JANET HORTON

PARTNER • HOUSTON

JHORTON@THOMPSONHORTON.COM
713-554-6746

Janet has devoted her entire legal career to working with public schools. She has worked tirelessly for her school law clients in a range of matters, including a particular focus on special education and disability law. Janet's years of experience, paramount attention to detail, and determination result in the best possible counsel for her clients.

Janet has represented public schools for her entire career. A former public-school teacher, Janet has expansive knowledge of the full range of issues affecting her clients. Janet effectively advocates for her clients in disputes involving special education and disability law, civil rights, employee and student issues. Janet has dedicated much of her practice to assisting her clients in all aspects of special education law. She provides a complete range of services from advising districts in order to avoid legal conflicts, to attending ARD meetings and to handling due process hearings and appeals.

In addition, Janet assists school districts with all facets of employment law, board policy development, Open Meetings Act issues and the negotiation of superintendents' contracts. She handles Public Information Act questions and all issues regarding students including student discipline, constitutional rights, and complaints to the United States Office of Civil Rights under Section 504 and Title II of the ADA. At the state and federal level, Janet collaborates with lawmakers to communicate the concerns of public school clients regarding legislative matters, especially those dealing with special education.

SELECTED CLIENT REPRESENTATIONS

Successfully defended a district in a special education due process hearing alleging a child find violation

Successfully defended a district in a complaint to the Office of Civil Rights alleging discrimination in the use of restraint and time out

Worked with an education service center to develop a resource for districts regarding assessing students for special education eligibility in compliance with the Texas Corrective Action Plan

Worked with an education service center to develop a resource for districts regarding independent educational evaluations including guidelines and forms

Lead a team of special education assessment experts to review a district's special education program focusing particularly on assessment practices and procedures

Successfully defended a district in a civil rights lawsuit based on the death of a student

Successfully defended a district in a civil rights lawsuit based on the death of a disabled student

Regularly advised principals regarding nonrenewal and termination of teachers

Advised district on the district of innovation process resulting in one of the first district of innovation plans filed with the Texas Education Agency

Successfully defended a district from an attempt to detach property and annex it to another district

PRACTICE AREAS

Constitutional Law
Employment Law
General Counsel / Board Counsel
Government Relations & Public Policy
Litigation
Special Education & Disability Law
Student Issues
Training & Compliance

EDUCATION

J.D., The University of Texas School of Law, 1980

B.A., with honors, The University of Texas at Austin, 1975

LICENSING & COURT ADMISSIONS

Licensed in the state of Texas

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

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit

U.S. Supreme Court

MEMBERSHIPS & RECOGNITIONS

Texas "Super Lawyer," Texas Monthly magazine, 2004-2019 and 2021-2024

Texas Association of School Boards Council of School Attorneys; Chair, 1999-2000

Texas Association of School Boards, Legal Assistance Fund Board of Trustees, 1998-2000

State Bar of Texas, School Law Section; Chair, 1988-1989; Kelly Frels Lifetime Achievement Award, 2017

National School Boards Association Council of School Attorneys; Executive Committee, 2000 – 2002

Texas Bar Foundation, Life Fellow

Thompson & Horton LLP

ATTORNEYS | COUNSELORS

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REPRESENTATIVE PRESENTATIONS, TRAININGS, & SPEECHES

"What's Going on with LRE", ED311/TCASE Spring Conference Special Education Law

"How the IDEA Affects Discipline Decisions When Special Education Students Pose a Threat", TASA/TASB Convention

"Preparing for the 86th Session of the Texas Legislature", GCASE Annual Conference

"Special Education Classroom Camera Requirements", TASA/TASB Convention

"What to Expect from TEA's Corrective Action Plan", Region 4 Education Service Center

"School Bond Election Do's and Don'ts for School Leaders", Spring Branch ISD

"Section 504 and the ADA – Not Just for Students", GCASE Annual Conference

"A Documentation System for Teacher Improvement or Termination" – Seventh Edition; Co-Author; Education Law Association