



SCHOOL & COLLEGE LEGAL SERVICES OF CALIFORNIA

*A Joint Powers Authority
serving school and college
districts throughout the
state.*

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MEMORANDUM

To: All Clients
From: Jennifer E. Nix, General Counsel *JEN*
Date: March 1, 2023
Re: SCLS Staffing Update

This year has brought several staffing changes to School and College Legal Services (“SCLS”). This memorandum updates you on attorney departures and additions.

I appreciate your patience with our attorneys and staff as we have worked to assist you while short-staffed this year. We look forward to addressing your legal needs in the future.

Nancy Klein

Nancy Klein retired from SCLS effective December 31, 2022, after 24.5 years with our office. Happy Retirement!

Erin Stagg

Erin Stagg left our office on January 23, 2023, to pursue work with the Judicial Council of California, the rule-making arm of the California court system. We wish Ms. Stagg the best!

Jessica Ozalp

Jessica Ozalp joined our office on August 22, 2022, in the role of Associate General Counsel. Many of you have had the pleasure of working with Ms. Ozalp already.

Ms. Ozalp is a former educator and has almost a decade of experience in school law. She counsels clients on issues such as personnel investigations and discipline, Uniform Complaints, sexual harassment and Title IX compliance, charter school oversight, Brown Act compliance, and conflict of interest laws. Ms. Ozalp provides legal trainings and workshops in these areas of expertise.



She also advises clients on the development of governing board and county board policies and regulations. Ms. Ozalp frequently assists public agencies in investigating complaints regarding issues such as workplace misconduct, harassment, and discrimination. She is experienced in conducting fact-finding interviews and drafting investigative reports.

Prior to joining SCLS, Ms. Ozalp practiced education law with a public agency law firm in Northern California. She also served for seven years in Wisconsin government, as legal counsel to the Wisconsin state education agency (DPI) and to the Education committees of the Wisconsin State Legislature. In these roles she provided legal opinions, developed and drafted laws, interpreted and revised regulations, and defended public agencies in administrative hearings and litigation matters. Using her unique perspective gained researching, analyzing and advising on public education matters in state government, Ms. Ozalp practices preventive law through proactively counseling clients on compliance and avoiding legal issues where possible, as well as providing critical legal updates and workshops.

Frank Zotter

Frank Zotter returned to work full-time from retirement, effective January 2, 2023, in the role of Senior Associate General Counsel. Welcome back, Mr. Zotter!

Mr. Zotter's practice focuses on State and Federal Court Litigation, including Restraining Orders; CEQA and Land Use Law; Public Records Act; Brown Act; Contracts; Real Property Site Acquisition; Condemnation; Governance Issues; Conflicts of Interest; District Reorganization; and Administrative Hearings.

For more than seventeen years Mr. Zotter has been an Adjunct Faculty member with Mendocino College in Business Law and Real Estate Law.

Mr. Zotter has over thirty years of experience in the practice of law and public law. Prior to joining SCLS, Mr. Zotter served as Deputy County Counsel/Chief Deputy County Counsel for Mendocino County for twenty-one years.

Nicollette Alvarado

Nicollette Alvarado joined our office on February 8, 2023, in the role of Of Counsel.

Ms. Alvarado is an experienced transactional and civil litigation attorney having represented clients in federal court, administrative proceedings and alternative dispute resolution. Ms. Alvarado provides a wide range of legal advice and services at SCLS, focusing on contract review, business and facilities, transactional matters, and labor and employment.

Prior to joining SCLS, Ms. Alvarado established her own practice in Mammoth Lakes, California, specializing in consumer protection, real estate and general business and transactional matters. Ms. Alvarado has experience working across multiple practice areas, including education law, where she previously counseled clients on student issues, labor and employment and special education matters. Ms. Alvarado brings her diverse experience and passion for the



law to her practice at SCLS where she enjoys crafting creative and efficient legal solutions for her clients.

While in law school, Ms. Alvarado served as a legal extern for the Disability Rights Legal Center where she focused on ADA compliance and special education matters, assisting in representing clients in IEP meetings, 504 meetings, mediation and due process hearings.

Brian Sciacca

Brian Sciacca joined our office on February 14, 2023, in the role of Associate General Counsel.

Mr. Sciacca's practice focuses on special education and Section 504 matters. He assists school districts, county offices of education, and special education local plan areas regarding all aspects of special education law. He also assists clients with various student services concerns, including student discipline, Title IX, and Section 504. Prior to joining SCLS, Mr. Sciacca practiced special education law for public school district clients at a law firm in Southern California. He then opened his own practice focusing on the representation of students with disabilities and their families in special education matters. In law school, Mr. Sciacca clerked at the Los Angeles Unified School District Office of the General Counsel and wrote a dissertation on potential personal liability of school employees for violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Prior to becoming an attorney, Mr. Sciacca worked in a public high school as an instructional aide in a resource specialist classroom and was a water polo and swimming coach.

Danielle Houck

Additionally, in April 2023, Danielle Houck will be joining our office in the role of Senior Associate General Counsel. Ms. Houck has significant experience representing school districts and providing advice and representation across a broad spectrum of issues. Her full bio will be provided to clients upon her start.

A list of all current attorneys and staff, including a chart of specialty areas, can be found on our website at <https://sclscal.org/staff/>.

On behalf of all of the attorneys at SCLS, we thank you for your continued support of our public law organization. Please reach out to any of us to assist with your legal needs.