

School Law Attorneys Present Workshops on FOIA, Title IX and Transgender Students, and Board Member Speech at CABE Convention

November 20, 2015

School Law Attorneys Michael P. McKeon, Susan L. Scott and Mark J. Sommaruga will presented at the annual Connecticut Association of Boards of Education/Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents Convention on both Friday, November 20 and Saturday, November 21, 2015, at the Mystic Marriott, Groton. Their presentations included the following:

Friday, November 20, 2015 2:05 PM – 4:05 PM Clinic Session C

C2 Civil Rights in Our Schools: What You Need to Know and Transforming Equity: Title IX and Transgender Students

Where do school districts' obligations regarding civil rights begin and end? This workshop will provide board members with an understanding of the basic requirements of state and federal civil rights laws, the intersection of such laws with safe school climate plans, and exploration of school district liability in the context of recent case law and federal and state guidance. Discussion will include civil rights issues unique to students with disabilities, the discipline of minority students, the protected class of gender identity or expression, and athletics and Title IX.

Presenters: Michael McKeon, Pullman & Comley, LLC

Susan Scott, Pullman & Comley, LLC

Friday, November 20, 2015 3:25 PM – 5:00 PM Workshop Session D

D1 Understanding the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act and Access to Public Meetings and Records

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) contains open meetings and public records requirements, along with numerous exceptions. Unfortunately, over the years, the FOIA and its exceptions have often been misconstrued, especially with the advent of new technologies. This workshop should serve to provide guidance to board of education members and school administrators seeking to navigate the maze of edicts and exceptions associated with the FOIA, along with updates on the FOIA from interesting recent cases.

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Presenters: Mark Sommaruga, Pullman & Comley, LLC

Thomas Hennick, *Public Information Officer*, Connecticut Office of Governmental Accountability, Freedom of Information Commission

Saturday, November 21, 2015 9:35 AM – 10:45 AM Workshop Session E

E1 Speak No Evil: The Legal Contours of Board Member Speech

This presentation is designed to address what can too often be a scourge of school districts, the board member with a serious lack of discretion or outright hostility against the board upon which he or she sits or against the district over which he or she shares oversight as a board member. Its purpose is to help school board members avoid inadvertently crossing the lines of appropriate speech and thereby exposing themselves and their districts to potential liability. Its further purpose is to assist school boards in walking the fine line between appropriate response and actionable overreaching and to avoid escalating fractious coexistence into a civil rights disaster.

Presenter: Michael McKeon, Pullman & Comley LLC

Professionals

Michael P. McKeon

Mark J. Sommaruga

Practice Areas

Education Law

School Law