



Melissa M. Grand

Shareholder

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Melissa Grand is a shareholder in Baker Donelson's Baton Rouge office and focuses her practice on the education industry and all manner of education law, compliance, and operational issues.

With more than 15 years of experience advising and defending educational institutions at all levels throughout the country, Melissa represents charter schools, charter school management organizations, private and independent schools, and other educational institutions as general outside counsel. She focuses on delivering cutting-edge advice and counsel to proactively help her clients navigate the ever-changing education landscape.

Melissa is well-versed in ethics laws and advises and offers compliance training to her education clients on a host of topics, including open meetings laws and board policies, best practices, and manuals. Her experience also extends to special education and student discipline issues. Melissa advises her school clients on contract negotiations and real estate and financing transactions. She regularly works with schools to review student and staff handbooks and enrollment contracts for legal compliance, and to create student and staff policies, including artificial intelligence (AI) policies, social media and technology policies, drug and alcohol policies, and policies pertaining to student privacy, student records, and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Melissa's experience further extends to creating Title IX policies and programs and advising clients on evolving regulatory and compliance aspects of Title IX.

Melissa also routinely provides training to school boards of trustees, administration, and employees on topics including Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), open meetings/ethics laws, and other board governance matters.

When litigation or other issues arise, Melissa has significant experience defending educational institutions in a variety of matters in state and federal courts, as well as Office of Civil Rights (OCR) complaints.

In addition, she represents large and small companies in wide range of complex commercial disputes. She has extensive experience practicing in Louisiana district courts and courts of appeal.

Professional Honors & Activities

- Listed in *The Best Lawyers in America*® for Consumer Law (2023 – 2025); Commercial Litigation (2025)
- Louisiana Rising Star in Business Litigation (2018, 2019, 2021, 2022)
- Louisiana Rising Star in Schools and Education (2019)
- Board Member – Advisory Counsel for the Global Geospatial Institute
- Baton Rouge Area Chamber Leadership Class of 2018
- THRIVE Baton Rouge – Secretary and Member of the Board of Directors (2015 – 2017)
- THRIVE Foundation – Member of the Board of Directors (2017 – 2019)
- Capital Area United Way – Community Impact Cabinet, At-Large Member (2018 – present)
- American Bar Association, Section of Litigation; Business Torts and Unfair Competition Committee, Co-Chair – Unfair Trade Practices Subcommittee (2015 – present)
- Baton Rouge Bar Association – Holiday Star Committee (2014 – 2018)

- Baton Rouge Bar Association – Chair, Holiday Star Committee (2017)
- Louisiana State Bar Association (2009 – present)
- Boys Hope Girls Hope of Baton Rouge – Chair, Board of Directors and President (2014); Board of Directors, Secretary (2013); Board of Directors (2011 – 2013)



Publications

- "The Supreme Court Declines to Require Religious Charter Schools" (May 2025)
- "AI in the Classroom – New Guidance From the Department of Education," republished July 14, 2023, in *Texas Lawyer* (June 2023)
- "New CDC Guidance for K-12 Schools: Update Your COVID-19 Policies and Protocols for Back-to-School" (July 2021)
- "Biden Administration Rollback: Are Collegiate Students Employees?," republished in *New Orleans CityBusiness* (March 2021)
- "COVID-19 Relief: New Funding Available for Schools" (March 19, 2021)
- "COVID-19 Vaccinations: Will K-12 Students Be Mandated to Take Them?," republished in *New Orleans CityBusiness* (December 2020)
- "Bank Litigation Arising from Check Fraud Schemes and Client Trust Accounts," American Bar Association, Business Torts & Unfair Competition (June 2016)
- "Protecting Granny: Recent Developments in Nursing Home Litigation in Louisiana," *Louisiana Law Review*, Issue 2 (Winter 2009)



Speaking Engagements

- Co-presenter – "Jeopardy! Charter School Edition," Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools Annual Conference (December 2024)
- "Political Activity at School in an Election Year," LAPCS Bottom Line Training (July 2024)
- "Artificial Intelligence: Coming To A Classroom Near You," Alliance of Public Charter School Attorneys (May 2024)
- "AI Coming to the Classroom," 2023 LAPCS Conference (December 2023)
- "Playing Your Role in Advocating for Charter Schools," Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools (December 2022)
- "Charter School Mythbusters," Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools Bottom Line Training (March 2022)
- "Charter School Mythbusters!," 2021 Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools Charter School Conference (December 2021)
- "Return to Work Best Practices and Legal Requirements," Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools Webinar (May 2020)
- "Preparation and Considerations When Stay-at-Home Orders are Lifted," Louisiana REALTORS® (May 2020)
- "Lease/Tenant Issues During COVID-19: What's an Owner to Do?," Louisiana REALTORS® Webinar (April 2020)
- "The Dos and Don'ts of Maintaining Nonprofit Status," Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools' Bottom Line Training (March 2020)
- "Developing Social Media Policies," Southern Association of Independent Schools Annual Conference (October 2019)
- "The Top Special Education Legal Mistakes (and How to Avoid Them)," National Business Institute (May 2019)
- Legal Panel Presenter – Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools Annual Conference (December 2018)

- "Protecting Student Data in an (Un)secure World," Southern Association of Independent Schools Annual Conference (October 2018)
- "Essential Components of a 504 Plan," National Business Institute, "Special Education Law From A to Z" seminar (June 2018)



Webinars

- Implementing the Title IX 2024 Final Rule in the Midst of State-Level Legal Challenges (July 2024)
- Return to School Plan: Key Legal, Policy, and Operational Considerations for Independent Schools (August 2020)



Education

- Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center, J.D., D.C.L., 2009
 - Board of Editors, Senior Editor – *Louisiana Law Review*
- Louisiana State University, B.A., 2005, cum laude



Admissions

- Louisiana, 2009
- Louisiana Supreme Court, 2009
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana, 2009
- U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Louisiana, 2009
- U.S. District Court for the Western District of Louisiana, 2009
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, 2009