



# 2023 Annual Report

## Education Law and Policy Institute

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With education law and policy issues at the forefront of public attention both nationally and locally, the Education Law and Policy Institute faculty and students have worked to respond to community needs and to strengthen our partnerships and collaboration. As the top-ranked [education law program](#) in the country, increasing numbers of students are choosing Loyola Law for its strength in education law paired with its expansive curriculum in child and family law issues. Together with faculty, our students are bringing their time, talent, and commitment to meet student and family needs through [Loyola's Stand Up for Each Other \(SUCEO\) Chicago educational advocacy project](#) and our [Anti-Bullying Program](#). Loyola faculty and students are also organizing programming and events aimed at developing research and scholarship and updating our community and key stakeholders on current issues in education law and policy.

### Program Updates:

#### **New Gift: Education Law & Policy Institute and ChildLaw Clinic**

The Loyola ChildLaw Clinic, through our Stand Up for Each Other (SUCEO) education helpline, has been handling bullying cases since the 2018-2019 school year. This representation work expanded thanks to the generous support of law school alum David Baker (JD '79) for the launch of Loyola's [Anti-Bullying Project](#) in 2020. Through the Clinic's work, we seek to (1) promote thorough and effective bullying investigations and school-based responses; (2) ensure that a plan is put in place to support targets of bullying and prevent recurrence and escalation; and (3) advocate for school leadership to take proactive steps to prevent and address bullying behavior going forward. Thanks to the project, Clinic faculty and law students under the faculty supervision have been able to prevent school expulsions, create safety plans for students, and seek additional support and resources from the school to support students impacted by bullying.

This year, the ChildLaw Center received a new gift from Mr. Baker, enabling the Clinic to continue its free legal services to children and their families in school-based and administrative proceedings. With the gift, the Center's Education Law and Policy Institute will work to grow the community of practitioners working in this area by developing a network of public and private attorneys to collaborate on case referrals, bullying case strategies, and opportunities for partnership and collaboration. Adjunct Professor and long-time education law attorney Micki Moran has taken the lead on this new phase of the project in close collaboration with Professors Jackie Ross and Miranda Johnson. In Spring 2024, Andy Froelich (JD '21) will also begin working on the project as a part-time staff attorney.

In furtherance of this project, Loyola's Legislation and Policy Clinic has also been working to develop legislation designed to address challenges families experience when seeking to have bullying-related concerns addressed by local school districts. Under the supervision of Clinic professor Lisa Jacobs, law students have been researching and developing a structure to require schools to implement "support plans" for targeted students and to designate staff member(s) as student-advocate(s) to center the needs of students who are bullied. Professor Jacobs also convened two meetings with stakeholders in the fields of child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health, and education to discuss ways in which bullying issues were manifesting in different sectors.

### **Loyola's Education Advocacy Program Expands Professional Partnerships**

This year, Loyola's Educational Advocacy Program and Stand Up for Each Other (SUFE0) Chicago project transitioned from a program operating through a direct helpline to a professional referral model. The purpose of this transition was to create a more structured intake process that better aligns with the academic calendar and law student availability and more effectively aligns with community mental health resources and outside services. These new partnerships include:

- New referral partnership with Advocate Trauma Recovery Center: The ChildLaw Clinic successfully referred a client who experienced bullying to receive counseling services, and the Clinic was retained by two Advocate Trauma Recovery Center clients who have experienced bullying and have already received counseling services but required school-based advocacy to feel safe and secure in school.
- New referral connection with Rush Adolescent Psychiatry team: Medical providers at Rush received a Know Your Rights Training conducted by Clinic faculty Jackie Ross and Micki Moran regarding patients' right to safety, schooling, and special education services. Since the training, Rush has referred at least ten patients for legal services. The expertise of the psychiatric team combined with the Clinic's legal expertise has resulted in productive and efficient legal services that have secured new placements and services for youth, some of whom had been out of school for months due to intense psychiatric and safety needs.

### **Stand Up for Each Other (SUFE0) Chicago Case Highlights**

- SUFE0 was able to get a student back into school when he was unfairly excluded for bringing a "lookalike gun" onto campus. In reality, it was a nerf dart toy that the student, a middle schooler, was playing with on his walk to school. SUFE0 pointed out that the toy did not meet the definition of a lookalike weapon, according to the school handbook, so the student was allowed to return to school.
- Clinic faculty have long represented a young boy with leukemia. The Clinic filed an administrative complaint on the student's behalf due to the school's failure to meet his academic and health needs. After months of litigation, the case was amicably resolved. The student spends half his day at a therapeutic school getting evidence-based instruction specially designed for students with learning disabilities and the other half of his day at his neighborhood school, allowing him to maintain his friendships and continue to participate in band, a beloved hobby of his.

- A school district was complaining to an eighth-grade girl's parents that she was too easily distracted and unmotivated in class. With SUFEO's intervention, the girl was evaluated and found to be reading at the second-grade level. The district developed an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for the student and privately contracted a specialized reading and math tutor to catch the student up while allowing her to stay in her neighborhood school. The student is halfway through her freshman year and is flourishing, making two levels of progress in her reading in just four months!
- A young boy was targeted and severely injured twice by a small group of boys in his school. The student was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as a result of this bullying. The student experienced such intense anxiety that he missed months of school. With the Clinic's intervention, the student was given an IEP and safety plan. The bullies were reassigned to another class; an aide accompanies the student throughout the day, making him feel safe, and weekly social work services are helping him develop coping strategies for his anxiety. This school year, the student has only missed 1.5 days of school due to his anxiety; one morning, when he was experiencing an anxiety attack, he was able to implement the strategies he's learned to successfully go to school that morning, albeit a couple of hours late. The young boy is happy he was able to remain in his school because he loves his friends and his band class.
- A middle school girl was being ostracized by her peers. Her family felt in the dark as to why she did not have friends in school. The girl was even physically assaulted in school by another student on multiple occasions. With the Clinic's intervention, it became clear she had some social deficits that were making her peers shut her out. An IEP was put in place, and the young girl was allowed to transfer to another nearby school with transportation services. The fresh start was just what she needed; she has lots of friends in her new school, is valued by her teachers, and is an active participant on the cheerleading and volleyball team.
- A young boy had missed months of school due to intense school refusal resulting from his anxiety disorder and being bullied by a group of peers. The district failed to recognize its legal obligation to support the family, so the parents were left to pay out of pocket for an expensive partial hospitalization program. As a result of the Clinic's advocacy, the young man was given an IEP, and a plan was developed to help transition him back to the classroom. These supports have been extremely effective in getting the young boy back into the classroom where he is learning and building new friendships.

### **Educational Advocacy Lab Launched:**

For the past few years, interest in SUFEO (Stand Up for Each Other) Chicago has attracted as many as sixty student volunteers to help run a free legal advocacy helpline for families facing barriers to success in school. Wanting to create a deeper, more meaningful experience for students, the Education Law Institute and ChildLaw faculty opted to turn SUFEO into a full-fledged course.

In the spring of 2023, a new course called the Educational Advocacy Lab was launched. Thirteen students participated in the course, taught by Professor Ross and Adjunct Professor Moran. This experiential course explored the intersections between racism, poverty, disability, mental health, gender, and juvenile justice through the lens of education law. Under the supervision of clinical faculty, law students participated in simulations and exercises and conducted real-life intakes

with parents and students seeking legal help for a pre-K-12th grade school issue. The goal of the intakes was to identify families' legal issues relating to education and support advocacy related to children's educational rights in discipline, special education, bullying, language access, and school enrollment. These intakes helped elucidate the topics covered in the seminar portion of the class, which grappled with how school systems historically oppressed low-income students of color and students with disabilities, the laws that were put in place in an attempt to mitigate these harms, and the practices that continue to disproportionately disengage vulnerable populations from school. On top of honing their intake skills, Lab students benefitted from opportunities for research, writing, and advocacy.

Feedback was so positive that the course is being offered again in the Spring of 2024. This spring, 20 students will engage in this exciting new offering.

### **ISBE Disciplinary Equity Partnership**

Starting in 2021, the Illinois State Board of Education formed a partnership with the University of Illinois-Springfield (UIS) and Loyola University Chicago with the aim of providing school districts with support to address racial inequities in school discipline. This partnership provides districts with access to [Emphatic Instruction](#), a customized set of online exercises for teachers that is evidence-based to reduce school suspensions and racial disproportionality. Districts can also send educators and administrators to Loyola's [School Discipline Reform Certificate](#) program and access trauma-informed training from the [UIS Alliance for Experiential Problem-Based Learning](#). Ilana Walden from [Forest Zafran Consulting Inc.](#) is supporting districts to integrate restorative justice into their systems and processes. As part of this partnership, Loyola Law hosted a Spring 2024 convening to explore the question, "[Restorative Justice: Where Are We Now?](#)" and take stock of the progress and challenges in implementing restorative justice in PreK-12 schools in Illinois.

### **Updated Career Guide**

The Education Law and Policy Institute released an updated [education law career guide](#), thanks to the support and assistance of Institute Research Assistant and second-year law student Brenton Villasenor. The career guide provides an overview of education law practice, alumni biographies, and education law placement information. The guide also provides the names of alumni working in various education law offices in order to facilitate networking. We welcome additions, edits, and corrections! Please e-mail [EdLaw-Institute@luc.edu](mailto:EdLaw-Institute@luc.edu).

### **Faculty Updates:**

#### **Professor Kathleen Hirsman Supports Weekend JD Leadership Transition**

Professor Kathleen Hirsman assumed the role of Interim Director of the Weekend JD program in May 2023. She supported the transition of leadership from Assistant Dean Kirk Walter to Assistant Dean of Student Affairs and Weekend JD Anita Maddali and Weekend JD Assistant Director Mary Daniels. Professor Hirsman has taught Education Law and Policy in the Weekend JD program since its inception and played a critical role in supporting students and faculty in the program this year.

## **Professor Miranda Johnson Chairs AALS Section on Education Law**

In 2023, Professor Miranda Johnson was elected Chair of the American Association of Law Schools (AALS) Section on Education Law. The Section promotes the communication of ideas, interests, and activities among members and provides discussion, information, and recommendations in regard to the interaction of law and education.

This has been a busy and eventful year for the Section on Education Law. The Section sponsored a midyear Works in Progress Section at Loyola University Chicago School of Law in September, which was co-sponsored by the Section on Children and the Law (described below). The Section also produced a 2023 newsletter highlighting the work of the Section and its members throughout the year. The Section also organized two panels at the 2024 AALS Meeting in Washington, D.C. in January: **Affirmative Action and the Way Forward** and **Academic Freedom and Faculty Governance in the Crosshairs**.

See this excerpt below from Professor Johnson's report as Chair of the Education Law Section:

This year has been another momentous year for education law. The national context of political polarization continues to impact PreK-12 schools as well as colleges and universities. Increasing numbers of state laws and school board policies are restricting education on race, gender, and sexual orientation, and efforts to protect LGBTQ+ students and advance diversity, inclusion and equity are under attack. Questions relating to educational curricula, parents' rights, pronoun use, and religious freedom of school employees are being disputed in courts. State laws and school district policies limiting the use of exclusionary discipline in schools are being rolled back, as schools struggle to meet students' behavioral and mental health needs in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Changes in long-standing Supreme Court jurisprudence are also creating new challenges for educational institutions. In particular, colleges and universities are grappling with the implications of the Supreme Court's decisions on affirmative action last term. Education law attorneys and school administrators are also navigating the shifting landscape relating to the scope of religious freedom in schools.

In this time, the work of Education Law Section members is critical. Through teaching, scholarship, and media interviews, Section members are helping law students, attorneys, policymakers, educational institutions, and the public understand the meaning and scope of legal changes and the relevance of legal precedents. Section members who are clinical faculty are also supporting law and policy reform processes and providing legal representation on education law matters.

The Education Law Section has provided important opportunities to convene and share information during this challenging moment...

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Congratulations to each of you for what you have accomplished in this past year. I wish you all the best as you wrap up your semesters, and I hope that you find time during the winter break to rest and spend time with family and friends. As we look forward to 2024, let's reflect on the upcoming 70th anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) and consider both how far we have come and how much work we have yet to do in order to realize the goals of educational equity and racial justice.

It's been an honor to serve as Chair of this section, and I look forward to opportunities for continued collaboration in the years ahead.

In addition to her leadership role in AALS, Professor Johnson also offered guest lectures for the Education and Civil Rights Class at The University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law and the Women and Human Rights Advocacy Clinic at Northwestern Pritzker School of Law.

#### Student Updates:

##### **Nneka Ugwu Selected as Skadden Fellow**

Nneka Ugwu was [selected](#) as Loyola's second recipient of the prestigious Skadden Fellowship. The program provides two-year Fellowships to recent law graduates to pursue the practice of public interest law on a full-time basis. Nneka's 2024-2026 Fellowship will be at Equip for Equality and will offer legal representation, outreach and training, and policy advocacy on behalf of Black students with disabilities in Illinois to address persistent disproportionality of exclusionary school discipline.

Nneka formerly served as President of SUFEO (Stand Up for Each Other) Chicago, an education advocacy program housed within the ChildLaw Clinic. Nneka credits her experience with SUFEO for helping her recognize the many workarounds school districts use to get around recent Illinois discipline law meant to dismantle the school to prison pipeline which disproportionately impacts low-income children of color and children with disabilities.

#### Alumni Updates:

##### **Vanessa Aceves (JD '23) Begins Equal Justice Works Fellowship at Equip for Equality**

Vanessa Aceves (JD '23), a former Rodin Scholar, Presidential Medallion recipient, and SUFEO co-intake chair, received an Equal Justice Works Fellowship for 2023-2025 to represent students who require communication devices to express themselves. Vanessa's experiences as the SUFEO co-intake chair and a longtime intern at Equip for Equality through the Education Law Practicum as well as her familial connection to the cause, inspired Vanessa to develop this project proposal. We are so delighted for Vanessa and students with disabilities throughout Illinois that they will have access to Vanessa's advocacy for the next two years during her fellowship at Equip for Equality!

## **Candace Moore (JD '13) Finishes Tenure as Chicago's First Chief Equity Officer**

In July 2019, Candace Moore became the City of Chicago's first Chief Equity Officer, transitioning from a role as Senior Staff Attorney in the Educational Equity Project at the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law to leading the newly-created office of the Office of Equity and Racial Justice for the City of Chicago. In that role, Candace directed policy and practice efforts to advance equitable outcomes across the City of Chicago enterprise. After over four years in this position, Candace concluded her service in this position and announced the following major accomplishments of her office during this time period:

- Codified the Office of Equity and Racial Justice and the requirement for all departments to create Racial Equity Actions plans and annually report progress along with the budget
- Published 25 Racial Equity Action Plans created by departments
- Published Chicago's first Equity Report
- Invested \$6 million in Together We Heal Creative Place grants
- Invested \$15 million in Community Wealth Building grants
- Led a Year of Healing and created an interactive report to serve as a tool for ongoing change work
- Modeled several co-governance partnerships (aka shared-decision making tables) including the Racial Equity Rapid Response Team, Housing Stability Community Response Table, and Community Safety Coordination Center
- Created two Equity Data Dashboards including the Workforce Dashboard and the Chicago Community Dashboard

Candace's [announcement](#) on LinkedIn generated over 100 comments thanking her for her tireless work to enhance city services from a racial equity lens and wishing her all the best with her next steps.

## **Andy Froelich (JD '21) Receives Chicago Bar Foundation Public Interest Award**

Andy Froelich received the Kimball R. Anderson and Karen Gatsis Anderson Public Interest Law Fellowship from the Chicago Bar Association and Chicago Bar Foundation on July 20, 2023, for his work at the James B. Moran Center for Youth Advocacy. In 2021, Andy received an Equal Justice Works Fellowship to expand a community-based education advocacy program into the Rogers Park neighborhood of Chicago, providing special education and school discipline legal services to low-income families in the community. Upon the conclusion of his fellowship in 2023, Andy continued his work at the Moran Center as a staff attorney.

## **Elizabeth Becker (JD '23) Selected for NCAA Postgraduate Internship**

With a Master of Education in Postsecondary Administration and Student Affairs from the University of Southern California, Elizabeth (Liz) Becker came to Loyola with a particular interest in higher education law. While at law school, Liz created a new field placement for academic credit with the University of Chicago Equal Opportunity Programs and the Center for Awareness, Resolution, Education, and Support (UChicago CARES). She also completed an Advanced Education Law Placement at the education law firm Franczek P.C. and earned a CALI Excellence for the Future Award for her coursework in higher education law. She also pursued

an interest in sports law while at Loyola, taking the law school's new course on Name Image, Likeness taught by Adjunct Professor Earl Caldwell. Liz was [selected](#) as a member of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)'s 2023-24 Postgraduate Internship Program cohort, joining the NCAA's Enforcement Team, which upholds integrity and fair play among member schools, ensures that compliant schools and student-athletes are not disadvantaged by their compliance, and provides fair procedures and timely resolution of cases.

### **Annie Keller (JD '23) Begins Work at Legal Aid Chicago**

Annie Keller (JD '23), a graduate of the Education Law Practicum and co-Intake Coordinator of SUFEO, was hired into Legal Aid Chicago's highly-coveted Children and Families Practices Group upon graduation. She's using experience gleaned from her experience in Loyola's educational advocacy project to represent families in a range of disputes, such as securing orders of protection, divorce, and parentage cases. Annie credits her participation in two expulsion hearings during her time at Loyola with giving her far more court experience than other first-year staff attorneys. She explains that conducting intakes through SUFEO was "enormously helpful in developing client-facing skills and preparing me as an issue spotter and litigator." She's also thankful for the mentorship opportunity SUFEO offered, working alongside faculty supervisors.

### Conferences and Special Events:

#### **Education Law: A Year in Review Celebrates 10 Years**

Loyola's Education Law and Policy Institute first launched its annual "Education Law: A Year in Review" in 2014, with the aim of bringing together education law stakeholders from various settings to reflect on major developments in education law and policy over the prior year. This program continued online during COVID and resumed being held in person in June 2023. With over 200 attendees, the Ceremonial Courtroom was filled, and participants included school district attorneys, parent and student attorneys, policymakers, government attorneys, educators, administrators, faculty, students, and community members. Institute faculty were delighted to welcome many Loyola Law alumni back for this auspicious occasion.

Given the rapid developments in education law over the past several years, this event offers an important opportunity to take stock of the national and local landscape and receive timely and important updates. Topics covered at the event included:

- school discipline, student civil rights, and the work of the Illinois Attorney General's Civil Rights Bureau;
- national trends in legislation concerning LGBTQ+ identities in schools;
- recent developments in the Supreme Court;
- updates on Title IX and special education law;
- student behavioral and mental health challenges and how schools should respond; and
- legal, policy, and legislative updates from the Illinois State Board of Education.

Speakers included Professor Sacha Coupet, Amy Kosanovich Dickerson (Loyola JD '07), former Legislation and Policy Clinic Teaching Fellow Amy Meek, and other leading experts. Mark Walsh, a contributing writer for *Education Week* and SCOTUSblog, provided an update via Zoom of the Supreme Court's decisions on affirmative action, which he had heard announced at the Supreme Court that morning. Videos and PowerPoints from many of the presentations are available [here](#).

Special thanks to ChildLaw Program Coordinator Griselda Sanchez for her tremendous work supporting the administration of this program for the past 10 years. Our appreciation also goes to law school Continuing Legal Education and Online Communications Coordinator, Lindsey Johnson, who has made sure that the many attorneys seeking Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credit for this program get their certificates in an expeditious manner. Thank you also to the many others who have supported this program in various ways over the years, including advising, speaking, moderating, staffing, attending, and helping us spread the word. We consistently get great feedback on the event and its usefulness to a wide variety of education law stakeholders. We have been told that it's the best education law and policy event in the state, with many attendees coming year after year and relying on the information and updates received for different aspects of their work.



Dr. Jennifer Rose of Trauma Recovery Center and Adjunct Faculty at Loyola University Chicago School of Education presents on the topic: **“Students’ Academic and Behavioral Challenges: How Should Schools Respond?”**

## **Loyola Chicago School of Law Hosted a Works in Progress for the AALS Sections on Education Law & Children and the Law**

We were delighted to host the American Association of Law Schools (AALS) Sections on Education Law & Children and the Law for a works-in-progress session on September 22-23. The event was co-organized by Professor Miranda Johnson, Chair of the AALS Education Law Section, and Professor Sacha Coupet, Chair of Midyear Programming for the AALS Children and the Law Section.

The session brought together scholars and researchers from across the country with the aim of providing a collegial and supportive environment for advancing scholarship and promoting cross-fertilization between scholars working in related areas of the law. Scholars presented a wide range of topics that included children’s law, education law, and higher education law.



WIP Participants Gather at Loyola Law

## **Convening Series on Anti-Racist Research in Restorative Practices**

Professor Miranda Johnson collaborated with Professor Thalia González from the University of California College of the Law, San Francisco (UC Law SF) and Associate Dean Amy Nelson Christensen from Loyola’s School of Education to host an interdisciplinary convening series entitled “**An Antiracist Research Agenda to Advance Restorative Practices in PreK-12 Schools.**” This convening series aims to support new research in the field and develop an infrastructure for a national working group to advance antiracist education research of restorative practices in PreK-12 schools. The series is supported by a grant from the Spencer Foundation.

A pre-conference online session was held in July 2023, and US Law SF hosted a two-day in-person working conference on October 12-13, 2023. The conference opened with a welcome circle facilitated by Dr. Fania Davis, a leading national voice on restorative justice, together with Malachai Scott from Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth. The working conference also included the voices and expertise of youth and youth organizers, including youth from Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth (RJOY) and a youth organizer from Voices for Youth in Chicago Education (VOYCE), which has contributed to major reforms in school discipline and school policing.

Convening participants are a small interdisciplinary group of scholars, practitioners, and community-based leaders with specialized knowledge relating to the intersection of education and restorative practices. During the working conference, participants presented and provided feedback on eight draft papers that will be edited by Professors González, Nelson Christensen, and Johnson for a peer-reviewed volume on this important topic.



Youth from Restorative Justice from Oakland Youth (RJOY) describe their work

### **Community Building Circle Initiative Re-Launched**

The Education Law and Policy Institute partnered with the Office of Student Services and the Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Equity to host a training in November for faculty, students, and staff on community building circles, a type of restorative practice designed to strengthen connections and relationships. At the workshop, participants learned to facilitate circles using templates based on prior circles at the law school and resources previously provided by Umoja Student Development Corporation. The aim of the training was to support the use of circle practices as a means to enhance connections and relationship building, with the ultimate goal of improving the ability of our community to have difficult conversations and resolve conflicts

when they arise. After the workshop, participants will plan and lead community building circles for the larger law school community during the spring semester. A shorter follow-up training will be held at the start of the Spring semester to prepare for the circles to be hosted next semester.

Loyola Law has used circle practice, a type of restorative practice, at the law school as one way of discussing issues of importance to our community. Staff, faculty, and students have been trained on community building circles and led regular circles on topical issues and hosted circles in response to current events, as part of student organizations, in class as part of PIF, and to engage in dialogue both within affinity groups and across difference. This use of circles existed pre-COVID and served us well as our community transitioned to remote learning and navigated COVID, a national racial reckoning, and the events surrounding the 2020 election.

The workshop was led by:

- Radhika Sutherland (JD '21), Associate Director of Student Affairs and Adjunct Professor,
- Jim Alritz (JD '21), Programs Director - Early Resolution Program, Center for Conflict Resolution, and
- Miranda Johnson, Clinical Faculty and Director of Loyola's Education Law and Policy Institute.

Dean Anita Maddali, Dean Tania Luma, and Mahdis Azimi (JD '14 and Assistant Director of Student Services) also partnered in this work.

### **Professor Johnson Presents at Education Law Association Conference**

Professor Johnson presented at the 69th Annual Conference of the Education Law Association (ELA), which was held in Reno, Nevada, from October 25-28, 2023. The presentation was entitled “**Examining School Discipline: Legal Updates and Equity Issues in PreK-12 Schools.**” Professor Johnson presented together with Dr. Tiffany Puckett, Assistant Professor at Northern Illinois University, and Dr. Chris Graves, Principal of LaSalle Language Academy in Chicago. The presentation reviewed federal cases relating to school discipline policies and practices, including cases related to student rights, discrimination, and suspension and expulsion procedures. The panelists also reviewed developments in U.S. Department of Education guidance and resolution agreements, special education due process decisions, and state policy reforms. Professor Johnson's presentation focused on recent developments in special education due process and state complaints related to school discipline and alternative school placements. She also addressed the recent [Resource on Confronting Racial Discrimination in Student Discipline](#) issued by the U.S Department of Education Office for Civil Rights and the U.S Department of Justice Civil Rights Division. Law student research assistant Brenton Villasenor supported this presentation through research and PowerPoint drafting.

The panel was well-received, and the aim is to make the update an annual event at the ELA conference. Professor Johnson and Dr. Puckett were also invited to give the same presentation at

the Martha McCarthy Education Law and Policy Institute at the Indiana University Bloomington College of Education in June 2024.

### Student Events:

#### **Let the Little Light Shine Film Screening:**

The Education Law and Policy Society, Stand Up For Each Other (SUFEO), and the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion collaborated to screen the film “Let the Little Light Shine” on April 11 as part of Loyola’s Diversity Week programming. The film “Let the Little Light Shine” follows what happens when Chicago Public Schools attempted to phase out National Teachers Academy (NTA), a high performing Chicago elementary school, in order to convert the building into a high school for the rising affluent community of South Loop. Parents, students, and educators mobilized to fight for the elementary school’s survival, and a litigation team that includes three Loyola Law alums (Aneel Chablani JD ’97, Candace Moore JD ’13, and Kate Gladson JD ’14) filed a lawsuit to block the closure.

Elisabeth Greer, a parent, community organizer, and named plaintiff in the lawsuit, spoke after the film together with Kate Gladson (JD ’14). The conversation focused on the community lawyering framework of the litigation and how the NTA community and legal team worked together to get a successful outcome that ensured NTA’s survival and provided an important legal precedent on race-based claims in school closing cases. Kate Gladson and Candace Moore (JD ’13) also spoke to students in the full-time section of the Education Law and Policy class.

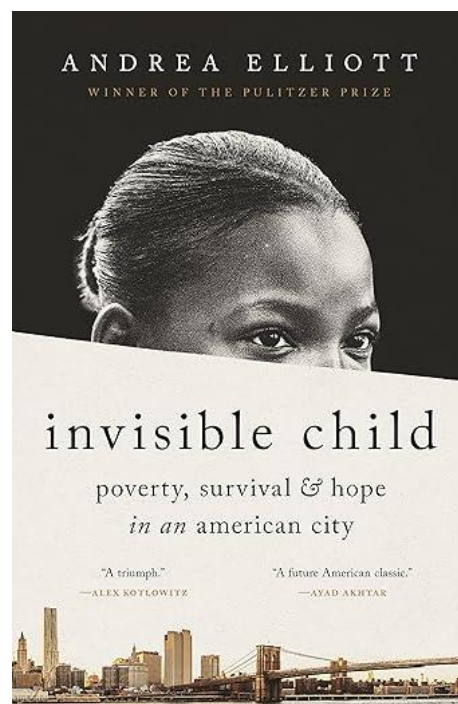
#### **Education Law Career Panel:**

On October 18, 2023, the Education Law and Policy Society hosted their annual Careers in Education Law panel with practicing attorneys in the education law sector. The panel was held on Zoom and featured Rachel Shapiro from Equip for Equality, Andy Froelich (JD ’21) from the Moran Center for Youth Advocacy, and John Anders (JD ’19) from Hinshaw & Culbertson. This annual event offers a great opportunity for students to learn more about the varied field of education law, network with attorneys in the field, and reflect on how they can maximize Loyola’s expansive course offerings in education law.

## Classes:

### **Revised Curriculum of Child, Family, and the State**

Professor Miranda Johnson revised the Law School's Child, Family, and the State elective in 2022, building on the wonderful foundation for the course created by Professor Sacha Coupet. Using Andrea Elliott's 2021 *Invisible Child: Poverty, Survival and Hope in an American City* and other materials, the course examines the legal relationships among children, families, and the state. Areas of law examined include child welfare, education, the juvenile legal system, and immigration. The course explores Supreme Court jurisprudence on the issue of parental rights and family privacy as well as the doctrine of children's rights. Attention is paid to the role of race, gender, and class and their intersection in shaping the ways in which children and families interface with governmental systems. The course brings in current issues, such as the legal and policy battles over access to gender-affirming care, state and district bans on teaching of "divisive concepts" and critical race theory, and challenges of children and families in the immigration system. Students in the course are asked to grapple with critiques of governmental systems impacting children and families, explore calls to reconstruct and reconstitute these systems, and examine the role of lawyers working from within and outside these systems.



### **Education Law and Policy Class Learns Community History of Bronzeville**

For the second year, students in Professor Miranda Johnson's Education Law and Policy class were offered the opportunity to participate in a walking tour of the historical African American neighborhood of Bronzeville with Bernard Turner, Executive Director of the Bronzeville-Black Metropolis National Heritage Area. Mr. Turner, author of the book *A New View of Bronzeville*, offered students rich and varied insights into how Bronzeville was settled and grew to become a center for African American culture and economy in Chicago. Stops on this tour included the Walk of Fame, landmarks, and public art reflecting the histories of this South Side neighborhood.

This tour of Bronzeville connected with students' learning from the book *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago's South Side* by Eve Ewing, which they read for the course alongside their textbook. The book focuses on Bronzeville to contextualize the 2013 mass school closure in Chicago, connecting that decision to systemic racism, segregation, and inequality rooted in the city's history and highlighting the lived experience and voice of community organizers, students, and parents. As one of their assignments for the course, students were asked to consider how their learning drawn from *Ghosts in the Schoolyard* and other materials related to bias, racism, and educational equity informed their understanding of education law and policy. Many students who attended the Bronzeville tour reflected on how the tour impacted their understanding of how educational policy decisions impact communities.

This year, a practical skills exercise was added to the course. Students were asked to draft a mock complaint to the US Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR). The complaints were based on factual materials provided, data and policies of a local school district, as well as legal standards used by OCR to decide civil rights complaints. Students from the law school's Stand Up for Each Other (SUFE0) educational advocacy project supported students with this exercise and added a real-world dimension.



Loyola Law students learn about Bronzeville history from community expert Bernard Turner

### **Scholarship and Blog Updates:**

#### **Book Launch:**

This year, the Institute continued to spread the word about the book [\*Discipline Disparities Among Students With Disabilities: Creating Equitable Environments\*](#). This book, released in 2022, was co-edited by Professor Pamela Fenning of the Loyola School of Education and Professor Miranda Johnson. The book explores the decades-long problem of disproportionate school discipline and school-based arrests of students with disabilities, particularly those who also identify as Black or Native American. A team of interdisciplinary scholars, attorneys, and education practitioners focus on how disparities based on disability intersect with race and ethnicity, why such disparities occur, and the impacts these disparities have over time. A DisCrit and research-based perspective frames key issues at the beginning of the book, and the chapters that follow suggest promising practices and approaches to reduce the inequitable use of school discipline and increase the use of evidence-supported alternatives to prevent and respond to behaviors of students with disabilities. The final chapter recommends future research, policy, legal, and practice goals, suggesting an agenda for moving the field forward in years to come.

This book was developed from a working conference held at Loyola in the summer of 2019, which brought together researchers, scholars, and practitioners from around the country to explore the issue of discipline disparities among students with disabilities and the intersection with race. This project was funded by a working conference grant from the Spencer Foundation.

### **Education Law and Policy Institute Blog Continues**

The Education Law and Policy Institute continued to publish its [blog](#) as a way for students and faculty to share updates and news about the Education Law and Policy Institute and analysis related to developments in education law and policy. The following recent student and alumni blog posts were published:

- [Preschool Doesn't Improve Test Scores: Why That's Good](#), by John Groden. Is preschool the medicine that will fix student achievement? Maybe not on tests, but preschool makes people better in the long run. Law student John Groden provides a thoughtful read that will make you reconsider how we understand preschool and the educational system.
- [How K-12 Students Can Profit Off of Non-Profits](#), by Jacob Morales. Non-profits provide much needed support to schools, relieving institutional stress, but also providing the students inside with unique opportunities. Law student Jacob Morales writes about the benefit that non-profits can bring to schools using partnership agreements aimed at improving the academic success of students.

Professor Miranda Johnson presented at the Legal Writing Institute One-Day Workshop at Vermont Law & Graduate School on December 8, 2023, on the topic, “Teaching Students How to Blog.” This presentation for law school faculty described the process for teaching students how to blog that is used in Loyola’s Education Law Practicum and Education Law and Policy course. The presentation also described the benefits of teaching students blog writing, which helps build their skills in public communication of legal concepts and enables students to develop their voice as legal professionals.