Avoiding the Principal’s Office: How to Avoid Common Legal Mistakes Made When Educating and Serving Students with Disabilities

Special education lawsuits are among the most prevalent suits faced by schools and districts throughout the country. District staff, school administrators, service providers, and teachers need to be aware of the rules and regulations of special education laws to avoid unintentionally violating these laws and ending up in protracted legal battles. This presentation will discuss some of the common problems and pitfalls that attorneys for parents and families encounter in representing their clients across Louisiana school districts. Specifically, the presentation will address common legal mistakes schools make involving discipline, developing IEPs, evaluations, educating students in the least restrictive environment (LRE), extended school year (ESY), and more.

Friday, January 29, 2016
9am–12pm
Human Development Center
411 S. Prieur St., New Orleans, LA

Register for this Event

$40 if registered by January 25
$50 if registered after January 25 or at the door

For more information please email Dr. Jennifer Maynard at jmayn2@lsuhsc.edu
CEUs will be provided
Meet our Presenters

Eden Heilman is the Managing Attorney and Director of the Southern Poverty Law Center’s office in New Orleans, Louisiana. She represents children and families in civil rights claims against schools, districts, and state agencies, and works to ensure children’s access to public education and to reform ineffective school discipline practices that push children out of school and into the justice system. Eden is also the lead attorney on the litigation P.B., et al v. John White, a class action on behalf of more than 4,500 students with disabilities in New Orleans against the Louisiana Department of Education. Eden has presented at dozens of national conferences, including the American Bar Association, Urban League, Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA), and the Children’s Defense Fund, and she has provided expert testimony about education issues before the U.S. Department of Justice. She has also authored several publications on matters such as the exclusion of children with disabilities from public charter schools, the education system in post-Katrina New Orleans, and the excessive use of harsh discipline practices in public schools. Prior to joining the Southern Poverty Law Center, Eden was an attorney for the Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana (JJPL). She received her law degree from Loyola University New Orleans College of Law, her master’s degree from Tulane University School of Social Work, and her bachelor’s degree from the University of Florida.

Jennifer Coco, a senior staff attorney with the Southern Poverty Law Center’s Louisiana office, brings extensive experience providing legal advocacy on behalf of public school students with disabilities. She has worked in various capacities in the fields of special education, education, and disability law in Chicago, IL; Washington, D.C.; and the greater New Orleans region. Jennifer gained invaluable insights into the practice of special education law by interning for the U.S. Dept. of Education’s Office for Civil Rights as well as conducting legal research for special education legal scholar Mark Weber, before beginning her legal career dedicated solely to the representation of public school students, particularly students with disabilities. Jennifer’s perspectives on advocacy for students with disabilities are shaped by her professional experiences on both individual student and systems levels and in the contexts of IDEA class action litigation, federal discrimination complaints, representation of individual clients, and state and national policy reform efforts. Prior to joining the Southern Poverty Law Center, Jennifer was an attorney for the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights under Law. She is a graduate of DePaul University College of Law and the University of Illinois.