DIANNA BOWEN

PARTNER • DALLAS/FORT WORTH

DBOWEN@THOMPSONHORTON.COM
972-734-5416

Dianna's youngest child was born with numerous special needs. Through years of nurses, hospitals, and therapies, Dianna's understanding of the hurdles parents of special needs children face, as well as the struggles schools face to meet these hurdles, grew. Now, she takes that knowledge and understanding to help schools handle legal issues surrounding special education, students, and personnel with a focus on what all educators think of first - the child.

Dianna is a partner in the Dallas and Fort Worth offices of Thompson & Horton LLP. For over twenty years, she has successfully defended public school districts, charter schools, independent schools, and public and private colleges and universities on a wide range of school law issues from special education to employment issues. Dianna represents her clients in all aspects of litigation, including proceedings before the governing body, in state and federal courts and before administrative agencies. She also counsels and advises her clients in formulating preventive strategies, drafting personnel and student policies and procedures, and training employees in all areas of school law.

Dianna has represented school districts in over 50 special education due process hearings before a special education hearing officer appointed by TEA and over 100 nonrenewal and termination hearings under Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code in front of a hearing officer appointed by TEA and/or the district board of trustees. In addition, Dianna has had great success litigating cases in state and federal court, including the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, regarding claims brought under federal and state law related to special education and employment matters. Dianna has been repeatedly recognized as a Texas Rising Star in the area of School Law. And, she is the mother of three red-haired children, one of whom was born with special needs.

SELECTED CLIENT REPRESENTATIONS

Drafted model special education procedures on all facets of the Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process

Successfully represented public school district in appeal to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals regarding special education request for reimbursement for a student attending private school

Represented public school district in trial court and Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals regarding alleged violations of Title IX regarding a special education student

Successfully represented public school districts in over 100 termination or nonrenewal hearings, over 200 grievance hearings, and over 50 special education due process hearings.

Successfully represented independent school in lawsuit brought by parent alleging breach of fiduciary duty, fraud, and conspiracy for retention of student.

Successfully resolved Section 1983 lawsuit alleging injury to a student

Achieved full dismissal of 2 lawsuits alleging violations of IDEA, Section 504, Section 1983 and ADA

Achieved full dismissal of 11-cause of action employment dispute in federal court for community college

Achieved successful results in over 30 mediations regarding employment disputes and special education matters.

PRACTICE AREAS

Employment Law
Litigation
Private/Independent Schools
Special Education & Disability Law
Special Investigations
Student Issues
Training & Compliance

EDUCATION

J.D., with honors, The University of Texas School of Law, 1999

B.S, University of Texas at Austin, 1995

LICENSING & COURT ADMISSIONS

Licensed in the state of Texas

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit

U.S. District Court for the Northern, Southern, Eastern, and Western Districts of Texas

MEMBERSHIPS & RECOGNITIONS

Texas Rising Star, School Law

Texas Association of School Boards -- Council of School Attorneys

State Bar of Texas, School Law Section

Dallas Bar Association

Texas Council of Administrators of Special Education

Chancellor, Saint Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church (2008-present)

Vestry Member, Saint Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church (2008-2010)

Thompson & Horton LLP

ATTORNEYS | COUNSELORS

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SELECTED CLIENT REPRESENTATIONS (CONTINUED)

Defended schools in multiple Office of Civil Rights investigations

Provided training and advice and counsel for over 30 public school districts and 20 independent schools

REPRESENTATIVE PRESENTATIONS, TRAININGS, & SPEECHES

Understanding PLAAFPs to Create Legally Compliant IEPs

An IEP is Only Worth the PLAAFP It's Written On

Compensatory Services — A New Tool for Compliance It's A New World: Special Education and Section 504 Services During and After COVID-19

Developing Legally-Compliant and Understandable Special Education Operating Procedures

The New Era of Title IX: What Every School District Should Know

A Top 20 Hits of Legal Issues in Special Education

Reasonable Accommodations: What's Required of You Under the Americans with Disabilities Act

FMLA Basics for School Supervisors

ABCs of Prior Written Notice

Texas K-12 – Title IX Compliance and Investigations

Good Communication in the Digital World: Prevent Embarrassments and Avoid Liability

Effective IEP Team Documentation: An IEP is Worth a 1,000 Words

Internal Employee Investigations: Do's and Don'ts

There's a New Standard of FAPE – Fact or Fiction?

Ethics: Always on Call – The School Attorney's Guide to Texts, Emails, and Late-Night Phone Calls

Cameras in the Classroom

Don't be Handicapped When Dealing with Student Disabilities

Investigations: She Said What?!? Effective Workplace Investigations

Student/Adult Interactions: Respect the Boundaries or Pay the Price

My Space, Your Space, Our Space: Managing Social Media in Schools

E-Myth Busters: Technology Trends and Traps

An Introduction to Education Law

Accommodating Disabilities: New Issues and Trends

ARD Meeting Do's and Don'ts

Lessons Learned: TEA Due Process Hearings

Student Health Service Trends: Educating the Medically Fragile Student

Investigations of Students and Employees: Traps for the Unwary

Sexual Harassment of Students and Employees: A Short Course

This is Going on Your Permanent Record: Effective Employee Documentation

Electronic Security Issues and School Policies in the Age of Social Media

A Practical Perspective on Employee and Student ADA Accommodations

Child Abuse and How to Deal with CPS

10 Things You Should Know Before Going Back to School