



Natalie A. Hoernschemeyer
Partner

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With twenty years of experience in education and labor and employment law, Natalie chairs the Education Group at Mickes O'Toole and leads the Firm's representation of over 250 public and private schools in Missouri. Natalie is recognized as a SuperLawyer in the field of Education Law, a peer-reviewed honor reserved for the top 5% of nominated lawyers in Missouri and Kansas.

In serving school districts across the state, Natalie focuses her practice on proactive counseling, strategic litigation, and timely training.

Proactive Counseling. Natalie approaches every legal matter with the goal of achieving the best possible outcome for her client. She works toward a resolution when possible while simultaneously managing the matter for future litigation if necessary. She provides general counsel advice on procedures and agreements based on best practices, including collaboration with her clients on drafting handbook policies, advice on personnel and employment matters, contract negotiations, counsel on staff and student investigations and discipline, and recommendations to the board of education.

Strategic Litigation. If a matter makes its way into Court, Natalie brings nearly twenty years of litigation expertise. She has a proven record of investigating and defending charges of discrimination before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Missouri Commission on Human Rights and the Office of Civil Rights. She also defends clients in litigation for a wide variety of claims, such as Section 1983, First Amendment, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Missouri Human Rights Act, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, wrongful termination, whistleblower, breach of contract and claims of negligence. Natalie has successfully represented clients before the Missouri Court of Appeals and the Missouri Supreme Court.

In the fall of 2021, Natalie led a team of attorneys in representing Columbia Public Schools and successfully defeated an attempt by the Missouri's Attorney General to sue every school district in the State of Missouri in a putative reverse defendant class action lawsuit. The Missouri Solicitor General argued on behalf of the Attorney General and not only sought the creation of a defendant class of all Missouri schools but also sought to enjoin all Missouri school districts from utilizing masking as a mitigation measure against COVID-19. The trial court denied the Attorney General's motions for class certification and preliminary injunction and the State dismissed its lawsuit later that year.

Again in 2022, Natalie and her team defeated the Attorney General who filed a string of lawsuits against numerous school districts to challenge the school's legal authority to implement masking as a mitigation measure. The trial court ruled in favor our client, Columbia Public Schools, ruling the Attorney General's claims were moot.

Timely Training. Natalie shares her knowledge of education and employment issues by creating and conducting comprehensive training programs, speaking at state and local conferences, and authoring articles on cutting-edge issues related to her practice. Natalie creates and conducts trainings that explain complex legal frameworks in a way that allows her clients to meet compliance standards and avoid litigation. Trainings regularly include the Sunshine Law, Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, ADA and FMLA compliance. Natalie has extensively focused on writing articles and giving presentations on recent Title IX changes that significantly impact educational institutions.

Natalie regularly speaks on education law for state and local conferences, including the Missouri Association of School Personnel Administrators, Missouri Association of School Administrators, Missouri Council of School Administrators, Missouri Association of School Business Officials, Missouri Association of Rural Education, Missouri Association of Secondary School Principals, Missouri United School Insurance Council and Educational Office Professionals Conference.

Additional Achievements. Natalie has taught advanced school law courses in the graduate program at Maryville University and prior to practicing, she served as a judicial law clerk to the Honorable Clifford H. Ahrens in the Missouri Court of Appeals Eastern District.

Areas of Practice:

- Education Law
- Labor & Employment
- Civil & Commercial Litigation
- Appellate Practice

Education:

- University of Missouri-Columbia School of Law, J.D., 2000
 - Journal of Dispute Resolution, Member
- Marquette University, B.A., 1997
 - Magna Cum Laude
 - Phi Beta Kappa
 - Alpha Sigma Nu

Bar and Court Admissions:

- Missouri Bar
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Missouri
- U.S. District Court, Western District of Missouri
- U.S. Court of Appeals Eighth Circuit

Professional Affiliations:

- National Council of School Attorneys
- Missouri Council of School Attorneys
 - Elected to Executive Committee 2022-2023
- National School Boards Association COSA Member
- Missouri School Boards Association COSA Member

Distinctions

- Super Lawyers Designation, 2018-2024
- Best Lawyers in St. Louis Designation (Labor & Employment Litigation and Employment Law – Management), 2022-2025
- POWER List of Missouri Education Attorneys, 2021