

Connecticut Special Education Due Process Hearing Officers

Attorney Sylvia Ho has been an IDEA Hearing Officer in the State of Connecticut since 2011. She also has served as an arbitrator and a fact finder for the Connecticut Superior Court for the Hartford Judicial District. In her private practice, she practices as a business litigator and transactional attorney in Farmington, Connecticut. She has received an AV Preeminent peer rating and Super Lawyers listing in her practice in Business litigation and Corporate Law. She is a member of the Connecticut Bar Association where has served on the House of Delegates and co-Chair of the Solo and Small Firm Section. Since 2014, she has been under appointment by the House Majority Leader of the Connecticut Legislature to serve as an advisor on the Advisory Board of the Commission of Women Children Seniors Equity and Opportunity to the Legislature. In 2023, she was a recipient of the CBA's the Honorable Anthony V. DeMayo Pro Bono Award. Attorney Ho is a graduate of Tufts University with Honors and Boston College Law School.

Attorney Janis C. Jerman is an Impartial Hearing Officer and Arbitrator providing dispute resolution services to government agencies and private parties in the primary areas of education, labor and employment, and business. She is contracted with the State Department of Education to handle special education due process hearings; school accommodation, residency, and transportation hearings; petitions for school bargaining unit clarification; revocation or denial of educator certificates and permits; declaratory rulings; and interest arbitration cases. She also hears student expulsion hearings for the Connecticut Technical High School System. Ms. Jerman holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Purdue University and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Connecticut School of Law.

Attorney Ned Kassman has been practicing law for over 28 years. He is admitted to practice in New York and Connecticut and the Federal District Courts for the Eastern and Southern Districts of New York. Initially, Attorney Kassman served as Counsel to a New York State Assemblyman, and then as an attorney litigating a diverse array of cases ranging from nursing home collection matters to Fire Department Violations to Rent Stabilization matters to a Civil RICO Class Action against Cablevision and its attorneys. Attorney Kassman also has over fifteen years' experience as a neutral, both as a Hearing Officer for New York City OATH, adjudicating Dept. of Building and Fire Dept. Cases and serving as an Arbitrator in Queens and Kings County Small Claims Court. From 2020 through 2024, Attorney Kassman was a full time Impartial Hearing Officer and adjudicated hundreds of Special Education Due Process Complaints. Currently, Attorney Kassman also serves as a Court Examiner and adjudicates Custody and Visitation and Willfulness Petitions in Family Court. He is a current member of the Education Committee in the Bar Association of the City of New York.

Attorney Patrick L. Kennedy received his B.A. in Government and Economics from Connecticut College in 1983 and his J.D. from the University of Connecticut School of Law in 1986. He has been in solo practice since 1992 and currently focuses on arbitration and mediation of civil cases. Attorney Kennedy serves as a magistrate, arbitrator and fact-finder in various Connecticut Superior Courts, as an arbitrator for FINRA, as an Independent Hearing Board for the Department of Education and a municipal citation hearing officer. He served as Chairman of the South Windsor Planning and Zoning Commission for eight years and currently serves as Vice Chairman of the Manchester Planning and Zoning Commission. Attorney Kennedy has also served as a volunteer judge for high school and middle school mock trials for many years.

Attorney Adrienne Lawston is an attorney with over thirty years of experience. Her current areas of focus include special education and disability law. Attorney Lawston began her career as an Assistant District Attorney, where she gained extensive trial experience. She later worked as an administrative law judge, with a New York State agency, and then moved on to the NYS Education Department's Office of State Review, where she conducted appellate review of the decisions of impartial hearing officers concerning special education issues. She left the Office of State Review to be part of the NYS Justice Center Project Team, whose mission was to implement a new law, the Protection of People with Special Needs Act. In her role as subject matter expert, she developed the business process and technical design for adjudication. As a result of the Project Team's work, a new agency was established, the NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs. Attorney Lawston later moved on to accept appointment as an Assistant Attorney General with the NYS Office of the Attorney General. She retired from New York State after many years of public service and is now using her experience in her work as an Independent Contract Hearing Officer.

Attorney Michael S. Lazan has practiced exclusively as a Hearing Officer/Arbitrator/Mediator since 1997: His experience includes presiding over and deciding IDEA special education cases for New York State since 1997, the District of Columbia since 2012, and Connecticut since 2025. He presides over IDEA special education mediation for the District of Columbia. Mr. Lazan also presides over arbitration cases for, among others, American Arbitration Association; Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service; New York State United Teachers/New York City Department of Education Section 3020-a Teacher Discipline Panel; and New Jersey State Board of Mediation. He is a graduate of Fordham University School of Law and Binghamton University, and is admitted to practice law in Connecticut, New York, and the District of Columbia.

Attorney Kelly B. Moyher received her B.A. in Communications/Journalism from Marist College in 1998 and her J.D. from Quinnipiac University School of Law in 2001. She received several speaking honors while attending law school, competed at the national level of the Moot Court Honor Society at the National Appellate Advocacy Competition (NAAC) and was a finalist at the regional level of the NAAC. Attorney Moyher is admitted to practice law in Connecticut and the United States District Court for the District of Connecticut, as well as before the Supreme Court of the United States. She practiced special education law on behalf of parents for the firm of Klebanoff & Phelan for two years following law school. Following her work in private practice, Attorney Moyher worked for the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) until 2015. She served as the Education Law Chair and Co-Chair for the Young Lawyers Division of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Bar Association for two years. Attorney Moyher is a recognized speaker on all issues surrounding education and special education law at both the state and national levels. She has been an impartial hearing officer for the State Department of Education since 2017.

Attorney Jane Ford Shaw received her B.A. in Political Science from Providence College in 1990 and her J.D. from Quinnipiac University School of Law in 1996. Attorney Shaw is admitted to practice law in Connecticut and in the United States District Court for the District of Connecticut in 1996. She has been in private practice since being admitted to the Bar, where she focuses on a wide breath of matters including real estate transactions, probate, guardianships, conservatorships, title 19 applications and small estate planning, as well as employment law, civil litigation and appellate matters. She has extensive experience in motion pleading and appellate briefing. She has also represented families in special education mediation and due process issues. Attorney Shaw frequently accepts Court appointments to represent minors and disabled individuals.

Janet K. Maxwell Wickett is an experienced attorney, impartial hearing officer, and mediator whose work spans multiple state education agencies and over a decade in special education law. She has served as an Impartial Due Process Hearing Officer for the Illinois State Board of Education since 2014, issuing detailed written decisions—several of which have been affirmed by the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois and the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals—and mediating IDEA disputes statewide. She currently serves as an Impartial Due Process Hearing Officer for the Connecticut, Illinois, Kentucky, and Nevada Departments of Education, where she manages the administrative process adjudicating IDEA disputes. She also mediates special education matters between families and school districts in Illinois and Kentucky. She works with Special Education Solutions, LLC as a complaint investigator - reviewing complaints involving hearing officers in New York and making recommendations regarding same - and conducting IDEA state complaint investigations in Hawaii. Janet is admitted to the Illinois Bar, the Connecticut Bar, the Seventh Circuit Federal Bar, and the United States Supreme Court Bar. She holds a J.D. from DePaul University College of Law and a B.B.A. with Distinction from the University of Michigan.