FRANCZEK

JENNIFER SMITH

Partner

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Jennifer Smith is Co-Chair of the firm's Higher Education Practice Group. Jennifer's practice involves representing education institutions on a wide range of issues. She has extensive experience in representing higher education institutions and school districts in civil rights investigations and litigation. Jennifer has experience with sensitive internal investigations and audits for higher education institutions and school districts. Jennifer has litigation and trial experience before state and federal courts, and numerous administrative agencies.

Jennifer is a member of the Illinois Council of School Attorneys and the National School Board Association Council of School Attorneys (NSBA). She presented at the 2019 NSBA School Law Practice Seminar on "Beyond Bathrooms: Growing Awareness of Transgender Students in the Courts and the Classroom." She also presented at the NSBA Advocacy Institute in 2016 on transgender issues in the presentation "Will the Real Title IX Please Stand Up?"

Education

- J.D., with distinction, University of Iowa, 2003
- B.A., *magna cum laude*, University of Northern Iowa, 2000

Bar & Court Admissions

- Illinois
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit

Representative Experience

- Defended a class action brought against the second largest school district in Illinois, School District U-46, which challenged the district's 2004 student assignment plan, alleged the district's plan discriminated against minority students; the suit also challenged the district's English Language Learner and other District programs.
- Represented three Indiana school districts—Hamilton Southeastern Schools, Franklin Township Community Schools, and Middlebury Community Schools—in their case against State of Indiana officials alleging the State's school funding formula is unconstitutional and as a result, their districts are not receiving sufficient funding.
- Negotiating service agreements, including transportation, facility use, and related service agreements.
- Successfully defended northwest suburban school districts in the lawsuit filed by municipality seeking to claw-back TIF district funds distributed by the village at a termination of TIF district. Village argued that TIF district was terminated prematurely and that funds distributed to school districts should have remained with a village. Circuit Court granted to school districts' motion to dismiss, and village subsequently abandoned all claims against the districts.
- Represented higher education institutions in a variety of athletics-related legal matters, including preventative counseling and litigation.

Recognition

Jennifer has been recognized as an Emerging Lawyer by Law Bulletin Publishing.