SpencerFane®

Stephanie Lovett-Bowman

Partner

Contact

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Overview

Stephanie Lovett-Bowman is a litigator and counselor. She specializes in helping schools and other employers resolve disputes and implement best practices to avoid risk and conflict. Her goal is to help schools maximize their time and resources so they can focus on what they do best, educating students.

As a former investigative attorney for the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR), Stephanie has unique insight to advise educational institutions and other employers in responding to government agency investigations. Her investigative work at OCR also provides her significant experience in conducting internal investigations. Stephanie frequently works as an outside, neutral investigator for complaints involving employees and students.

Stephanie regularly represents clients in administrative proceedings and lawsuits involving discrimination, employment contracts, student bullying and harassment, and regulatory compliance. She also has substantial appellate experience, having successfully argued appeals in front of the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals and the Missouri Court of Appeals.

Among other matters, Stephanie provides counsel on sensitive situations including employee terminations, discipline, and leave issues. Stephanie is also well-versed in drafting policies and regulations that comply with the complex legal regulations that surround the public school system and private employers. She frequently provides training to supervisors and employees to help prevent complaints and concerns from arising. Stephanie provides counsel regarding federal and state education laws, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504, teacher tenure laws, open records laws, and constitutional issues.

Prior to becoming an attorney, Stephanie worked as a journalist for a Philadelphia-based newspaper.

Education

- University of Kansas School of Law (J.D.), *Order of the Coif*
- University of Kansas (B.A.)

Bar Admissions

- Kansas, 2011
- Missouri, 2010

Court Admissions

- U.S. District Court for the District of Kansas
- U.S. District Court for the Western District of Missouri
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit
- U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts
- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit

Community Involvement

- The Civic Council of Greater Kansas City, Kansas City Tomorrow, Class of 2017
- Operation Breakthrough, Volunteer

Distinctions

- *Missouri Lawyers Media*, Women's Justice Awards, General Practitioner, 2024
- *Missouri & Kansas Super Lawyers,* Rising Stars, 2015, 2022

Memberships

- Kansas Bar
- Missouri Bar
- Council of School Attorneys
- Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association
- Association for Women Lawyers of Greater Kansas City

Presentations and Publications

- "Religious Freedom v. Board Policies," Missouri School Boards' Association Conference, November 2022
- "Back-to-School Hot Topics," Labor & Employment Seminar, October 2022
- "Workplace Investigations: Keeping Your Hands on the Wheel and Your Eyes on the Prize," Spencer Fane WorkSmarts Seminar, September 2022
- "The Ever-Evolving Status of the Title IX Regulations," Spencer Fane webinar, May 2021
- "COVID-19: Impact on School Districts & Recent Developments," Spencer Fane webinar, March 2021
- "#MeTooK12: Title IX investigations in the K-12 Environment," Missouri School Boards' Association Conference, Lake of the Ozarks, MO, September 2018
- "Disability Accommodations: Common Complaints and Tips," Missouri Community College Association, June 2017

Related Experience

- Obtained summary judgment on behalf of a school district and school principal in a suit by a former student pressing claims under the U.S. Constitution for the defendants' alleged failure to respond to racial discrimination by an employee and students.
- Obtained summary judgment on behalf of a school district and four administrators in student bullying case based on immunity defenses and failure to produce evidence of actionable discrimination under the Missouri Human Rights Act. Affirmed on appeal.
- Obtained dismissal of multiple lawsuits against a charter school based on the school's compliance with Missouri vaccination laws.
- Tried a special education due process hearing regarding sufficiency of school district's evaluation and educational program for student, resulting in a hearing.