Dedicated to Educational Excellence and Equity for Children

A vital component of the Civitas ChildLaw Center, Loyola’s ChildLaw and Education Institute is designed for students, faculty, judges, practitioners, business leaders, and policy makers who strive to serve the educational needs of children through the law.

THE CHILDLAW AND EDUCATION INSTITUTE OFFERS:
• A comprehensive and integrated curriculum in education law for students of law and education, as well as for attorneys, educators, and school administrators.
• Collaborative and interdisciplinary research and outreach through publications, conferences, web-based initiatives, and community programs in the field of education law and policy.
• Advocacy resources for children confronting barriers to educational opportunities and educational connections.

This program has been approved by the Illinois MCLE Board for 7.5 hours of general CLE credit. This program has also been approved by the Illinois State Board of Education for 7.5 hours of Continuing Professional Development Credit.

Loyola University Chicago School of Law
ChildLaw and Education Institute
Philip H. Corboy Law Center
25 E. Pearson Street, Chicago 60611
LUC.edu/ law/academics/special/center/child/child_edu.html
312.915.6481
**Agenda**

8:00 AM • Registration

8:15-8:30 AM • Welcome

Hillary Coustan  
Loyola University Chicago School of Law

Michael Kaufman  
Loyola University Chicago School of Law

8:30 AM - 9:00 AM • The Basics of Special Education in Charter Schools

Eileen Ahearn, PhD  
National Association of State Directors of Special Education

During this session, Dr. Ahearn will explain how certain aspects of a state’s charter school law — including whether a charter school is its own district (also known as local education agency (LEA)) or part of another LEA for purposes of special education — determines allocation of responsibilities for special education.

9:10 AM - 10:00 AM • Chicago Charter Schools and Special Education

Rod Estvan  
Access Living

Maureen Komperda  
Chicago Public Schools

Elizabeth Purvis, EdD  
Chicago International Charter School

Rachel Shapiro  
Equip for Equality

Michael Kaufman, moderator  
Loyola University Chicago School of Law

In this roundtable discussion, panelists will address the challenges and successes relating to special education in Chicago’s charter schools. Among other things, they will discuss the provision of special education services to students in charter schools, charters’ relationship with Chicago Public Schools, enrollment of students with disabilities, funding, and charter school discipline policies and procedures.

10:30 AM - 10:45 AM • Break

10:45 AM - 12:15 PM • Best Practices

Eileen Ahearn, PhD  
National Association of State Directors of Special Education

Parker Baxter  
Center on Reinventing Public Education

Teri Pettit  
Michigan Department of Education

**Panelists**

**EILEEN M. AHEARN, PhD**  
Project Director, National Association of State Directors of Special Education

Prior to joining the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE), Dr. Ahearn gained over 20 years of experience in Massachusetts as a teacher and administrator in general and special education, culminating in the position of superintendent of schools in a K-12 district. She also designed, implemented, and served for eight years as the executive director of a service collaborative providing special education programs, staff development, transportation, and business services to 13 public school districts in central Massachusetts. Dr. Ahearn moved to NASDSE to engage in national policy work on special education issues. In addition, she has become a recognized national expert in the area of special education in charter schools. She conducts research and has directed three federally funded technical assistance projects that have resulted in a wide variety of resources on charter schools. Dr. Ahearn has presented at numerous state and national level conferences and conducted training for charter schools, state agencies, and charter organizations.

**PARKER BAXTER**  
Senior Legal Analyst, Center on Reinventing Public Education

Parker Baxter is an education attorney, consultant, and author with over ten years of experience in the field. He currently leads the District-Charter Collaboration Compact project for the Center on Reinventing Public Education. Previously, Mr. Baxter served for three years as director of charter schools for Denver Public Schools (DPS) where he was responsible for authorization, quality assurance, oversight, and performance management of the district’s portfolio of more than 30 charter and contract schools. Prior to joining DPS, Mr. Baxter was an aide to Senator Edward M. Kennedy on the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, where he worked on issues related to the No Child Left Behind Act and Head Start, and assisted in the formation and passage of the Higher Education Access Act. He received his JD from New York University School of Law and Master of Public Management and Policy from NYU’s Wagner School of Public Service, where he was a Dean’s Scholar. Mr. Baxter is also a former special education teacher, an alumnus of Teach For America, and an Honors graduate of Colorado College.

**HANK BOHANON, PhD**  
Associate Professor, Loyola University Chicago School of Education

Dr. Bohanon has been a special education teacher in the Dallas Public Schools. He also has served as project coordinator at the University of Kansas for the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs research on positive behavior supports. As an associate professor at Loyola University Chicago School of Education, he founded and served as the director of the Center for School Evaluation, Intervention, and Training (CSEIT). He is a member of the board of directors for the Association of Positive Behavior Support. His current work focuses on supports for high school settings and state level evaluation of practice for Response to Intervention, Social and Emotional Learning, and School Mental Health.

**BRUCE BOYER**  
Clinical Professor and Director, Civitas Child Law Clinic, Loyola University Chicago School of Law

Bruce Boyer is a nationally-recognized expert in child welfare law who has litigated, taught, consulted, and written extensively in the area of child abuse and neglect. He has represented clients in a wide range of proceedings including child welfare, adoption, juvenile delinquency, special education, and disability hearings, with his focus being primarily on issues of child maltreatment. He has served as chair of the American Bar Association’s Steering Committee on the Unmet Legal Needs of Children and as a member of the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism, and he has been elected as a fellow of the American Bar Foundation in recognition of his “outstanding dedication to the welfare of the community and the highest principles of the legal profession.”
ANDREA BROWN-THIRSTON, PhD
Chief Academic Officer, Chicago International Charter School

Dr. Andrea Brown-Thirston earned her Bachelor of Science degree from Northwestern University and her doctoral degree in Curriculum and Instruction from The University of Illinois at Chicago. She joined Chicago International Charter School (CICS) in September 2007 and brings experience most recently from higher education where she was an assistant professor of Teacher Education at Concordia University Chicago in River Forest, Illinois. Dr. Brown-Thirston has published several articles and presented at local and national conferences; Rowman & Littlefield Publishers recently published her co-authored book, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers recently presented at local and national conferences; Thirston has published several articles and specialized in school finance disputes, and her doctoral degree in Curriculum and Instruction from The University of Illinois at Chicago, she was an assistant professor brings experience most recently from higher education.

JUANA BURCHELL
Special Education Charter Schools Coordinator, Illinois State Board of Education

Juana Burchell came to the United States from El Salvador as a Fulbright Scholar to Loyola University Chicago where she obtained a Master of Arts in Education. Prior to her experience in the United States, she was a professor at the Universidad Centro Americana José Simeón Cañas she was taught "Theories of Learning Applied to Education," among other subjects. While at the Illinois State Board of Education, Ms. Burchell has worked in multiple positions and projects. During the last three years, she has been responsible for authorizing the special education services proposed in new and renewal applications for charter schools. Her goal in this role is to ensure that students with disabilities receive the services they need in order to succeed. Additionally, she values being a source of support for charter school personnel.

HILLARY COUSTAN
Associate Director, ChildLaw and Education Institute, Loyola University Chicago School of Law

Hillary Coustan is the associate director of the ChildLaw and Education Institute. She received her JD from Stanford Law School, where she was a Public Interest Fellow and worked in the Youth and Education Law Clinic. Prior to law school, she worked as a program coordinator for a national scholarship program and as a policy associate for a charter school organization. After law school, Ms. Coustan clerked for the Honorable Robert W. Gettleman, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, and was an associate at Sachnoff & Weaver. She has published articles regarding access to educational resources, has advocated on behalf of the educational rights of children, and teaches Disability Law and Loyola's Education Law Practicum.

ROD ESTVAN
Education Policy Analyst, Access Living

Rod Estvan received his elementary and secondary education in Chicago's Public Schools. After attending the University of North Dakota, he taught in two different inner city public high schools in Chicago. He left the field of education and worked in Chicago's financial and commodities industries for a number of years. During this time, Mr. Estvan became the father of a child with a disability and returned to the field of education, working again for the Chicago Public Schools. His experience advocating for his own child's education led him to become an advocate and, eventually, an employee of Access Living, for whom he is also a registered lobbyist. Mr. Estvan has also worked as a monitor for the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois in a case involving special education in Chicago, is the author of several journal articles on special education, and writes a yearly analysis of the Chicago Public Schools budget for special education expenditures. He has been involved in the development of special education rules in the State of Illinois and is currently a member of the Illinois Attorney General's Select Committee on Special Education.

KATHLEEN GIBBONS
Senior Assistant General Counsel, Chicago Board of Education

Kathleen Gibbons has worked for the Chicago Board of Education since 1994. During her tenure with the Chicago Board, she has handled federal and state lawsuits involving the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, McKinney-Vento Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), First Amendment, Title VII, Sections 1983 and 1988, the Open Meetings Act and the Illinois School Code. Ms. Gibbons oversees the Chicago Public Schools' implementation of and compliance with the two Corey H. class action settlement agreements, which impact all 700 schools, including all charter schools. She graduated from Loyola University Chicago School of Law in 1987; received a Master of Arts in Administration in 2000 from Northern Illinois University; and a Bachelor of Science with high honors from Illinois State University. Ms. Gibbons is a certified special education teacher and has taught seventh and eighth graders.

ERIN HAN
Staff Attorney, Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago

Erin Han is a staff attorney at Legal Assistance Foundation in Chicago, where she represents wards of the state in education matters. Prior to moving to Chicago in 2006. Ms. Han ran an almost identical project on behalf of foster youth at the San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program in Southern California. She graduated from Boston College Law School with honors in 2003 and has taught both Education Law and Legal Writing as adjunct faculty at California Western School of Law, DePaul Law School, and Chicago Kent College of Law. Ms. Han has published several articles, most recently “Response to Intervention” and “Advocating for Special Education”, which appeared in the ABA Section of Litigation Children’s Rights Litigation (Spring 2010) newsletter.

MIRANDA JOHNSON
Salisbury Clinical Teaching Fellow, Civitas ChildLaw Clinic, Loyola University Chicago School of Law

Miranda Johnson supervises law students in the representation of children in child protection and child custody cases and in the representation of parents and students in school discipline and special education cases. Prior to working at Loyola, she worked as a staff attorney at Advocates for Children of New York, an organization promoting access to better educational services for New York City school children. At advocates for Children, Ms. Johnson represented parents of students with disabilities in administrative proceedings to obtain appropriate educational services. She also represented parents and students in systemic reform litigation seeking to enhance educational equity in New York City. She previously taught high school social studies at the Eagle Rock School in Estes Park, Colorado. Ms. Johnson holds an undergraduate degree from Dartmouth College,
and Supports. She believes that all children have a right to a quality education and that it is our humble responsibility to ensure that those rights are afforded to children throughout this district.

**Michael Kaufman**  
Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, Professor of Law, and Director of the ChildLaw and Education Institute, Loyola University Chicago School of Law  
Michael Kaufman is the associate dean of academic affairs, professor of law and director of the ChildLaw and Education Institute at Loyola University Chicago School of Law. He is the author of dozens of books and countless law review articles, including one of the leading text books on Education Law and Policy. Dean Kaufman also was elected to three terms as a member of the Board of Education for a large, diverse school district in the Chicago area, serving as the board's president and vice-president. After graduating with honors from Kenyon College and the University of Michigan Law School, Dean Kaufman clerked for the Honorable Nathaniel R. Jones of the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. He also has received numerous public service awards.

**Maureen Komperda**  
Director of Special Education for Charter Schools, Chicago Public Schools  
Maureen Komperda is the director of special education for charter schools at Chicago Public Schools. Prior to this position, she was a special education teacher for 14 years at Talcott School where she taught students with learning disabilities and emotional/behavior disorders. Ms. Komperda then became a citywide teacher working with the Alternative Safe Schools, where she provided special education services to Chicago Public School students who were expelled from their attendance area school. In 2007, she became a National Board Certified Teacher, in addition to a “lead citywide teacher,” and supported charter schools throughout the district. From 2009 to 2010, Ms. Komperda served as a specialized services administrator working with the Office of Special Education and Supports. She believes that all children have the right to a quality education and that it is our humble responsibility to ensure that those rights are afforded to children throughout this district.

**Darcy L. Kríha**  
Partner, Franczek Radelet P.C.  
Darcy L. Kríha represents public school districts and special education cooperatives throughout Illinois. In addition to overall school board representation, Ms. Kríha has extensive experience handling special education and high-profile student discipline matters. Ms. Kríha is a member of numerous professional organizations, including the Illinois Association of Administrators of Special Education (IAASE), the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), and the Center for Disability and Elder Law (CDEL), and its Eamon Shannon Special Education Program Planning Committee. In July 2006, she was selected by the Law Bulletin Publishing Company as one of Illinois’ “40 Under 40 Attorneys to Watch.” Ms. Kríha volunteers at La Grange School District 102 and Lyons Township High School District 204, where her four children attend school. She is a member of District 102’s Strategic Planning Committee, Grades 6-7-8 Task Force and is a founding member of District 102’s educational foundation.

**Paul T. O’Neill**  
President, Tugboat Education Services  
Paul T. O’Neill is an attorney who focuses his practice and scholarship on education law. He is President and Founder of Tugboat Education Services, which provides advice and regulatory assistance to education organizations across the nation. Mr. O’Neill previously served as senior vice president and chief regulatory officer at EdisonLearning, the national school services and management organization, and as an attorney with Brustein & Manasevit, the Washington D.C.-based education law firm. He is also a former general counsel of the Charter Schools Institute of the State University of New York, one of the leading charter school authorizers in the state. Additionally, for ten years Mr. O’Neill has served on the adjunct faculty of Teachers College, Columbia University, where he teaches education law and policy courses, including Designing Charter Schools and Special Education Law and Policy. Mr. O’Neill received a BA from Oberlin College, an MEd in Educational Administration from Teachers College, Columbia University, and a JD from the University of Virginia School of Law. He is the author of numerous scholarly and professional publications, including the Charter School Law Deskbook (Lexis Nexis Publishers, 2nd Ed.), and the No Child Left Behind Compliance Manual (LRP Publications, 2nd Ed.). He lectures widely on a range of education reform topics.

**Teri Pettit**  
Public School Academy Consultant/Liaison, Michigan Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services  
Teri Pettit serves as the public school academy (charter school) consultant /liaison for the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Special Education (OSE) and Early Intervention Services (EIS). She also serves as the director of educational services for CS Partners, a Michigan-based charter school management company. Ms. Pettit has over 25 years of experience in both traditional and charter school education. She has served as a special education director, elementary school principal, and teacher in both regular and special education in K-12 schools. Additionally, she has extensive experience in the fields of curriculum development, school improvement and compliance. In her role with the Michigan Department of Education, she works closely with Public School Academies in Michigan by serving as a technical assistant, publishing a monthly eNews, and participating in a number of OSE-EIS activities and initiatives.

**Elizabeth D. Purvis, EdD**  
Executive Director, Chicago International Charter School  
Dr. Beth Purvis came to Chicago International Charter School in March 2003 with more than 15 years experience working with children with disabilities and their families. After completing her doctoral degree in 1997, Dr. Purvis became a member of the faculty at the University of Illinois at Chicago where her work focused on research and personnel preparation in urban education. Under the leadership of Dr. Purvis, Chicago International has added ten campuses and more than 6,000 students. Dr. Purvis currently serves on the boards of the Illinois Network of Charter Schools and the Illinois State Advisory Council to the Illinois State Board of Education. Previously she served on Charter Review and Evaluation committees for Chicago Public Schools; was president of the Illinois Division of Early Childhood, 2003-2004; and was an executive board member of the Illinois Council for Exceptional Children. Dr. Purvis has served on the editorial review board of two peer-reviewed professional journals, has published and presented numerous papers, and been awarded various grants in her field. Dr. Purvis earned her BS in Educational Research from Bucknell University, her Master of Arts in Special Education from Teachers College at Columbia University, and her EdD in Special Education from Peabody College at Vanderbilt University. She resides in Chicago with her husband and two children.

**Rachel Shapiro**  
Staff Attorney, Equip for Equality  
Rachel Shapiro has been a staff attorney at Equip for Equality, the Protection & Advocacy agency in Illinois, since 2006. She provides legal representation, training, and advocacy to children with unmet special education needs involved in the Cook County Juvenile Court system. As part of her position, Ms. Shapiro also supervises up to five law student interns each semester and provides support to pro bono attorneys in approximately 10-15 special education cases at a time. Ms. Shapiro conducts special education trainings for pro bono attorneys, public defenders, probation officers, and community agencies that work with students with disabilities. Prior to becoming an attorney, she worked at a preschool and as an applied behavioral analysis therapist for children with autism.