

40th Annual School Law Conference
February 12-13, 2025 • AT&T Conference Center • Austin, TX
February 12-13, 2025 • Live Webcast

Wednesday Morning, Feb. 12, 2025

7:30 am In Austin Only	<p>Registration Opens</p> <p>Includes continental breakfast.</p>
8:20 am	<p>Welcoming Remarks</p>
8:30 am 0.75 hr	<p>Commissioner Decisions Update</p> <p>Hear an update on Commissioner of Education decisions from the past year.</p> <p>Mark P. Tilley, Texas Association of School Boards - Austin, TX</p>
9:15 am 0.50 hr	<p>Cellphone Bans in Schools</p> <p>Examine the call for cellphone bans in schools, challenges faced and the impact on the school environment.</p> <p>Leticia D. McGowan, Richardson ISD - Richardson, TX</p>
9:45 am 0.50 hr	<p>What We've Learned re: Bullying</p>
10:15 am	<p>15-Minute Break</p>
10:30 am 0.75 hr	<p>Voting Rights Act Litigation: The Basics and Big Changes</p> <p>No two Voting Rights Act lawsuits are alike. Each case requires unique analysis of the community subject to the suit. A few landmark cases in 2023 and 2024 added to this complexity. Cover the basics of Section 2 claims under the Voting Rights Act, and explain changes in the law as a result of <i>Petteway</i> and other recent decisions.</p> <p>Charles J. Crawford, Abernathy, Roeder, Boyd & Hullett, P.C. - McKinney, TX Lucas Henry, Abernathy, Roeder, Boyd & Hullett, P.C. - McKinney, TX</p>
11:15 am 0.75 hr	<p>A Well-Informed Electorate: Best Practices for Avoiding Electioneering and Voting Rights Complaints</p> <p>A discussion of recent electioneering and Voting Rights Act litigation, including a review of various legal issues that school district officials must navigate when speaking with their communities about school funding, budget shortfalls, and other matters of public concern.</p> <p>Stephanie A. Hamm, Thompson & Horton LLP - Houston, TX</p>

12:00 pm
In Austin Only

Pick Up Lunch (in Austin)

Included in registration.

Wednesday Afternoon, Feb. 12, 2025

LUNCHEON PRESENTATION

12:30 pm
0.50 hr

Cyber Attacks and Data Breaches

Cyber threat actors are increasingly targeting school districts. Review mandatory data breach notification laws as well as common cyber insurance policy provisions that require due diligence and prompt action by school officials.

Micki Morris, Rogers, Morris & Grover, L.L.P. - Houston, TX

1:00 pm

15-Minute Break

1:15 pm
0.75 hr

Anxiously Awaiting Accommodations Topic

Julie Leahy, Texas Classroom Teachers Association - Austin, TX
Jacob Woolston, Pflugerville ISD - Pflugerville, TX

2:00 pm
0.75 hr
0.25 hr ethics

When Employees Go Viral

Dive into the challenges faced when employees become the subject of viral attention—whether caused by the district, an employee, or external actors. Explore when, who, and how to take action, and what legal implications have been established as a result of such events.

Jefferson K. Brim III, Brim & Brim, P.C. - Austin, TX
Mario G. Perez Jr., J. Cruz & Associates, LLC - Laredo, TX

2:45 pm

15-Minute Break

3:00 pm
1.00 hr ethics

Update on Conflicts of Interest

An overview and analysis of the rules, case law and ethics opinions regarding conflicts of interest rules including simultaneous representation of potentially adverse clients, positional conflicts, conflicts involving the lawyer's personal interest, imputed disqualification, conflicts involving insurance, conflicts regarding former or prospective clients, and conflicts arising from pre-retention contacts.

Dennis P. Duffy, Kane Russell Coleman & Logan PC - Houston, TX

4:00 pm 0.75 hr ethics	<p>When Lawyers Make the News: It's Not About You. It's About Your Client.</p> <p>With the guidance provided by the Texas Rules of Professional Conduct, the Texas Lawyer's Creed, and existing ethics opinions, this presentation focuses on ethical considerations lawyers often face when handling cases that make the news and will offer practical guidance on avoiding common pitfalls that arise when your case makes the spotlight. Consider lessons learned from stories and examples of lawyers who themselves made headlines and faced legal trouble for ethical lapses in the scope of client representation.</p> <p>Thomas P. Brandt, Fanning Harper Martinson Brandt & Kutchin, P.C. - Dallas, TX John Husted, Fanning Harper Martinson Brandt & Kutchin, P.C. - Dallas, TX</p>
4:45 pm	Adjourn
In Austin Only	<p>Networking Reception (in Austin from 4:45 p.m. - 5:45 p.m.)</p> <p>Join us for drinks and hors d'oeuvres with program faculty and attendees.</p>

Thursday Morning, Feb. 13, 2025

7:30 am In Austin Only	<p>Conference Room Opens</p> <p>Includes continental breakfast.</p>
8:30 am 2.00 hrs	<p>Complying with Safety and Security Personnel Requirements in Texas Public Schools</p> <p>Address the legal requirements for safety and security personnel, ways that school districts can achieve compliance through school marshal or guardian plans, through contracting with outside law enforcement agencies, or by creating their own police departments. Discuss the different legal and practical considerations for each strategy, including entity and individual liabilities for those involved.</p> <p>Allyson Collins, Spalding Nichols Lamp Langlois - Austin, TX Hans P. Graff, Leon Alcala, PLLC - Houston, TX Marney Collins Sims, Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District - Houston, TX</p>
10:30 am	15-Minute Break
10:45 am 0.50 hr ethics	<p>AI Topic</p> <p>Wesley L. Nute, Jr., Eichelbaum Wardell Hansen Powell & Muñoz, P.C. - Plano, TX</p>
11:15 am 0.50 hr	<p>Special Education: Attorney's Fees</p> <p>Christopher Schulz, Schulman, Lopez Hoffer & Adelstein, LLP - San Antonio, TX</p>
11:45 am 0.75 hr	<p>Special Education: Topic #2 (student disability rights/level of violence at schools)</p> <p>Elvin Houston, Walsh Gallegos Treviño Kyle & Robinson, P.C. - San Antonio, TX Jeff Kelly, Association of Texas Professional Educators - Austin, TX</p>

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Thursday Afternoon, Feb. 13, 2025

LUNCHEON PRESENTATION

1:00 pm
0.50 hr

School Vouchers in Texas?

Review the current bills being considered by the 89th Legislature and speculate about whether they will become law.

David J. Campbell, O'Hanlon, Demerath & Castillo, PC - Austin, TX

1:30 pm

15-Minute Break

1:45 pm
0.50 hr

Drawing the Lines: School Nurse Authority

The school nurse in the state of Texas has autonomy and responsibilities that stem from a myriad of laws, regulations and policies that arise outside of the education law setting, but that necessarily must overlap and interact with education laws and policies. Explore information of which the school law attorney should be aware when advising client school districts regarding their expectations regarding what the school nurse can, should and must do as well as where the lines are drawn between oversight and overstepping.

Stacy C. Ferguson, Escamilla & Poneck, LLP - San Antonio, TX

2:15 pm
0.75 hr
0.50 hr ethics

Interacting and Dealing with Difficult People: Ethically Working with All Kinds of Others

The Texas Lawyer's Creed reminds us of our oath to "disagree without being disagreeable." But today's polarizing culture ensures we will have to interact with coworkers, leaders, and volunteers who can make it very hard to remain civil. In this enlightening and entertaining session, we'll discuss how to navigate difficult conversations respectfully, manage our own impulses toward being difficult, and actively model civility to ensure that we are in compliance with our legal and professional duties toward all.

DeDe Church, DeDe Church & Associates, LLC - Austin, TX

3:00 pm

Adjourn