



Merry C. Rhoades

ATTORNEY AT LAW / SHAREHOLDER

Contact Information

Telephone: (618) 692.4120
Direct Dial: (618) 307.2011
Facsimile: (618) 692.4122
E-mail:
mrhoades@tuethkeeneey.com

101 W. Vandalia
Suite 210
Edwardsville, Illinois 62025

Practice Areas

Illinois Education Law
Labor & Employment
Special Education

Bar Admissions

Illinois, 1986
Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals
United States District Courts for the
Southern and Central Districts of Illinois

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Merry C. Rhoades has more than 30 years of experience representing Illinois public education institutions. In her practice as an education law attorney, Merry regularly advises clients on all facets of school law, ranging from annexation and detachment matters to the employee/employer relationship to tax and finance matters.

Merry is known throughout downstate Illinois for her work in the area of special education and student rights. She has worked extensively with Illinois public school districts regarding the special education and related services provided to special needs students. She has been asked to speak for organizations such as the Illinois Association of Administrators of Special Education (IAASE), the Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA), the Illinois Principal's Association (IPA) and the Illinois School Boards Association (IASB) on special education issues. She also participates in the Illinois Council of School Attorneys' Special Education Concerns Committee. In addition to her work on student-related matters, Merry is also well-versed in the non-renewal of probationary employees, the termination of the educational support person and the dismissal of the long-standing tenured teacher. Her experience includes providing up-to-date advice on employee due process rights when disciplining or terminating the school district employee. Merry has a particular interest in advising clients on the American with Disabilities Amendment Act and the corresponding Illinois Human Rights Act.

Because of Merry's 30-plus years of experience in representing Illinois public school districts, she has key insights regarding the day-to-day operation of the school district. That experience includes school district compliance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act (OMA), the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), and other laws governing board of education operation. Most recently, Merry represented several school districts in the first court challenge to the 1% School Facility Occupation Tax.

Merry is an active member of several school related organizations. She is a member of the Illinois Council of School Attorneys Executive Committee and served as a past Chairperson. She serves as an Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) PRESS advisory committee.

Merry is certified by the ISBE to provide mandatory leadership training to newly elected School Board members.

Honors & Awards

Illinois Leading Lawyer since 2010: School Law

Education

J.D., DePaul University College of Law, 1986

Professional Affiliations

- Illinois Bar Association
- Illinois Council of School Attorneys
- National Counsel of School Attorneys

Selected Publications and Presentations

- Presenter, IASA Student On-Line Privacy Protection Act (2021)
- Presenter, Alton #11 Special Education Presentation on Special Education Eligibility in a Post-COVID-19 World (2021)
- Presenter, ROE 40 Legal Update (2021)

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- Presenter, IASA Student Rights & Responsibilities: What Every School Administrator Should Know (2020)
- Presenter, ROE 40 Legal Issues for School Counselors (2020)
- Presenter, South Macoupin Area Special Education Time Out and Physical Restraint (2020)
- Presenter, ROE 40 Board Member Training (2019)
- Presenter, ROE 45 Board Member Training (2019)
- Presenter, Granite City Administrator Workshop on Sexual Harassment (2019)
- Presenter, HB3586: The Devil's in the Details (2019)
- Presenter, St. Clair County Regional Office of Education, The Job of a School Secretary: the Legal Perspective (2018)
- Presenter, St. Clair County Regional Office of Education, Bullying in Schools: A Legal Perspective on Responding (2018)
- Presenter, ROE 3, An Educator's Guide to Social Media (2017)
- Presenter, What's All This About Student Privacy? Tips for the School Administrator (2017)
- Presenter, Roxana Back-to-School In-service, Hot Topics in Special Education (August 2016)
- SB100 presentations for Monroe-Randolph ROE, Gillespie CUSD #5, SIUE-Charter School, Making Sense of Student Discipline: Complying with SB100 (2016)
- Presenter, Home Sweet Home: Understanding Residency and Special Education Issues, Mid-State Special Ed (Feb. 2016)
- Presenter, Making Sense of Student Discipline: Complying with SB100 (Gillespie Jan. 2016)
- Presenter, Special Education Discipline – Navigating MDRs, FBAs and BIPs, (Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville (June 2015)
- Presenter, BULLYING, What is it and What is the District's Required Response? Jackson and Perry Regional Office of Education (April 2015)
- Keynote Speaker, ILASCD and Northeastern Illinois University's Cyberbullying/Bullying Network Conference (April 2015)
- Presenter, An Overview of Obligations Toward Disabled Students: Section 504 Plans and Individual Health Plans, Alton Community Unit School District No. 11 (May 2014)
- Presenter, A Prescription for Confusion: Medical Documentation Requirements for Homebound Services Under Illinois and Federal Law, Monroe-Randolph Regional Office of Education (September 2013)
- Presenter, Legal Standards for the Management of School Personnel, Administrator Academy (October 2013)
- Presenter, Protecting the Rights of Children with Special Needs, National Business Institute (October 2012)
- Presenter, Ensuring Success Due Process Procedures, National Business Institute (October 2012)
- Presenter, Common RtI Questions (and Answers?), Closing the Gap Conference (March 2012)
- Presenter, Social Networking Administrator Academy, Charleston Community Unit School District (March 2012)
- Presenter, Employment of Teachers in Illinois After Education Reform, Administrator Academy #1228 (October, 2011, February 2012, March 2012, October 2012)
- Co-author, "In Search of Klebold's Ghost – Investigating the Legal Ambiguities of Violent Student Profiling, West Education Law Reporter, 174 WELR 793 (May 22, 2003)



TUETH KEENEY
COOPER MOHAN JACKSTADT P.C.

Merry C. Rhoades

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- Contributing Author, Student Rights and Responsibilities; ILLINOIS SCHOOL LAW (Ill. Inst. For CLE Supp. 2001)

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