

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



Benjamin L. Pratt, Esq.,
President, Pennsylvania School Board Solicitors Association,
Saxton & Stump, Lancaster PA

Ben Pratt is a shareholder at Saxton & Stump and a member of the firm's Education, Construction, Labor and Employment and Litigation groups. He is adept in his representation of management at the collective bargaining table and has served as both chief spokesperson and in an advisory role during negotiations. He represents clients at local agency hearings, administrative tribunals and in quasi-judicial hearings as special counsel before the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board and the National Labor Relations Board. He has represented schools in labor and grievance arbitrations, dismissal hearings, insurance subrogation claims, unemployment and workers compensation claims, court of common pleas litigation and appellate-level litigation. Ben serves as a solicitor for multiple school districts and at the start of 2023, was named president of the Pennsylvania School Board Solicitors Association. His Juris Doctorate is from Widener University Law School and his bachelor's degree is from Catawba College.



Michael I. Levin, Esq.
PSBA General Counsel, Levin Legal Group, Huntingdon Valley, PA

Mike I. Levin formed his firm in 1994 after 14 years as a partner and five years as an associate with Cleckner and Fearen. He believes in a hands-on approach to the practice of the law and closely monitors the activities of the personnel in the firm. He has written and edited four books: *Pennsylvania School Personnel Actions*, *United States School Law and Rules*, *Municipal Liability in Pennsylvania*, and *Pennsylvania School Laws and Rules*. He also authored the chapter on *Schools, Colleges and Universities* in West's Legal Forms encyclopedia. Mike has assumed positions of leadership in professional associations, having served on the Board of Directors of the National Council of School Attorneys and moved through the chairs of the Education Section of the Pennsylvania Bar Association. He is a frequent lecturer at statewide and national seminars.



Edward A. Diasio, Esq.

Wisler Pearlstine, Blue Bell, PA

Edward Diasio is a member of the firm's Education Law practice group, representing public school districts and other educational entities on a wide range of general school law matters such as the use of technology, social media and application software in the school setting; board governance; policy development; student rights, responsibilities, and discipline; residency disputes; contract development and review; and compliance with federal, state and local law and regulations. He serves as solicitor for the Cheltenham and Upper Dublin school districts, as well as special counsel for the Central Bucks, Wallingford-Swarthmore and several other public school districts throughout southeastern Pennsylvania.



Mark W. Cheramie Walz, Esq.

Sweet Stevens Katz & Williams, New Britain, PA

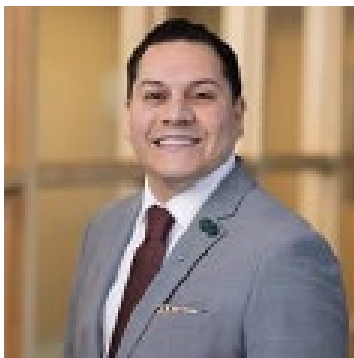
Mark Cheramie Walz dedicates his work to the use of technology in education and advising practical solutions that reduce liability while harnessing the benefits of new technology. Additionally, Mark counsels school entities in all matters related to special education litigation, including due process hearings and federal court appeals. He frequently lectures to school administrators, parents and students on the safe use of social networking and modern technology both in school and at home. Prior to joining the firm, Mark worked in the Bucks County District Attorney's Office as deputy district attorney assigned to the Special Victims Division. While there, he specialized in the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and computer crimes cases and gained unique insight into computer and mobile phone forensics, social networking and the pitfalls of modern technologies.



Howard L. Kelin, Esq.

Sweet Stevens Katz & Williams, New Britain, PA

Howard L. Kelin retired in December 2021 from Kegel Kelin Litts & Lord, except that he continued to handle some hospital tax exemption cases for school districts. When his former firm merged into Saxton & Stump at the end of 2022, Howard became associated with Sweet Stevens Katz & Williams, where he is finishing out the hospital tax exemption cases. Howard's legal career focused on education law. He is a Past President of the Solicitors Association, and received the Distinguished Career Achievement Award from the Solicitors Association President in 2020. Howard is a graduate of William and Mary and the University of Virginia School of Law.



Jonathan M. Huerta, Esq.

King Spry Herman Freund & Faul, Bethlehem, PA

Jonathan M. Huerta is chair of the firm's Local Taxation and Assessment Practice Group. He concentrates his practice in the areas of general civil litigation and education law. Before joining King Spry, Jonathan was a law clerk for the Honorable Judge Emil Giordano at the Court of Common Pleas of Northampton County and was an extern with the Honorable Renee Cohn Jubelirer at the Commonwealth Court. He earned his Juris Doctorate from Pennsylvania State University, Dickinson School of Law. Jonathan also holds a bachelor's degree in psychology with a minor in business foundations from the University of Texas at Austin.



Gabriela Raful, Esq.

Galfand Berger, Philadelphia, PA

Gabriela Raful is a senior partner at Galfand Berger, LLP, where she represents injured clients in the areas of workers' compensation, personal injury, products liability and social security disability. She is the president of the Berks County Bar Association – the first racial minority, youngest and first naturalized citizen to be elected to this position. In 2017, she was appointed by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court to the Monitoring and Evaluation Team of the Language Access Advisory Group for the United Judicial System of Pennsylvania. Gabriela is a frequent lecturer on matters involving workplace and personal injuries, language access and representing non-English speakers, and is a contributing author to *The ABA Medical-Legal Guides: Head Trauma and Brain Injury for Lawyers*. Gabriela graduated from Kutztown University of Pennsylvania with a degree in political science and paralegal studies. She earned her Juris Doctor from Widener University School of Law.



David F. Conn, Esq.

Sweet Stevens Katz & Williams, New Britain, PA

David F. Conn is a seasoned litigator who has represented public entities of almost every kind, including county agencies, townships, boroughs, school districts and municipal authorities. In that capacity, he has appeared in everything from administrative hearings to appeals before the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. David's approach combines a commitment to public service with a fierce attachment to advocacy, and he is always looking for creative solutions to face the dynamic challenges confronting public entities.



Brian F. Boland, Esq.
Kozloff Stoudt, Wyomissing, PA

Brian F. Boland concentrates his practice in estate planning/administration, educational/municipal law and business law. He serves as solicitor and special counsel for eight Berks, Lebanon and Lancaster county school districts and several townships, boroughs and authorities. Brian regularly writes and lectures on a variety of issues for the Pennsylvania School Boards Association and the Center for Excellence in Local Government and prepares instructional materials and seminars for school districts and municipalities. In addition, Brian heads the Estate Planning and Administration Department of the firm. He is a member of the Berks County, Pennsylvania and American bar associations.



Nicole L.M. Feight, Esq.
Rudolph Clarke, Trevoise, PA

Nicole L.M. Feight concentrates her practice in the areas of municipal law and education law, with a special interest in open records/Right-to-Know Law (RTKL) compliance. In addition to offering representation on a variety of general matters for school districts and municipalities, she responds to questions regarding Right to Know (RTKL) requests and assists clients with the processing of RTKL requests and handling of any appeals filed with the Office of Open Records. Nicole also provides RTKL training sessions for the firm's clients and has presented continuing legal education programming to other practicing attorneys on the topic of RTKL compliance. Nicole joined the firm after graduating from Temple Law. She obtained her undergraduate degree from Ursinus College, where she majored in English and minored in media and communication studies.



Tricia S. Springer, Esq.
Eckert Seamans Cherin & Mellott, Harrisburg, PA

Tricia S. Springer concentrates her practice in labor and employment matters, administrative law, and civil litigation. She represents both public and private sector employers in labor and employment issues, including hiring, termination and employee discipline; contract negotiations; interest arbitrations; grievance arbitrations; and employment-related litigation. Tricia also conducts and counsels employers on workplace investigations, including allegations of employee misconduct. Tricia has an extensive practice representing governmental agencies and private parties in connection with the Pennsylvania Right-to-Know Law (RTKL) and educational institutions in connection with the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act. While attending law school, Tricia was a law clerk for the Honorable J. Michael Eakin of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. She also served as a law clerk for the Honorable P. Kevin Brobson of the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania and as a legal intern in the Governor's Office of General Counsel for the Pennsylvania Department of Health.