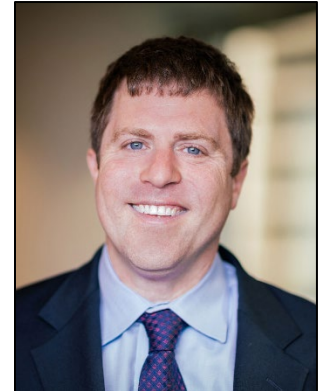
sginsburg@robbins-schwartz.com

Scott L. Ginsburg is chair of the firm's Real Estate and Finance Practice Group with a focus on matters related to public finance and property taxation. Scott's experience includes counseling clients and litigating cases in the areas of local government finance, real estate taxation, tax rate objections, tax exemptions, sale and use tax, energy, TIF and property tax abatements. As a registered lobbyist and longtime member of the State and Local Taxation ("SALT") Section Council of the Illinois Bar Association, Scott monitors and drafts legislation involving matters of public finance, and he has testified on behalf of Illinois units of local government in matters before the Illinois General Assembly. Scott has tried multiple cases before the Illinois Property Tax Appeal Board and the Illinois Department of Revenue, and his litigation experience includes defense of actions before courts of all levels. Scott also practices in the area of commercial transactions and local government, including contract drafting and review, litigation and alternative dispute resolution. He has experience in representing general contractors, local governments, and business owners in all aspects of civil litigation.

Prior to joining Robbins Schwartz, Scott concentrated his practice on litigation, in the areas of commercial disputes, construction defects and labor and employment issues. Scott is also a former judicial extern to the Honorable Michael J. Reagan, United States District Judge, Southern District of Illinois.

From the very beginning, Scott's passion for education law was evident. He recognized the transformative power of education and was drawn to the field as a way to contribute positively to this noble endeavor. As the child of educators - both of his parents and a sister dedicated their lives to teaching - Scott's career in education law became an apt reflection of his family's commitment to learning and knowledge.

What Scott finds most fulfilling in his professional life is helping taxing districts find innovative and creative solutions to address financial issues. It is in these challenging situations that his skills truly shine, as he harnesses his expertise to guide clients toward effective resolutions. The ability to apply creative thinking to solve intricate financial problems has become a hallmark of his career.



PRACTICE AREAS

Commercial Transactions
Education
Energy
Litigation
Municipal
Public Finance & Taxation
Real Estate
Zoning, Planning & Land
Use

EDUCATION

J.D., Washington
University School of Law

B.A., DePauw University

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

U.S. District Court for the
Northern District of Illinois

Supreme Court of Illinois

ORGANIZATIONS

Chicago Bar Association

Illinois Association of
School Business Officials

Illinois State Bar
Association, State and
Local Taxation Section
Council, Member

Outside of his professional life, Scott's interests and passions are just as diverse. He finds solace running along the serene lakefront, a practice that not only keeps him physically active but also clears his mind. His love for literature shines through in his joy for reading books about history and science, allowing him to delve into the complexities of the past and the wonders of the natural world. And then, there's his unwavering curiosity about the world, which is evident in his love for travel, a means through which he explores new horizons and experiences the beauty of different cultures.

Rogers Park Montessori
School, Board of Directors

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Co-Author, "Appellate Court Decision Clarifies Notice Standards for Property Tax Assessments in Illinois," *Tax Trends*, Illinois State Bar Association (July 2024)

["PTAB Clarifies Uniformity Standards for Income Properties,"](#) *Tax Trends*, Illinois State Bar Association, (2015)

"Chicago Bears Football Club v. The Cook County Department of Revenue," *Tax Trends*, Illinois State Bar Association (2014)

Contributing author, "Illinois Supreme Court Clarifies Standard Review for Zoning Decisions," *Illinois Municipal Review* (2008)

RECENT PRESENTATIONS

Comments on PTELL Legislation, ED-RED's Member Meeting (April 2022)

Challenges to Property Tax Assessments and Protecting School District Revenues, IASB Webinar (February 2021)

