



Melissa Martinez Bondy

Partner



Melissa Bondy concentrates her practice in the areas of education law in both Pre-K to 12 and higher education settings. Her practice has an emphasis on the complex and highly regulated disability law/special education environment; Title IX compliance; education policy; student discipline; and public and student record concerns. She represents public school districts, private colleges and universities, and other public entities throughout Ohio.

Melissa prides herself on her unique approach to solving clients' issues and counseling clients to resolve special education disputes arising under the IDEIA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which includes attendance at IEP meetings, resolution sessions and mediations. She is a frequent speaker on issues related to disability and staff compliance for both school districts and institutions of higher education. Melissa regularly represents educational entities before the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, defending Section 504, Title IX, ADA, and Title IV claims of discrimination, and she frequently advises employers about a variety of employment issues, including employee discipline or termination.

Melissa is a former Staff Attorney to Judge William M. Young of the Twelfth District Ohio Court of Appeals. Melissa is also a board member of ROX (Ruling Our eXperiences), a non-profit that provides educational programming for girls to equip them with the knowledge, confidence, and skills to live healthy, independent, and violence-free lives.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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INDUSTRIES & PRACTICES

Colleges & Universities
Cannabis
Education (Pre-K to 12)
Education Law
Public Sector

Bar Admissions & Activities

- Member, Hispanic National Bar Association
- Member, Ohio State Bar Association; Columbus Bar Association
- Member, National School Boards Association, Council of School Attorneys
- Member, Ohio Council of School Board Attorneys

Education

- University of Notre Dame (J.D., 1996)
- The Ohio State University (B.A., *summa cum laude*, 1993)

Awards & Recognition

- Honoree, Who's Who in Latino Columbus, 2016



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Presentations & Published Works

- Speaker, "Medical Marijuana and CBD Considerations" BASA Special Education Workshop, September 2019
- Case Study of LRE, Inclusion & Private School Placement: L.H. v. Hamilton Co. DOE - BASA Special Education Issues for School Leaders, September 2018
- Speaker, "Emotional Support Animals on Campus," Webinar, June 2017
- Speaker, "Minors on College Campuses: Managing Risk and Liability," Ohio Association of College and University Business Officers 100th Annual Meeting and Professional Development Conference, April 2017
- Transgender Student Issues, BASA Legal Issues for Superintendents, October 2016
- Speaker, "Introduction to Title IX Investigations," BASA Title IX Workshop, February 2016
- Speaker, "Avoiding a Strike Out: Extracurricular Activities, Athletics, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973," Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Ohio's Affiliate Conference, June 2015
- Speaker, Emerging Special Education Leaders Academy, State Support Team Region 11, 2013-14 to present
- Speaker, Emerging Leaders Academy, State Support Team Region 10, 2013-14 and 2014-15
- Author, "OCR Updates: Service Animals and Recent Title II Guidance," *SST10 Legal Issues Update*, January 2015
- Speaker, "PR-01 Update: Becoming a Prior Written Notice Maven," BASA Special Education Issues for School Leaders, April 2014
- Speaker, "Social Networking in Web 2.0: Time for Limits?" Capital Conference, November 2013
- Speaker, "Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation of Students: A Civil Rights Issue?" Buckeye Association of School Administrators, September 2011
- Author, "Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Top Ten 504 FAQs"

Professional & Community Activities

- Commissioner, Grandview Heights Civil Service Commission, 2018 to present
- Member, The Ohio State University Early Head Start Partnership Board, 2015 to present
- Member, Ruling Our eXperiences (ROX) Board of Directors, 2013 to present; Secretary, 2014 to 2016
- Former Participant, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio Project Mentor Program
- Former President, Board of Directors, Amethyst, Inc.

Experience

University defense in Section 504 discrimination claim

Successfully resolved claims of failure to accommodate a student in university programming.



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Partner

School district defense in race discrimination claim

Represented a public school district accused of disparate student discipline on the basis of race and resolved the matter with no finding against the client.

School district defense in Title IX claim

Successfully represented a public school district accused of maintaining unequal sports facilities for male and female athletes.

Special education due process hearing and suspension appeal

Negotiated a successful resolution in a special education due process request and suspension appeal relating to drug possession on school grounds.