

**ORANGE COUNTY
DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION**

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County Superintendent
of Schools

**ORANGE COUNTY
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

MARI BARKE

TIM SHAW

LISA SPARKS, Ph.D.

JORGE VALDES, Esq.

KEN L. WILLIAMS, D.O.

April 10, 2025

To: County Committee on School District Organization

From: Dr. Stefan Bean
Orange County Superintendent of Schools

Re: Selection of Legal Counsel for the County Committee on School District Organization

Dear County Committee on School District Organization (County Committee),

Please accept this as an official Confirmation of Commitment regarding the ability of the County Committee to access effective legal counsel.

As you recall, considering the litigation between the Orange County Board of Education (OCBoE) and the County Committee, I asked attorney Tony De Marco of Atkinson, Andelson, Loya, Ruud & Romo to opine regarding whether the hiring of former OCBoE attorney, Greg Rolen, as the General Counsel in the Legal Services Division of the Orange County Department of Education created a conflict of interest between the Legal Services Division and the County Committee that would preclude the Legal Services Division from continued representation of the County Committee. Mr. De Marco concluded that because the matter between the OCBoE and the County Committee was active, a conflict of interest existed that would preclude the Legal Services Division from representing the County Committee.

Subsequently, the OCBoE officially withdrew from the litigation against the County Committee. That litigation is concluded and may not be reinstated by the OCBoE.

At this time, it is the opinion of both Mr. De Marco and the counsel which represented the County Committee in the litigation with the OCBoE, Olson Remcho, that the General Counsel's office may now represent the County Committee on day-to-day matters, as long as Mr. Rolen is placed within an "ethical wall" preventing him from participating in any advice or counsel, consultation, or input on matters handled by attorneys in the Legal Services Division. An ethical wall is generally described as a set of internal procedures implemented within organizations, especially in law firms, financial institutions, and corporations, to prevent the exchange of sensitive or confidential information between departments or individuals.

Historically, advising the County Committee on legal matters was assigned to attorneys in the Legal Services Division. The law prefers that the County Committee access legal services through public sources, such as the Legal Services

Division. When special services are required (such as litigation), the County Committee should have access to legal services from other providers.

Through this Confirmation of Commitment, which I ask that the County Committee also approve, I propose the following:

- Day-to-day legal advice will again be provided to the County Committee by the Legal Services of Division;
- Mr. Rolan will be placed behind an ethical wall, and will not participate, in any way, in matters related to the Legal Services Division's representation of the County Committee;
- Other attorneys in the Legal Services Division (e.g. Ruth Brewda and Lysa Saltzman) will provide day-to-day legal advice to the County Committee;
- Attorneys from the Legal Services Division will attend each County Committee meeting to answer any legal questions which may arise during County Committee meetings;
- Attorneys from the Legal Services Division, who will have an attorney-client relationship with the County Committee, shall promptly inform the County Committee of any attempts by Mr. Rolan to participate in matters related to their representation of County Committee;
- The County Committee will also select a firm from the proposed list, who will assist with special services;
- The selected firm shall be available to the County Committee if there is a dispute between the County Committee and the OCBoE, if there is a matter that is outside the subject matter expertise of the Legal Services Division, or if there is a future conflict of interest precluding the Legal Services Division from representing the County Committee; and,
- Attorneys in the Legal Services Division may consult with the selected firm as needed, or from other firms available to them through the County Superintendent of Schools depending on the needed expertise or collaboration (e.g. Ron Wenkart).

This Commitment strikes the appropriate balance between using public counsel available through the Legal Services Division, while maintaining access to legal counsel for special services should the need arise.

Selection of Legal Counsel Options

Recommended OCDE in-house legal counsel:

- **Ruth D. Brewda and Lysa M. Saltzman of OCDE Legal Services Division.** Both Ms. Brewda and Ms. Saltzman have previously provided legal counsel support to the County Committee on School District Organization.

Additional attorneys identified by the committee:

- **Robin Johansen and Kristen Rogers of Olsen Remcho, LLP.** Ms. Olson has prior experience with the County Committee on School District Organization. Ms. Rogers is Ms. Johansen's colleague, who currently serves as counsel to the Los Angeles County Committee on School District Organization, is also available. They provided rates of \$485 and \$515 per hour.

Attorneys recommended by Mr. De Marco in December 2024:

- **Margaret Chidester and Associates: Steven R. Chidester, Alexandra T. Reynoso, and Ariel K. Greenwood.** Ms. Chidester and her associates have extensive experience with education law. Ms. Chidester disclosed that she is currently engaged in work with OCDE. Rates listed up to \$400 per hour.
- **Michael Travis of BBK (Best Best & Krieger, LLP).** Mr. Travis is experienced in school governance and compliance and has offered competitive rates. Quoted school client's hourly rate at \$345 per hour.
- **Spencer Covert of Parker and Covert, LLP.** Mr. Covert was contacted and expressed appreciation for the County Committee's interest; however, noted potential conflicts that may limit his ability to provide ongoing legal counsel.

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Robin Johansen

SENIOR COUNSEL

Kristen Mah Rogers

PARTNER

Robin Johansen

SENIOR COUNSEL



✉ rjohansen@olsonremcho.com

📞 [510.346.6200](tel:510.346.6200)

Robin B. Johansen is senior counsel with Olson Remcho. She previously co-founded the law firm of Remcho Johansen & Purcell which merged with Olson Hagel & Fishburn LLP in January 2020 to form Olson Remcho. Ms. Johansen was admitted to the California Bar in 1977 and the Bar of the District of Columbia in 1979. She is a graduate of the University of Illinois (B.A., *cum laude*, 1968) and Stanford Law School (J.D., 1977).

Ms. Johansen was Senior Article Editor, *Stanford Law Review*, Volume 29, and is the author of “The New Federalism: Toward a Principled Interpretation of the State Constitution,” 29 *Stanford Law Review* 297, 1977 and “Searches and Seizures on Church Premises: Weighing the Privacy Rights of Religious Bodies” in *Kelley, Government Intervention in Religious Affairs II*.

Ms. Johansen is a member of the California Academy of Appellate Lawyers and appears on the Northern California Super Lawyers list. She served on the Board of Directors of First Place for Youth, a statewide organization serving former foster youth and on the Board of Directors of Coro Northern California. From 1992 to 1993, she was a member of the State Citizens’ Commission on Ballot Initiatives, and in 1974, Ms. Johansen was a research assistant to the U.S. House of Representatives’ Impeachment Inquiry staff.

Ms. Johansen has represented numerous local governmental entities on a variety of public policy issues and has worked extensively on matters involving the initiative and referendum process at both the state and local levels, and on matters of redistricting. She has also represented a broad range of clients, including the California Legislature, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Controller, in public policy, school finance, and constitutional litigation in both state and federal courts.

Representative Highlights +

Results described below were dependent on the facts of that particular case. Prior results do not guarantee or predict similar outcomes.

- *Lee v. City of Los Angeles*, 88 F. Supp. 3d 1140 (C.D. Cal. 2015) (*on appeal*). Successfully defended the City of Los Angeles’s 2012 Redistricting Ordinance against a lawsuit alleging that district boundaries violated the Federal and State Constitutions, and the Los Angeles City Charter.

- *Suever v. Connell*, 579 F.3d 1047 (9th Cir. 2009). Won reversal of district court's ruling that would have required the State to pay interest on unclaimed property, while successfully defending district court victory that shields the State from exposure to an award of damages.
- *Friends of Bay Meadows v. City of San Mateo*, 157 Cal. App. 4th 1175 (2007). Successfully represented a private landowner in dispute over referendum petition.
- *Canatella v. Stovitz*, 213 Fed. Appx. 515 (9th Cir. 2006). Defended constitutionality of attorney discipline proceedings on behalf of the State Bar of California.
- *Independent Energy Producers Association v. McPherson*, 38 Cal. 4th 1020 (2006). Defended Proposition 80 in a case that now defines the standard for pre-election review of ballot measures.
- *Senate v. Jones*, 21 Cal. 4th 1142 (1999). Represented California Senate in successful challenge to the constitutionality of a statewide initiative.

Education

University of Illinois, B.A., *cum laude*, 1968

Stanford Law School, J.D., 1977

Admissions

California

District of Columbia

Practice Areas

Elections & Redistricting

Government Law

Initiatives & Referenda

Legislative & Regulatory Drafting

Litigation & Appeals

Location

Oakland

Sacramento

555 Capitol Mall, Suite 400
Sacramento, CA 95814-4503

Oakland

1901 Harrison Street, Suite 1550
Oakland, CA 94612

Long Beach

555 E. Ocean Boulevard, Suite 420
Long Beach, CA 90802

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Kristen Mah Rogers

PARTNER



✉ krogers@olsonremcho.com

☎ [510.346.6208](tel:510.346.6208)

Kristen M. Rogers is a partner at Olson Remcho LLP.

Ms. Rogers represents public and private clients in litigation over election law, education funding, public policy, and constitutional issues with a focus on federal litigation. Ms. Rogers also advises clients on political and government law matters, including conflict of interest and ethics regulations. Her work has focused on counseling clients on ballot measures and referenda, including drafting statewide and local ballot initiatives, and defending such measures in subsequent litigation, as well as redistricting.

Prior to joining the firm, Ms. Rogers was a litigation associate with Farella Braun + Martel LLP, where she represented clients in high-stakes litigation in civil and criminal matters. From 2014 until mid-2015, she clerked for the Honorable Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers of the United States District Court for the Northern District of California. Before that, she was an associate in the Washington, D.C. office of Jenner & Block LLP, where she represented clients in state and federal litigation on a variety of matters, including successful election redistricting cases involving novel state constitutional questions from the trial court level through expedited state supreme court review.

Throughout her legal career, Ms. Rogers has pursued a diverse pro bono practice, including representing clients seeking asylum and parole, and successfully challenging a statewide voter purge. During law school, Ms. Rogers interned at the San Francisco City Attorney's Office, participated in Harvard's Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative, was a legislative history research assistant for Eloise Pasachoff on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and was an editor for the *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review* and *Harvard Law and Policy Review*. Prior to law school, she taught middle school American history and English language arts as part of Teach for America.

Ms. Rogers is a graduate of University of California, Berkeley (B.A. *with honors*; Phi Beta Kappa), Pace University (M.S.T.), and Harvard Law School (J.D., *cum laude*). She was admitted to the California Bar in 2010 and the District of Columbia Bar in 2012.

🎓 Education

University of California, Berkeley (B.A. 2005) • *with honors*, Phi Beta Kappa

Pace University (M.S.T. 2007)

Harvard Law School (J.D. 2010) • *with honors*

Admissions

California

District of Columbia (inactive)

Practice Areas

Education

Elections & Redistricting

Government Law

Initiatives & Referenda

Litigation & Appeals

Public Retirement Law

Location

Oakland

Sacramento

555 Capitol Mall, Suite 400
Sacramento, CA 95814-4503

Oakland

1901 Harrison Street, Suite 1550
Oakland, CA 94612

Long Beach

555 E. Ocean Boulevard, Suite 420
Long Beach, CA 90802

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Education



Attorneys at Olson Remcho advise and represent private citizens, organizations, and members of the California education community in matters involving state education funding (including funding for state-imposed education mandates and teacher and school employee pension benefits), actions taken by the State Board of Education, and the powers and duties of county and school district boards of education. Our deep experience and expertise in education law includes matters involving Proposition 98, the Local Control Funding Formula, Local Control and Accountability Plans, state-imposed education mandates, teacher and school employee pension benefits, school bonds and parcel taxes, and early education.

We provide our state and local education clients with expert litigation services, as well as support in drafting legislation and ballot measures. Additionally, we advise education clients on all aspects of participation in the political process, including campaign reporting requirements and lobbying.

“ We provide our education clients with expert litigation services, as well as support in drafting legislation and defending ballot measures. ”

Our attorneys regularly advise and represent schools and school districts in matters before the Education Audit Appeals Panel. Our attorneys have a solid record of obtaining substantial reductions in — and in some cases, the complete reversal of — penalties associated with education audit findings against our clients.

Representative Engagements:

- Obtained over \$5 billion in Proposition 98 funding and significant legislative clarification of the constitutional funding obligation through litigation and settlement of *CTA v. Gould* and *CTA v. Schwarzenegger*.
- Achieved state budget augmentation of \$11 billion in Proposition 98 funding following successful resolution of dispute over calculation of constitutional maintenance factor obligation.
- Assisted in negotiating and drafting groundbreaking legislative resolution of the CalSTRS unfunded liability for teacher pensions.
- Settled appeal by Oakland Unified School District, eliminating \$30 million in penalties stemming from an annual compliance audit.
- Reduced liability for several audit findings for Vallejo City Unified School District by almost \$3 million.

- Obtained agreement absolving Mt. Diablo Unified School District of a \$1.3 million penalty associated with audit finding over District's processing of teacher credential documents.

Representative Cases:

Cruz v. State of California, Alameda County Superior Court, No. RG14727139 (2015). Successfully defended the State Board of Education and Superintendent of Public Instruction against a preliminary injunction motion alleging constitutional inadequacies in instructional time.

California Redevelopment Association v. Matosantos, 53 Cal. 4th 231 (2011). Filed amicus curiae brief on behalf of the California Teachers Association in support of the State's efforts to restructure California's redevelopment agencies and provide additional funding for California's public schools.

California School Boards Association v. California State Board of Education, No. C060957, 2010 WL 1692760 (Cal. App. 2010). Represented the California School Boards Association and the California State Superintendent of Public Instruction in a successful challenge to the State Board of Education's effort to force schools to comply with an unfunded mandate that all eighth graders take Algebra I.

California School Boards Association v. California State Board of Education, 186 Cal. App. 4th 1298 (2010). Successful challenge to unlawful action taken by the California State Board of Education in approving a statewide charter.

California School Boards Association v. State of California, 192 Cal. App. 4th 770 (2011). Established that the State's practice of deferring mandate reimbursement to schools was contrary to California law.

California School Boards Association v. State of California, 171 Cal. App. 4th 1183 (2009). Successful challenge to the State's efforts to reduce its obligation to reimburse local governments for state-imposed mandates.

Mendoza v. State of California, 149 Cal. App. 4th 1034 (2007). Successful challenge to state legislation transferring control of the Los Angeles Unified School District to the Mayor.

California Teachers Association v. Schwarzenegger, Sacramento County Superior Court, No. 05CS01165 (2006). Represented the California Teachers Association and the Superintendent of Public Instruction in a successful challenge to efforts to reduce education funding far below the amount agreed upon in the 2004-05 budget compromise. Recovered \$3 billion in Proposition 98 funding for schools and implementation of the Quality Education Investment Act of 2006.

Wilson v. State Board of Education, 75 Cal. App. 4th 1125 (1999). Successfully defended the constitutionality of California's Charter Schools Act of 1992.

McLaughlin v. State Board of Education, 75 Cal. App. 4th 196 (1999). Filed amicus curiae brief in litigation over the authority of the State Board of Education to grant waivers to school districts from the requirements of Proposition 227 (bilingual education).

California Teachers Association v. Gould, Sacramento County Superior Court, No. 373415 (1996). Lead counsel for a coalition of education groups and the Superintendent of Public Instruction in a case challenging education funding components of the 1992-93 budget compromise. The coalition won at the trial court and ultimately negotiated a settlement that restored \$2 billion in school funding.

Pajaro Valley Unified School District School Reorganization. Represented the City of Watsonville in an administrative proceeding before the State Board of Education, successfully opposing an attempt by an affluent portion of the Pajaro Valley Unified School District to split off from the generally less affluent remainder of the District.

ABC Unified School District v. State of California, Orange County Superior Court, No. 686300 (1992). In this sequel to *Serrano v. Priest*, the seminal case requiring equal per-pupil funding in California, the firm successfully defended the California State Superintendent of Public Instruction's compliance with the court's mandate in *Serrano*.

California Teachers Association v. Hayes, 5 Cal. App. 4th 1513 (1992). Represented the California Teachers Association in the first appellate court decision addressing the implementation of legislation implementing the Constitution's minimum funding guarantee for K-14 education.

Serrano v. Priest, 200 Cal. App. 3d 897 (1986). Represented the California State Superintendent of Public Instruction in trial and appellate court litigation upholding the State's compliance with the Supreme Court's order to equalize school funding throughout the State.

**LAW OFFICES OF
MARGARET A. CHIDESTER &
ASSOCIATES**

Margaret A. Chidester

Proprietor

Steven R. Chidester

Managing Partner

Alexandra T. Reynoso

Partner

Ariel K. Greenwood

Associate

LAW OFFICES OF
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MARGARET A. CHIDESTER*
STEVEN R. CHIDESTER
ALEXANDRA T. REYNOSO
ARIEL K. GREENWOOD

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*A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION

REF. OUR FILE

LAW OFFICES OF
MARGARET A. CHIDESTER & ASSOCIATES
FIRM SUMMARY

The Law Offices of Margaret A. Chidester & Associates was formed on September 1, 2000 by Margaret A. Chidester and Steven R. Chidester and consists of four experienced attorneys: Margaret A. Chidester, Steven R. Chidester, Alexandra T. Reynoso, and Ariel K. Greenwood.

CLIENTS

We serve school and community college districts, charter schools, ROPs, and other educational agencies in counsel and special counsel capacities, including the following current clients:

Adelanto Elementary School District
Apple Valley Unified School District
Arcadia Unified School District
Baldy View Regional Occupational Program
California School of the Arts – San Gabriel Valley
Camino Nuevo Charter Academy
Castaic Union School District
Chino Valley Unified School District
Coastline Regional Occupational Program
College & Career Advantage
Colton Redlands Yucaipa Regional Occupational Program
Eastside Union School District
Etiwanda School District
Fontana Unified School District
Fountain Valley School District
Fowler Unified School District
Helendale School District
La Mesa-Spring Valley School District
Lancaster School District
Lucerne Valley Unified School District
Mountain View Elementary School District, Los Angeles County
Mountain View Elementary School District, San Bernardino County
Newhall School District
North Orange County Regional Occupational Program
Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District
Oak Park Unified School District

Orange County Board of Education
Orange County School of the Arts
Para Los Niños
Pleasant Valley School District
Riverside County Office of Education
San Bernardino County Office of Education
San Bernardino Regional Emergency Training Center
Santa Clarita Valley School Food Services Agency
Southern California Regional Occupational Center
Sulphur Springs School District
Tri-Cities Regional Occupational Program
Victor Elementary School District

ATTORNEYS

Professional and Educational Backgrounds of Members of the Firm:

MARGARET A. CHIDESTER

B.A., University of California at Riverside, (Spanish), (with honors);

M.A., Educational Administration, California State University at San Diego;

J.D., University of San Diego, School of Law;

Ed.D., Educational Leadership, University of Southern California, Rossier School of Education.

Legal Experience:

Proprietor, Law Offices of Margaret A. Chidester & Associates, September 1, 2000 – present;

Partner, Parker, Covert and Chidester, 1987-2000;

Associate, Parker and Covert, 1981-1987;

Past Chairman and Member of Board of Directors, National School Boards Association Council of School Attorneys (1993-2005);

Member, California Council of School Attorneys; Member, Board of Directors, 1993-1995.

Publications and Presentations:

Author: “*Employment Litigation Involving the Superintendency: Taking Preventive Contractual Measures.*” Paper presented at 40th Annual Convention. Equity, Excellence, and Equal Education Opportunities: NOLPE and Brown at 40 (1954-1994) San Diego, California;

Co-Author: “*Due Process for School Administrators and School Board Members,*” NSBA Council of School Attorneys School Law in Review, 1985, Volume 1;

Author: “*First Amendment Issues and Pupil Discipline,*” NSBA School Law in Review, 1989;

Co-Author: “*Religious Challenges to Curriculum and Instruction Practices,*” NSBA’s Religion, Education and the U.S. Constitution, 1994;

Author: “*Playing Fair: Litigating State and Local Athletic Eligibility Rules Protecting High School Athletes,*” Legal Handbook on School Athletics, NSBA Council of School Attorneys, March, 1997;

Author: “*Evaluation and Termination of School District Counsel,*” Selecting and Working with a School Attorney: A Guide for School Boards, NSBA Council of School Attorneys, April, 1997;

Co-Author: “*The School Attorney as a Preventive Law Practitioner,*” Selecting and Working With a School Attorney: A Guide for School Boards, NSBA Council of School Attorneys, April, 1997;

Co-Author: “*Use of E-Mail: Traps for the Unsuspecting School Board Member,*” Inquiry and Analysis, NSBA Council of School Attorneys, 2000;

Co-Author: “*E-Mail: ‘Sunshine,’ and Public Records,*” American School Board Journal, July 2000;

School Employers Association Annual Management Conferences on Collective Bargaining, 1982-Present, Presenter at NSBA Council of School Attorneys Annual Meetings, California Council of School Attorneys Continuing Education Seminars, Association of California School Administrators, California Association of School Business Officials and California School Boards Association;

Presenter, ACSA Superintendents’ Academy, 1995-2017, Superintendent Contracts and School Governance Issues;

Presenter, Oxford University Round Table on Education Policy, 2000, Saint Antony's College;

Presenter, California Council of School Attorneys, "*From Findings to Facilities: The High Stakes Nuances of Analyzing the Charter School Petition*," September 2011;

Presenter, National School Boards Association Council of School Attorneys, 2012 School Law Practice Seminar, "*Can Schools be Both Safe and Free? New National Guidelines on Harassment, Bullying, and Freedom of Expression*";

Presenter, School Employers Association of California: School Management Certification Program, 2014-Present, "*The Legal Framework for Collective Bargaining*";

Presenter, California School Boards Association, "*Cutting Edge Legal Issues in Charter Petition Renewal*," November 2017;

Presenter, 2017 Leadership Conference, USC Rossier School of Education;

Presenter, 2019 California Council of School Attorneys Annual Workshop, "*Prayer and Other Religious Statements at Public School Board Meetings*";

Presenter, 2022, National School Boards Association Council of School Attorneys Annual Conference, "*Legal and Practical Strategies for Managing Public Comment in School Board Meetings*";

Presenter, 2022, California Council of School Attorneys Spring Workshop: "*The Perils of School Board Member Censure: Do you REALLY want to go there?*"

Other Language: Spanish

Education Experience:

California Administrative Services Credential (during service as an educator);

Bilingual Certificate of Competence, Spanish (during service as an educator);

Fisher K-8 Credential and E.C.E. Credential (during service as an educator);

Bilingual teacher, grades K-6: Santa Ana Unified School District, Oceanside Unified School District, Fallbrook Elementary School District;

University of Southern California, Delta Epsilon, Best Dissertation Award, Rossier School of Education, 1995: Superintendent Employment Contracts: Legal and Pragmatic Considerations that Affect the Board-Superintendent Relationship;

Adjunct Professor, Educational Leadership and Organizational Change Leadership, Ed.D. Programs, University of Southern California, Rossier School of Education, 1995-present;

Member, Phi Delta Kappa, USC Chapter; Past President, Delta Epsilon, USC Rossier School of Education;

Member, USC Rossier School of Education, Board of Councilors, 2000-present;

Member, USC Alumni Association Board of Governors, 2004-2005;

Recognized by USC RSOE Dean's Superintendents Advisory Group (DSAG) as 2022 Hall of Fame Inductee.

STEVEN R. CHIDESTER

B.A., San Diego State University, (Psychology);

B.A., cum laude, San Diego State University, (Sociology);

J.D., Western State University College of Law, Fullerton California;

Honors: Golden Key National Honor Society (3.5+ G.P.A.);
American Jurisprudence Awards: Family Law and Criminal Law;
Western State University College of Law, President's Scholarship.

Legal Experience:

Managing Partner, Law Offices of Margaret A. Chidester & Associates, commencing September 2000, specializing in representation of school districts and education agencies;

Solo practice, 1992-2000, Law Offices of Steven R. Chidester;

Associate Attorney, Law Offices of Neben & Starrett, Inc., Newport Beach, 1991-1992.

Education Experience:

Emeritus Institute Instructor, "*Law for the Layman*" course, Irvine Valley College, Irvine, CA. 1998 to 2010;

Paralegal Instructor, American Career College, Irvine, CA, 1997-1998.

Publications and Presentations:

Presenter, 2019 California Council of School Attorneys Annual Workshop, “*Prayer and Other Religious Statements at Public School Board Meetings*”;

Presenter, 2022, National School Boards Association Council of School Attorneys Annual Conference, “*Legal and Practical Strategies for Managing Public Comment in School Board Meetings*”;

Presenter, 2022, California Council of School Attorneys Spring Workshop: “*The Perils of School Board Member Censure: Do you REALLY want to go there?*”

Steven Chidester has represented school districts in all aspects of charter school law, including review and analysis of charter petitions and providing advice to Governing Boards as to how petitions can be lawfully denied. He advises on all charter school legal compliance issues, including, but not limited to, Brown Act and financial reporting. He has extensive experience in the remediation proceeding for charter authorizers to identify and direct correction of charter school activity that could result in financial or governance infractions that cause instability of charter schools authorized by district clients.

When denied charter petitioners appeal to the County Board of Education, Steven has identified objections for the school district to support its denial before the County Board and at the state level. Steven Chidester has appeared and represented school districts on multiple occasions before the California Charter Schools Advisory Commission and the State Board of Education when charter petitioners have appealed Denials.

Steven has appeared in Superior Court, representing school districts, and has participated as counsel in defending appeals from charter school petitions denied at the Superior Court level.

Steven teaches workshops for school district administrators, including, but not limited to, responding to and analyzing subpoenas, analysis of child custody orders, booster clubs, ASB fund management, best practices to avoid fraud, nonprofit organizations including foundations supporting school districts, pupil suspensions, and pupil expulsions.

Steven taught the “*Law for the Layman*” course at a community college for over ten years. “*Law for the Layman*” was a class for laypersons on introduction to the law, including basic elements of state and federal constitutions, substantive and procedural due process, consumer law issues, and related legal subjects.

Steven has had extensive experience in school facilities, including in assisting school districts in responding to Proposition 39 charter school facilities requests and limiting charter facilities provided by school districts to those required by law. He has had extensive experience in Public Contracts Code requirements concerning the lowest, responsible bidder and the public hearings that may result.

Steven has twenty-five years of experience in supporting school districts with charter school oversight requirements to comply with their legal obligations and to avoid school district liability for failure to comply with the Charter School Act's statutory oversight obligations. His expertise at the local and appellate levels, including before the California Supreme Court, demonstrates his deep knowledge of charter school issues and his commitment to protecting charter school authorizing school districts.

ALEXANDRA T. REYNOSO

B.A., cum laude, Occidental College, Los Angeles, CA (History);

J.D., Chapman University Dale E. Fowler School of Law, Orange, CA.

Legal Experience:

Partner, Law Offices of Margaret A. Chidester & Associates, July 2024 – present;

Associate, Law Offices of Margaret A. Chidester & Associates, December 2021 – June 2024;

Law Clerk, Law Offices of Margaret A. Chidester & Associates, August 2021 – November 2021;

Law Clerk, Los Angeles City Attorney's Office, Los Angeles, CA, May 2020 – July 2020;

Law Clerk, Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, San Fernando, CA, May 2019 – July 2019.

Alexandra Reynoso has extensive experience in assisting school districts in charter school law matters including enforcing statutory requirements on charter schools, reviewing and analyzing charter petitions, and supporting school districts in complying with their legal oversight requirements.

She has in-depth experience assisting school districts and charter schools conduct complaint investigations of alleged unlawful discrimination under state law uniform complaint procedures, as well as experience in sexual harassment investigations under Title IX.

Ms. Reynoso has represented school districts and charter schools in administrative hearings including personnel matters before the California Public Employment Relations Board and the California Labor Commissioner.

Ms. Reynoso has expertise and extensive experience in the obligations and rights of Regional Occupational Programs that serve students in member districts via Joint Powers Agreements.

ARIEL K. GREENWOOD

B.A., University of California, Riverside, CA (English);

J.D., University of California, Irvine, CA.

Legal Experience:

Associate, Law Offices of Margaret A. Chidester & Associates, January 2023 – present;

Law Clerk, Law Offices of Margaret A. Chidester & Associates, September 2022 – December 2022;

Legal Intern, Office of the City Attorney, Orange, CA, January 2022 – May 2022;

Legal Advocate, Frank D. Lanterman Special Education Legal Clinic, Los Angeles, CA, May 2021 – August 2021.

Ms. Greenwood has extensive experience as a complaint investigator as co-investigator for complaints of unlawful discrimination.

She has served as co-investigator in instances of alleged employee misconduct that results in disciplinary proceedings.

SUMMARY OF EDUCATION LAW EXPERTISE

The firm has over 65 years of collective experience in all legal and policy matters pertaining to governance and operation of public schools and community college districts, charter schools, joint powers agencies, and regional occupational programs.

The firm's Attorneys have been invited speakers on pupil, governance, labor, and employment law issues at national and state conferences of the ACSA, NSBA, CASBO, CSBA, SEAC, the American Association of School Personnel Administrators the National Organization of Legal Problems in Education, and the Cal Poly Pomona Ed.D. program, as well as in continuing legal education programs for California school lawyers. We have extensive experience in representing school districts in compliance investigations by the Office for Civil Rights, the California Department of Education, and other state and federal agencies.

We have over 45 years of collective expertise in charter school representation, formation, renewal, revocation, governance, collective bargaining, and litigation. We draft policies for charter school boards and provide legal representation in their employee discipline matters.

Our Attorneys have extensive experience in litigation involving public entities before all levels of the California state courts, including the California Supreme Court, California Courts of

Appeal, the Federal District courts, and the United States Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit, as well as before numerous administrative agencies such as the Office for Civil Rights, the Public Employment Relations Board, the Department of Fair Employment and Housing, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the California State Board of Education, Commissions on Professional Competence, and numerous arbitrators and hearing panels.

Our litigation experience includes the following published appellate decisions:

Newport-Mesa Unified School District v. Hubert (1982) 132 Cal.App.3d 724, 183 Cal.Rptr. 334;

Gardner v. Commission on Professional Competence, Board of Education of the Tustin Unified School District (1985) 164 Cal.App.3d 1035, 210 Cal.Rptr. 795;

El Camino Community College District v. Superior Court (1985) 173 Cal.App.3d 606, 219 Cal.Rptr. 236;

Jones v. Palm Springs Unified School District (1985) 170 Cal.App.3d 521, 216 Cal.Rptr. 75;

Bassett Unified School District v. Commission on Professional Competence (1988) 201 Cal.App.3d 1444, 247 Cal.Rptr. 865;

Choice-In-Education League v. Los Angeles Unified School District (1993) 17 Cal.App.4th 415, 21 Cal.Rptr.2d 303 (Amici Curiae for Education Legal Alliance for the Los Angeles Unified School District);

Gallup v. Alta Loma School District Board of Trustees (1996) 41 Cal.App.4th 1571, 49 Cal.Rptr.2d 289;

Summerfield v. Windsor Unified School District (2002) 95 Cal.App.4th 1026, 116 Cal.Rptr.2d 233 (Amici Curiae for the Education Legal Alliance);

Culbertson v. San Gabriel Unified School District (2004) 121 Cal.App.4th 1392, review denied 2004 Cal. Lexis (Amici Curiae for the Education Legal Alliance);

Bakersfield Elementary Teachers Association v. Bakersfield City School District (2006) 145 Cal.App.4th 1260 (Amici Curiae for the Education Legal Alliance);

Corales, et al., v. Bennett, et al. Ninth Circuit (2009) No: 567 F.3d 554;

North Orange County Regional Occupational Program v. Regional Occupational Program Educational Association of North Orange County CTA/NEA – PERB Decision No. 857;

Temple City Educators Association CTA/NEA v. Temple City USD – PERB Decision No. 1972;

Castaic Union School District v. California School Employees Association, Chapter 401 – PERB
Order No. Ad-384; and

Scott B. v. Board of Trustees of Orange County High School of the Arts (2013) 217 Cal.App.4th
117.





Michael T. Travis

PARTNER



Michael T. Travis
Partner
(949) 263-6591
michael.travis@bbklaw.com

April 3, 2025

Dean West
Associate Superintendent, Business Services
Orange County Department of Education
200 Kalmus Drive
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
Email: dwest@ocde.us

Re: General Counsel Qualifications for the Orange County Committee for
School District Organization

Dear Mr. West:

On behalf of Best Best & Krieger LLP (BBK), I am pleased to present my and the firm's qualifications to provide general Counsel legal services to the Orange County Committee for School District Organization (County Committee).

The firm has the full ability to attend County Committee meetings and a true desire to represent the County Committee. I, Michael T. Travis, will serve as the lead attorney for this proposed effort. I provide strategic, forward-thinking solutions to a broad range of public sector clients, including cities, counties, school districts, community college districts and universities. With a practice centered on resolving complex labor and employment matters, I advise on navigating challenges of personnel management, investigations, governance, administrative hearings and high-stakes litigation. My full biography is attached for your review.

Firm Background

Clients trust the legal professionals of BBK not only for our comprehensive legal knowledge and industry understanding, but for our commitment to providing excellent counsel and building relationships based on integrity. More than 130 years after the founding of our firm, we value our clients' continued trust, which has allowed BBK to increase our range of legal services and expand our platform to nearly 250 attorneys and 12 offices nationwide.

Educational institutions, like any public agency, are challenged to operate under applicable federal, state and local laws with scarce resources and support. They are set apart from typical government organizations, having the charge to educate students while complying with strict regulations. Many of the issues they routinely face require experienced and knowledgeable counsel.

BBK provides comprehensive, cost-effective legal solutions for public and private K-12 schools, school districts, county offices of education, community colleges and universities and education foundations. We partner with our educational clients, listening carefully to the issues and working collaboratively to develop practical and legal options and solutions.

Focused Governance Experience for School Districts

Currently, BBK serves as general counsel for many of our school district clients, advising in all areas of government relations on a daily basis in the most efficient and economical manner possible. This means, regardless of the specific area of law at issue, we listen carefully to the problem facing the school district and then work collaboratively with our clients to develop practical options and solutions to the issue consistent with the applicable law. Our goal is to establish long-term relationships with our clients based on the principles of trust and open communication.

If selected, BBK would be pleased to have experienced counsel attend governing board meetings and committee meetings in order to provide the County Committee **Board Counsel and Support**. In addition to assistance with personnel items, updates on pending litigation and other closed session items, the firm would be prepared to have attorneys present for the public session to ensure compliance with the Brown Act and Governing Board policies. We are very familiar with model policies, such as those developed by the California School Boards Association, and have assisted school boards in confirming their validity and adapting them to local use.

Our **Public Policy and Ethics Compliance Group** counsels public agencies and officials who wish to promote public confidence in their decision-making processes by assuring that official conduct is above reproach. In response to rising public scrutiny of governmental ethics, all levels of government are adopting, re-examining, and strengthening standards of ethics and accountability. Regulatory bodies — including environmental, financial and political — have adopted aggressive policies to pursue and prosecute violations.

The group's goals are to better provide comprehensive and strategic compliance solutions to public agencies and corporations attempting to align with new public scrutiny, standards and regulations; to advise and represent clients on public integrity issues involving political practices; and to inform clients of pertinent federal, state and local legislation including the Political Reform Act, the Brown Act and the Public Records Act.

BBK provides advice regarding the interpretation and application of the **Ralph M. Brown Act** to our public entity clients. Advice often pertains to:

- Requirements for agenda preparation, posting and distribution
- Closed session topics and reporting
- Notices and agendas for special and emergency meetings
- Adding agenda items after agenda is posted
- Conducting meetings by teleconferencing

- Application of Brown Act to committees of official bodies
- Avoiding violations and penalties

We also defend challenges to our clients’ compliance with the Brown Act. The attorneys proposed for this team have served as Brown Act instructors for the League of California Cities and the Special District Institute. We have established good working relationships with regional media, including interfacing with their editors on issues relating to our clients’ legal affairs or inaccuracies in their reporting.

BBK attorneys advise clients on all aspects of the **California Public Records Act** through BBK’s Advanced Records Center, a specialized team of lawyers and paralegals with unique skills the preservation, collection and production of electronically stored information . We routinely brief our clients on pending legislation and cases in this area. With the emergence of new technology, we regularly advise clients regarding the use of email, records retention, and the public’s right to access electronic information. We regularly speak at seminars and workshops regarding updates concerning the Public Records Act and email/technology issues.

BBK has extensive knowledge of the **Political Reform Act** and its requirements for conflict of interest codes and restrictions regarding conflict of interest matters. We provide regular training to boards and their staff in Political Reform Act compliance. We frequently provide advice to elected and non-elected public officials regarding conflict of interest laws, such as the Political Reform Act (Government Code § 81000 et seq.), self-interested contracts (Government Code § 1090), campaign contribution conflicts (Government Code § 84308) and the incompatibility of public offices.

School District Clients

BBK handles a wide variety of day-to-day general matters, administrative and education law issues and other problems that arise for many school districts throughout the state. We have represented, or are currently representing, numerous public and private higher education institutions and districts, including:

Public School District Clients		
Alvord Unified School District	Glendale Unified School District	Norris School District
Anaheim Union High School District	Goleta Union School District	Nuview Union School District
Bear Valley Unified School District	Gompers Preparatory Academy	Oceanside Unified School District
Beverly Hills Unified School District	Green Dot Public Schools California	Ontario-Montclair School District
Blochman Union School District	Grossmont Union High School District	Palm Desert Charter Middle School
Bonita Unified School District	Hanover County Public Schools (Virginia)	Perris Union High School District
Bonsall Unified School District	Hemet Unified School District	Poway Unified School District
Borrego Springs Unified School District	Hope Elementary School District	Ramona Unified School District

Public School District Clients		
Cajon Valley Union School District	John Adams Academies, Inc.	Riverside Unified School District
Calipatria Unified School District	Jurupa Unified School District	Rosemead School District
Cardiff School District	Laguna Beach Unified School District	San Bernardino City Unified School District
Carpinteria Unified School District	Lakeside Union School District	San Dieguito Union High School District
Cayucos Elementary School District	Lawndale Elementary School District	San Jacinto Unified School District
Central Union High School District	Lemon Grove School District	San Juan Unified School District
Clarke County School District (Georgia)	Lewis Center for Educational Research Academy	San Marcos Unified School District
Coast Unified School District	Little Lake City School District	San Ysidro School District
Colton Joint Unified School District	Loma Prieta Joint Union School District	Santa Barbara School District
Covina-Valley Unified School District	Lompoc Unified School District	Solana Beach School District
Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District	Los Angeles Unified School District	South Bay Union School District
Da Vinci Schools	Los Banos Unified School District	Sweetwater Union High School District
Del Mar Union School District	Los Gatos-Saratoga Union High School District	Troup County School System (Georgia)
Downey Unified School District	Madera Unified School District	Val Verde Unified School District
El Centro School District	Mendocino Unified School District	Vallecitos School District
El Rancho Unified School District	Moreland School District	Washington Charter School
El Sol Santa Ana Science and Arts Charter Academy	Moreno Valley Unified School District	West Georgia Regional Educational Service Agency (Georgia)
Encinitas Union School District	Mountain View School District	Whittier Union High School District
Fullerton School District	Newport-Mesa Unified School District	Yucaipa-Calimesa Joint Unified School District

College and Community College District Clients	
Antelope Valley College	North Orange County Community College District
Barstow Community College District	Palomar Community College District
Cerritos Community College District	Regents of the University of California – Merced
Chaffey College	Riverside Community College District
Concordia University Irvine	San Diego Community College District
Desert Community College District	South Orange County Community College District
Glendale Community College District	Southwestern Community College District
Grossmont Cuyamaca Community College District	Southwestern University
Hartnell Community College District	State Center Community College District
Imperial Community College District	UC Regents – Office of the President
Long Beach Community College District	University of California, Berkeley
Los Angeles Community College District	Ventura County Community College District
Los Rios Community College District	Whittier College
Mt. San Antonio College	Yosemite Community College District
Mt. San Jacinto College	Young American College of the Performing Arts
National University	

Education Agency, Association, Foundation and Corporation Clients	
Alliance for College-Ready Public Schools	Riverside County Office of Education
Altus Schools San Diego Corp. and Southern California Corp.	San Diego Continuing Education Foundation
Aspire Public Schools	San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE)
Fontana Public School Education Foundation	SDCOE – Fringe Benefits Consortium
Foundation for California Community Colleges	San Diego County Superintendent of Schools
Northern California Child Development, Inc.	Schools Insurance Group
Partnership for Los Angeles Schools	Victor Valley College District Foundation, Inc.
Placer County Office of Education	

Hourly Rates for Legal Services

Basic legal services include all services provided to the County Committee that are not otherwise specifically identified below as other legal services. Our proposed hourly rates for basic legal services are:

Partners and Of Counsel	\$345
Associates	\$310
Paralegals, Law Clerks and Analysts	\$190

For special counsel legal services, including but not limited to labor relations and employment matters, BBK attorneys will bill at then-current individual public rates which are based on experience and areas of practice. Our individual public rates currently fall within the following rates and ranges: Partners and Of Counsel range from \$345 - \$685 per hour; Associates range from \$310 - \$340 per hour; Pension Consultants at \$285 per hour; Paralegals, Law Clerks and Analysts from \$190 - \$270 per hour; Consultants and Government Affairs from \$285 - \$510 per hour.

Our special counsel legal services include:

- Litigation and formal administrative or other adjudicatory hearing matters
- Labor relations and employment matters
- Non-routine real estate matters (e.g. CC&R’s, deed or title work)
- Land acquisition and disposal matters (including pre-condemnation)
- Successor Agency and housing matters
- Taxes, fees and charges matters (e.g. Prop. 218 and Mitigation Fee Act)
- Public construction disputes
- Non-routine contract negotiation matters (including non-BBK model agreements and franchise agreements)
- Non-routine land use and development matters (including general plan updates, Williamson Act issues, annexations and development agreements)
- Environmental matters (e.g. CEQA, NEPA, endangered species)
- Water law matters (e.g. water rights and quality)

- Tax and ERISA related matters, Employee Benefits
- Toxic substances matters (e.g. CERCLA, RCRA)
- Complex public utility matters (e.g. electric, natural gas, telecommunications, water, rail or transit that involve state or federal regulatory issues)
- Renewable energy and energy efficiency project contracts and power purchase agreements
- Intergovernmental Relations and Advocacy efforts (e.g. legislative and regulatory representation) at the federal and state level
- Non-routine election law matters, including election law litigation
- PRA Policy drafting including reviewing, assessing and updating records-related policies
- Other matters mutually agreed upon between BBK and the County Committee

The above rates will be adjusted annually. Beginning July 1, 2026 and every July 1 thereafter with advanced written notice, the blended rates above for Basic Legal Services shall be increased for the change in the cost of living for the most recently published twelve (12) month period, as shown by the U.S. Department of Labor in its All Urban Consumers Index set forth Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA area (monthly) provided, however, that such adjustment shall never be lower than zero percent (0%). The individual rates for Special Counsel Legal Services are subject to annual adjustment as well, adjusting for inflation and market trends as is appropriate for each area of specialization.

BBK does not charge for routine word processing, legal assistants, clerical costs, administrative support staff, secretarial costs, and office costs, including telephone and fax charges. Reimbursement of costs advanced by BBK on behalf of the County Committee as well as other expenses will be billed at actual cost. These currently include, but are not limited to, mileage at the IRS authorized rate; actual expenses for being away from our offices on County Committee business; postage; legal research; and any cost of printing or reproducing documents, photographs, electronically stored information (ESI) if needed, or other items necessary for legal representation.

The BBK Advantage

There are several key advantages that BBK can bring to the County Committee:

Focused Legal Counsel: At BBK, we support the County Committee's mission to make recommendations in the areas of (a) the organization and reorganization of school districts; (b) changes in school district boundaries; and (c) the number of trustees and the manner by which they are elected. We can help the County Committee accomplish its mission by providing full general counsel service based on our practical experience. Our practice is focused on serving as counsel to public agencies, including K-12 public school districts, throughout California. Because of our experience, we understand the complex and challenging legal issues facing public districts and we are uniquely qualified to provide comprehensive and cost-effective legal services.

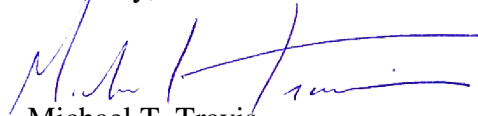
Established Experience: Established in 1891, BBK has provided legal services to cities, counties, special districts, joint powers authorities, and other public agencies for over 130 years. Our attorneys currently represent more than 800 special districts, including K-12 public school districts as general or special counsel, providing a long track record successful of legal representation from which the County Committee can benefit.

Effective Communication: Communication is the cornerstone of our legal services. First and foremost, our goals are to understand the District's expectations and needs, provide timely and accurate responses to the District's requests, anticipate and identify potential legal pitfalls and cultivate an effective and efficient working relationship. BBK attorneys are accessible to accommodate client needs, and we understand that time-sensitive demands require special attention.

Continuing Education and Empowerment: BBK is dedicated to keeping our attorneys and our clients up to date on current issues in areas of law that matter to them. We offer online resources to our clients where BBK attorneys share thought leadership and insight on legal issues, trending topics and challenges municipalities and public agencies face every day. We also offer an online Learning Hub with relevant and curated course offerings. Through our online education resources, BBK invites visitors to connect with the BBK attorneys who are deeply involved with these public law topics and share their thoughts on challenges and solutions.

I appreciate your consideration of BBK's qualifications and would be honored to have the chance to discuss what I and BBK can bring to the County Committee as you face today's governing challenges and changing educational landscape.

Sincerely,



Michael T. Travis
of BEST BEST & KRIEGER LLP

MTT

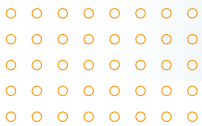
Attachment



PARTNER

Michael Travis

📍 Irvine, CA 📞 (949) 263-6591 ✉️ michael.travis@bbklaw.com



Best Best & Krieger LLP (BBK) Partner Michael T. Travis provides strategic, forward-thinking solutions to a broad range of public sector clients, including cities, counties, school districts, community college districts, and universities. With a practice centered on resolving complex labor and employment matters, Michael advises on navigating challenges of personnel management, investigations, governance, administrative hearings, and high-stakes litigation.

Michael also represents clients before the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB), Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH), Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), and the Office for Civil Rights (OCR). He has significant experience advising public employers regarding the Public Safety Officers Procedural Bill of Rights Act (POBR) and Firefighters Procedural Bill of Rights Act (FBOR). He has led large-scale harassment and discrimination investigations and handled administrative hearings for multiple law enforcement agencies throughout the state.

Before joining BBK, Michael served as both general and special counsel at prominent California-based firms, advising public entities on a wide range of legal issues, including the Brown Act, the California Public Records Act, and Title IX.

Recognized for his excellence in education law, Michael was named a Super Lawyers Rising Star from 2013 to 2020. He is admitted to practice before the U.S. District Court for the Central and Eastern Districts of California.

Notable Experience

- *In re RC* (2022) Tenured Faculty Dismissal. The Office of Administrative Hearings upheld the termination of a long-time tenured community college faculty soccer coach after 11 days of trial for permitting a sexually harassing and intimidating environment on the women's soccer team, and for failing to stop retaliation for protected activity.
- *In re AF* (2021) Permanent Classified Dismissal. Successfully obtained arbitration award sustaining the termination of a permanent classified employee for theft, dishonesty and failure to cooperate with an investigation. The case was based entirely on circumstantial evidence.
- *Somin v. Porter* (2018) 2nd District Court of Appeal, Division 7, No. B271775. Court upheld the issuance of a restraining order against community college student who threatened an instructor on Facebook. Review was denied by the California Supreme Court.

CORE PRACTICES

- Education Law
- Labor & Employment
- Municipal Law

EDUCATION & ADMISSIONS

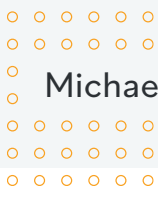
Education

Chapman University Dale E. Fowler School of Law, J.D.

Pepperdine University, B.A., journalism

Bar Admissions

California



Accolades

- Super Lawyers, Rising Star, Schools and Education, 2013 - 2020

Professional & Community Involvement

- American Bar Association
- State Bar of California
- The Literacy Project, Board of Directors