



Katy L. McCully Merrill

Senior Counsel

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What can I solve for you?

Drawing on a deep and broad knowledge base about education law and a passion for helping public school districts and education agencies, I represent clients in resolving disputes before an array of decision-making venues, including federal courts. I also conduct investigations, offer counsel on employment, governance and other matters, and provide training to help clients stay legally compliant so they can create and maintain the best education environments possible.

What's it like to work with me?

I always put my clients' needs first and understand they have considerations beyond the legal arena. To help them preserve relationships with students and their families, we avoid taking hard-line adversarial stances and always aim to find a way around litigation if possible. My clients and I much prefer to collaborate to find solutions that benefit all involved parties. Afterward, I assess systems and policies to see if we can make changes that help stave off similar problems down the road.

Overview

Bringing high levels of compassion and competence to her practice, Katy McCully Merrill advises K-12 and community college districts and county offices of education statewide on a variety of challenges and disputes. These include employment concerns such as hiring practices, leaves, labor negotiation and employee discipline, as well as matters involving student discipline, instruction and enrollment. In



addition, Katy guides clients in governance issues, including those related to board policy development, Public Records Act requests and the Brown Act.

Katy regularly handles discrimination, harassment and retaliation matters before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the California Civil Rights Department (formerly the Department of Fair Employment and Housing). Drawing on her ample litigation experience, she advocates for clients at all levels of the hearing and trial process before state and federal courts and administrative agencies.

A skilled investigator, Katy assists clients in examining issues including uniform complaints, student expulsions, employee misconduct and allegations of discrimination and harassment. In addition to daily support, she provides client training in the areas of student and employee discipline and in the prevention of discrimination and sexual harassment. Katy's highly knowledgeable, practical approach enables her to address challenges and resolve problems efficiently so agencies can return their focus to educating youth.

Practicing in a highly complex and often emotionally fraught area of law, Katy excels at persuasively articulating her clients' positions in a way that judges and non-lawyers can relate to and comprehend. She illuminates the caring, human face of school districts and other public agencies and clearly conveys that these organizations are composed of people who are working hard to ensure all children receive exemplary educations, regardless of ability or background.

Katy previously worked in several diverse legal fields at other firms, including civil litigation and bankruptcy. While in law school, Katy served as a legal clerk for the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary, engaging in policy-making and congressional hearing support.

"I became an attorney to help others. Our work with clients every day is rewarding because it makes a difference in our communities and in the lives of students and employees."



Experience Highlights

Clerkships

- Served as a legal clerk for the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary, engaging in policy-making and congressional hearing support

Involvement

Professional Affiliations

- Fresno County Bar Association, Member
- Fresno County Women Lawyers, Member

After School

I belong to the Fresno County Bar Association and Fresno County Women Lawyers, and I dedicate a lot of my free time to helping others in the Fresno community.

Education

- Baylor University School of Law (J.D.)
- Westmont College (B.A., Political Science, *magna cum laude*)

Admissions

Bar Admissions

- California
- Texas

Related Services

- Employment Law
- Governance & Leadership



- Investigations
- Labor Relations & Negotiations
- Title IX

Related Clients

- Public Education K-12