

TAASE Conference 2024

December 2-4, 2024



**Music Road Hotel & Convention Center
303 Henderson Chapel Road
Pigeon Forge, TN 37863**

TAASE

Tennessee Association of Administrators of Special Education
December 2-4, 2024 @ Music Road Convention Center

Monday, December 2, 2024

Registration- Convention Center Lobby

7:30 AM - 8:15 AM

Welcome & Opening Session- Orchestra Ballroom

8:15 AM - 8:30 AM

TAASE President- Daniel Mobley- Welcome

TAASE App- Sarah Huffman

TAASE Cup Awards- TAASE Board Members

TDOE Update- Assistant Commissioner, Jennifer Jordan

8:30 AM - 9:00 AM

Keynote Speaker- Jan Tomsy, Esq.- “2024: Year in Review”

9:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Lunch- (on your own)

11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Breakout Sessions #1

1:00 PM - 2:15 PM

DOBRO Scott Bennett, Esq.: “Responding to Threats of Mass Violence”

HARP Amanda Morse, Esq.: “A Spoonful of ABA (and RBT) Goes a Long Way”

UKULELE TDOE: Dr. April Ebbinger: “Best Practices in Manifestation Determination Reviews”

VIOLIN Deanna Arivett, Esq.: “All Things Section 504, Child Find, 504 Plans, and More”

GITAR Chris McCarty, Esq.: “Compensatory Services: The When and the How”

Break- Coffee /Soft Drinks/ Snacks

2:15 PM - 2:45 PM

Breakout Sessions #2

2:45 PM - 4:00 PM

DOBRO Jan Tomsy, Esq.: “Parent Participation, Methodology, and Disputes”

HARP TDOE: Taylor Jenkins, Esq.: “IEPs vs. ISPs”

UKULELE TDOE: Dr. Alison Gauld: “The Federal Cap of 1% and Implications of Participation”

VIOLIN Katherine Kimmell, Esq.: “A Matter of Discretion: When Can Educators Exercise Their Professional Judgement?”

GITAR Chuck Cagle, Esq.: “The 2024 General Assembly: Effects on New Laws on Special Education”

Evening Reception

Hosted by Allied Instructional Services: Convention Center

5:00 PM - 6:30 PM

TAASE

Tuesday, December 3, 2024

Breakout Sessions #1

8:15 AM - 9:30 AM

DOBRO TDOE: Dr. April Ebbinger- "504, Requirements and Responsibilities"
HARP Caitlin Burchette, Esq.- "How to Navigate Special Education Concerns During Title IX Investigations"
UKULELE Scott Bennett, Esq.- "Managing Disruptive Behaviors"
VIOLIN TDOE: Taylor Jenkins, Esq.- "Hot Topics in Special Education"
GUITAR Deanna Arivett, Esq.- "FAPE and Staffing Shortages: Bridging the Gap"

Break- Coffee /Soft Drinks/ Snacks

9:30 AM - 10:15 AM

Keynote Speaker

10:15 AM - 12:00 PM

Chris McCarty, Esq.- "Weighing LRE Against Student Safety"

Lunch- (on your own)

12:00 PM - 1:30 PM

Sponsor of the Day- Goalbook

1:30 PM - 1:40 PM

Ask the Attorneys- Orchestra Ballroom

1:45 PM- 3:30 PM

Attorneys from the TAASE conference will answer questions from the audience concerning current legal trends in special education.

Facilitator: Debbie McAdams, TAASE Legislative Chairperson

Wednesday, December 4, 2024

TAASE Board Meeting: Orchestra Ballroom- (Full Board)

8:30 AM - 9:00 AM

Chuck Cagle, Esq. - Discipline of SWDs

9:15 AM - 11:00 AM

Closing Remarks- TASL Information and Certificates of Attendance

11:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Keynote Speakers



Jan Tomsy

“2024: The Year in Review”

Monday, December 2, 2024

Orchestra Ballroom



Chris McCarty

“Weighing LRE Against School Safety”

Tuesday, December 3, 2024

Orchestra Ballroom



Charles “Chuck” Cagle

“Discipline of SWDs”

Wednesday, December 4, 2024

Orchestra Ballroom

Breakout Speakers



Jan Tomskey, Esq.

Nationally recognized for her expertise in special education law and draws on her seen-it-all experience, deep well of knowledge and steadfast commitment to her clients to advise them on the most difficult circumstances and achieve the best outcomes possible. Jan represents school districts in mediations, due process hearings and litigation in state and federal courts and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Bringing a rare combination of persuasion and finesse, she advocates for clients in disputes that often involve the most sensitive issues.

Clients turn to Jan for help in defending their decisions on appeal to county boards and in court, primarily because of her history of success and ability to cultivate and maintain relationships with all parties involved in a dispute.

Jan counsels clients on such student-related issues as cyber misconduct, social media, technology and many other matters. In addition, she is certified as a trainer of trainers in Interest-Based Bargaining. Jan has also earned a highly regarded reputation for designing and delivering workshops for individual districts, which are specifically tailored to address their needs.

Frequently invited to present at public speaking engagements by prestigious education organizations throughout the country, Jan uses her gifted and natural presentation skills to captivate, inform and entertain audiences. Her speeches are always very well-received. At one recent conference, for example, audience members provided written feedback for her presentation, which was rated as “Excellent” according to the organization’s metrics. “Jan was amazing. The information she shared was valuable and applicable,” wrote one attendee. Another audience member described her speech as “incredibly done. Great analysis, humor and timing from a great speaker.” And yet another said, “Outstanding presentation with up-to-date case law.”

A strong writer, Jan is the author or co-author of publications that are considered essential to special education professionals. They include *Personal Liability for IDEA Violations: Where the Courts Stand*; *The Administrator’s Guide to Building and Maintaining a Comprehensive Autism Program*; and *IDEA Due Process Survival Guide: A Step-by-step Companion for Administrators and Attorneys*.



Chris McCarty, Esq.

Mr. McCarty is a shareholder in our Knoxville office, practices in the areas of employment law, education law and civil litigation. Mr. McCarty handles matters before state and federal courts throughout Tennessee. Mr. McCarty is also a trained arbitrator, and is listed as a Rule 31 mediator by the Tennessee Supreme Court Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee. Mr. McCarty also presents on employment and education law topics. His articles on those topics have been seen in numerous publications, including HR Magazine, the Tennessee Bar Journal and the Knoxville Business Journal. Mr. McCarty is approved as a member of the American Arbitration Association's (AAA) Panel of Employment Arbitrators.

AFFILIATIONS

- Federation of Defense & Corporate Counsel
- DRI – Employment & Labor Law Committee
- Society for Human Resource Management
- American Bar Association
- Knoxville Bar Association
- Tennessee Bar Association
- National School Boards Association Council of School Attorney

Following college, Mr. McCarty spent two years teaching eighth grade United States history at Seymour Middle School in Seymour, Tennessee. He now lives in the Concord area with his wife and their three children, and is actively involved with his church, Cedar Springs Presbyterian.



Charles “Chuck” Cagle, Esq.

Charles W. (Chuck) Cagle is a shareholder and chair of the Education Law and Government Relations Practice Group for the firm’s Nashville office. He oversees the firm’s representation of over 70 public boards of education, two private schools, two private universities, and a private medical school in a variety of legal matters including employment issues related to both licensed and classified employees, employee and student discipline, employee and student rights, special education and disability accommodation, constitutional rights issues, sexual harassment and bullying issues, civil rights, desegregation, school system consolidation, tort liability, school system business practices, school funding, taxation, and school construction.

Mr. Cagle also is a registered lobbyist with the Tennessee Bureau of Ethics and Campaign Finance. His list of lobbying clients has included school superintendents, school employee professional organizations, school boards, private schools, and private universities. In addition, Mr. Cagle serves as an adjunct professor at Vanderbilt University teaching courses in K-12 Education Law and Public Policy and the Law of Higher Education.



Dr. Jennifer Jordan
Tennessee Department of Education
Assistant Commissioner of Education for Special Populations

Dr. Jennifer Jordan is the Assistant Commissioner of Special Education and Intervention Programs with the Tennessee Department of Education. Before her appointment to the assistant commissioner in October 2021, Dr. Jordan served as the Senior Director of Instruction and Intervention with the department.

Prior to joining the department, Dr. Jordan's professional career spanned 33-years as a special education teacher, instructional coach, behavior consultant, school psychologist, literacy consultant, and district leader with the Lauderdale County School District. Dr. Jordan has twenty years' experience at the district level as Director of Special Education and Director of Literacy and Instructional Interventions (K-12). Dr. Jordan has served as adjunct professor at Union University in special education as well as presented at the district, state and national levels in the areas of literacy, high-quality instructional materials, and special education.

Dr. Jordan holds a master's degree in Special Education, an educational specialist degree in School Psychology, and a doctorate in Literacy and Reading.



Deanna Arivett, Esq.

Deanna Arivett, Esq. consults with clients on day-to-day legal matters and represents clients in litigation at both the administrative and federal court levels. In addition to legal representation, Deanna also enjoys providing professional development to school district staff at national conferences, state conferences, and at the local school level.

Deanna has a valuable combination of professional background and passion for supporting school systems that allows her to understand and represent the unique needs of school systems. Prior to her legal career, Deanna obtained a Master's of Arts degree and an Educational Specialist Degree in the field of school psychology from Middle Tennessee State University. Deanna then practiced for six years as a nationally certified school psychologist in public schools in both Tennessee and Ohio. Deanna's experience as a school psychologist has provided her with a unique insight and knowledge of the challenges faced by today's school personnel.

Furthering her education, Deanna graduated magna cum laude with a Juris Doctorate from the University of Dayton School of Law. Deanna was the executive publication editor for the University's law review and published a comment on the use of restraints in public schools. While obtaining her legal degree, Deanna clerked for an Ohio law firm that represented over a hundred public school districts. Deanna worked on a number of legal issues faced by school systems, including special education, Section 504, ADA, general education, student discipline, employment law, and board policy. Under an Ohio intern's license, Deanna also obtained courtroom experience through her externship with an Ohio prosecutor's office.

Upon completion of her legal degree, Deanna went into private practice as an attorney with the Law Office of Melinda Jacobs PLLC (LOMJ). As an attorney with LOMJ, Deanna was mentored by a renowned special education attorney, Melinda Jacobs, and gained experience in consultation, trial preparation, litigation, and professional development in the legal areas of IDEA and Section 504. These experiences have prepared Deanna to provide unparalleled services to her clients.



Scott Bennett, Esq.

D. Scott Bennett, Esq. has represented school boards, other local governments, police officers, and private employers for almost 30 years. After practicing in a regional litigation firm for most of his career, Mr. Bennett concluded that clients need, and deserve, a more personal connection with their attorney. Ms. DeCamp and he have built Bennett & DeCamp around the purpose of providing high quality, personally focused legal representation to value conscious community leaders and businesses.

Mr. Bennett focuses heavily on the needs of local school systems, their employers, and students. His practice includes every aspect of the diverse area, including employment, discrimination and equity issue, contracts and vendor relations, policy development, student discipline, bullying and harassment, risk management, first amendment issues, tort claims, governance issues, internal investigations, and the like. Mr. Bennett also focuses on IDEA law, ADA, ADEA, FLSA, THRA, Title II and VII, and 504 cases.



Katherine Kimmel, Esq.

Katherine Kimmel is an associate in the firm's Nashville office where she focuses her practice on Education Law. Prior to joining the firm, Katherine directed state and federal policy for a trade association of child care businesses. She also has experience providing policy analysis in the areas of orthotics and prosthetics, rehabilitative services, early childhood home visiting, and Head Start.

Katherine is a graduate of the University of Mississippi School of Law where she served as an Associate Cases Editor for the Mississippi Law Journal. During law school, Katherine worked as a research assistant for Professor William Berry and served as a student attorney for the Child Advocacy Clinic.

Katherine spends most of her free time with her husband and young daughter. As a recent Nashville transplant, she enjoys exploring new restaurants and taking advantage of the many beautiful local parks.



Caitlin Burchette, Esq.

Caitlin C. Burchette is an associate in the firm's Knoxville office where she focuses her practice on education law, employment law, civil litigation, and insurance defense. She also has an extensive background in governmental entity defense, civil rights litigation, and appellate work.

Caitlin is a graduate of the University of South Carolina School of Law. While in law school, she served as a member of the Pro Bono Board and was an Articles Editor on the ABA Real Property, Trust, and Estate Law Journal. Caitlin is admitted to practice in all state courts in Tennessee, as well as the Eastern and Middle Districts of Tennessee, the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, and the U.S. Supreme Court.



Amanda Morse, Esq.

Amanda Lynn Morse graduated with highest honors from the University of Tennessee College of Law in 2013. During law school, Ms. Morse interned with the United States Attorney's Office of the Eastern District of Tennessee and the Federal Defenders of East Tennessee. Prior to attending law school, Ms. Morse was a severe child abuse investigator for the Department of Children Services. Ms. Morse joined the Knox County Law Director's Office in 2013 representing Knox County in a variety of civil legal matters.

Bar Admissions

- Tennessee, 2013
- United States District Court, 2013

Education

- Florida State University of Tennessee, B.A. 2005
- University of Tennessee, College of Law, *summa cum laude*, J.D. 2013

Associations

- Knoxville Bar Association
- KBA Minorities Opportunities Committee
- Tennessee Bar Association
- Tennessee County Attorneys Association
- East Tennessee Lawyer's Association for Women
- Order of the Coif



Taylor Jenkins, Esq.

Taylor Jenkins is a Staff Attorney in the Tennessee Department of Education Office of General Counsel. He primarily focuses on issues involving special education and litigation. Prior to joining the Department, Taylor worked in the Education and Employment Division of the Office of the Tennessee Attorney General, where he represented state agencies, departments, and universities in federal and state court, including the Department in multiple IDEA lawsuits. Taylor graduated from Duke University in 2012 and Vanderbilt University Law School in 2015.



Dr. April Ebbinger
Tennessee Department of Education

Dr. April Ebbinger, a Nationally Certified School Psychologist, is the Director of School Psychology Services for the Tennessee Department of Education. Dr. Ebbinger has experience as a classroom teacher, school psychologist, district administrator, and higher education faculty. She has authored multiple journal articles and presented at state and national conferences. Dr. Ebbinger serves on the Board of the Tennessee Association of School Psychologists and was the 2020 Tennessee School Psychologist of the Year. In her free time, Dr. Ebbinger enjoys running with her dog, Daisy Mae, reading historical fiction, and cruising the Caribbean.



Alison A. Gauld, Ed.D
Tennessee Department of Education

Alison A. Gauld, Ed.D, joined the Tennessee Department of Education as the Low Incidence and Autism Coordinator for Special Populations January 2014. She taught special education for children with low incidence disabilities within the public schools for over 20 years, most recently, students with significant disabilities within the public-school setting in Colorado. She created programs for individual student needs and collaborated with a variety of services, itinerate support personnel, and general education teachers to ensure LRE while teaching discrete skills in intervention. Alison also worked with the Colorado State Department of Education in the development of Extended Evidence Outcomes for the 1 percent population to guide instruction toward the standards as well as working on the development, refining, and revisions of the alternate assessment for the low incidence population. She has a BA in Special Education and a MA in Educational Leadership from Arizona State University and completed all the coursework for an Ed.D in Special Education at the University of Northern Colorado.