



## Diane Marshall-Freeman

Partner

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### What can I solve for you?

Clients value the close relationships we build together, and they turn to me for my commitment, vast experience, and strategic legal skills to help them overcome a wide range of challenges. They include governance and compliance matters, board member disputes, litigation around the negotiation table or in the courtroom, workplace investigations and interscholastic athletics and Title IX issues, among others.

### What's it like to work with me?

Known as a dedicated, highly responsive attorney, I work diligently to protect my clients and help them achieve their goals. I bring an old-school work ethic to my practice by preparing thoroughly for every situation; I don't like surprises. Yet I also stay abreast of and often apply cutting-edge strategies and solutions. Clients appreciate my pleasant personality.

## Overview

Nationally recognized for delivering top-tier client service and helping shape the contours of education law across California and beyond, Diane Marshall-Freeman draws on decades of experience and extensive knowledge to help clients. She serves as general counsel to the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) and advises on an array of issues for both large and small school districts across the state.



Diane helps school district professionals navigate the dynamic and often complex nature of governance matters and comply with the myriad and ever-changing education laws and regulations. She counsels clients on the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as well as student disciplinary actions, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and Department of Education complaints and Title IX matters. Clients also benefit from Diane's experience and skills at handling such intricate personnel matters as teacher dismissals, classified and certificated employee issues and discrimination and harassment claims.

In working with school boards, Diane addresses disputes among members by finding the common ground, mending torn relationships, and crafting a way forward on the issues. This approach helps school districts' come together and achieve their ultimate and all-important mission: providing the best education possible for all our students. Additionally, Diane has earned a reputation across the education-law profession for her outstanding work in and passion for interscholastic athletics. As she says, "I'm very supportive of high school sports. And, I want to make sure that all of our schools in California engage in athletics on a level playing field, starting from the same position with rules that apply equally."

Diane fully understands both the big-picture perspective and detailed nuances involved in workplace investigations. Whether called upon to serve on behalf of a client or as a neutral investigator, she makes sure to view the situation through the proper lens. This means either faithfully protecting the client or acting as a third-party, dispassionate inspector to determine all the relevant facts.

A strategically adept litigator with excellent communication skills, Diane vigorously advocates for clients in cases before decision-makers in a wide range of venues, including at federal and state levels. As general counsel to CIF, she has appeared in state courts on matters involving student athletic eligibility, qualifications for section and state championships and CIF jurisdiction. Diane examines every angle of a case, conducting thorough research on each and every factor of the legal calculus to make sure she and her client are taking the right approach or, conversely, to determine if they need to change their tactics.

Earlier in her career, Diane served as assistant general counsel in San Juan Unified School District for 11 years and as the director of labor relations for Universal Studios Hollywood. She draws on the experience she gained in both of these positions, which enhances her ability to serve clients today.

A popular speaker on education and student athletics topics, Diane is often a featured panelist and presenter at state and national education conferences. Additionally, she is the president of the National School Boards Association (NSBA) Council of School Attorneys (COSA), as well as a past president of the California Council of School Attorneys. She also works closely with the California Association of African-American Superintendents and Administrators, (CAAASA) and helped the association create the "Education For All" photography award, which is available to public high school seniors statewide. Diane has also served on the board for the Omega Boys Club of San Francisco.

Diane speaks Spanish and Portuguese and plans to learn another language.



## Involvement

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### Professional Affiliations

- California Association of African-American Superintendents and Administrators, (CAAASA)
- Vice-Chair of the National School Boards Association (NSBA)
- Vice-Chair of the Council of School Attorneys (COSA)
- Past president of the California Council of School Attorneys

### Community Affiliations

- Board for the Omega Boys Club of San Francisco

## After School

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I spend as much time as possible with my close-knit family. I love to travel and also enjoy reading history books and non-fiction detective mysteries.

## Education

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- University of California, Los Angeles (J.D.)
- University of California, Los Angeles (B.A.)

## Admissions

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### Bar Admissions

- California

## Related Services

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- Employment Law
- Governance & Leadership
- School and College Athletics
- Labor Relations & Negotiations



F3 Law

## Related Clients

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- Public Agencies
- Community Colleges
- Higher Education
- Public Education K-12

## Languages

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- Portuguese
- Spanish