

LAW OFFICES OF  
**MARGARET A. CHIDESTER & ASSOCIATES**

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\*A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION

LAW OFFICES OF  
MARGARET A. CHIDESTER & ASSOCIATES  
FIRM SUMMARY

REF. OUR FILE

The Law Offices of Margaret A. Chidester & Associates, formed on September 1, 2000 by Margaret A. Chidester and Steven R. Chidester, consists of five experienced attorneys: Margaret A. Chidester, Steven R. Chidester, Leslie J. Kim, Olivia L. Benvenuto, and Alexandra T. Reynoso. We serve school and community college districts, charter schools, and other educational agencies in counsel and special counsel capacities, including the following districts and education agencies:

Adelanto Elementary School District  
Apple Valley Unified School District  
Arcadia Unified School District  
California School of the Arts - San Gabriel Valley  
Camino Nuevo Charter Academy  
Castaic Union School District  
Chino Valley Unified School District  
Coastline Regional Occupational Program  
College & Career Advantage  
Colton Joint Unified School District  
Colton Redlands Yucaipa Regional Occupational Program  
Eastside Union School District  
Etiwanda School District  
Fillmore Unified School District  
Fontana Unified School District  
Fountain Valley School District  
Fowler Unified School District  
La Mesa-Spring Valley School District  
Lucerne Valley Unified School District  
Monrovia Unified School District  
Mountain View School District, Los Angeles County  
Mountain View School District, San Bernardino County  
Newhall School District  
North Orange County Regional Occupational Program  
Norwalk La Mirada Unified School District

**MARGARET A. CHIDESTER & ASSOCIATES**

Orange County Board of Education  
Orange County School of the Arts  
Para Los Niños  
Pleasant Valley School District  
Riverside County Office of Education  
Santa Clarita Valley School Food Services Agency  
Sulphur Springs School District  
Tri-Cities Regional Occupational Program  
Victor Elementary School District

**The Professional and Educational Backgrounds of Members of the Firm:**

**MARGARET A. CHIDESTER**

B.A., University of California at Riverside, (Spanish),  
(with honors);  
J.D., University of San Diego, School of Law;  
M.A., Educational Administration, California State University  
at San Diego;  
Ed.D., Educational Leadership, University of Southern  
California, Rossier School of Education.

Legal Experience:

Proprietor, Law Offices of Margaret A. Chidester & Associates,  
September 1, 2000- present;  
Partner, Parker, Covert and Chidester, 1987-2000;  
Associate, Parker and Covert, 1981-87;  
Past Chairman and Member of Board of Directors, National  
School Boards Association Council of School Attorneys  
(1993-2005);  
Member, California Council of School Attorneys; Member, Board  
of Directors, 1993-1995;

Publications and Presentations:

Author: "Employment Litigation Involving the Superintendency:  
Taking Preventive Contractual Measures." Paper presented  
at 40th Annual Convention. Equity, Excellence, and Equal  
Education Opportunities: NOLPE and Brown at 40 (1954-  
1994) San Diego, California;  
Co-Author: "Due Process for School Administrators and School  
Board Members," NSBA Council of School Attorneys School  
Law in Review, 1985, Volume 1;  
Author: "First Amendment Issues and Pupil Discipline," NSBA  
School Law in Review, 1989;

- Co-Author: "Religious Challenges to Curriculum and Instruction Practices," NSBA's Religion, Education and the U.S. Constitution, 1994;
- Author: "Playing Fair: Litigating State and Local Athletic Eligibility Rules Protecting High School Athletes," Legal Handbook on School Athletics, NSBA Council of School Attorneys, March, 1997;
- Author: "Evaluation and Termination of School District Counsel," Selecting and Working With a School Attorney: A Guide for School Boards, NSBA Council of School Attorneys, April, 1997;
- Co-Author: "The School Attorney as a Preventive Law Practitioner," Selecting and Working With a School Attorney: A Guide for School Boards, NSBA Council of School Attorneys, April, 1997;
- Co-Author: "Use of E-Mail: Traps for the Unsuspecting School Board Member," Inquiry and Analysis, NSBA Council of School Attorneys, 2000;
- Co-Author: "E-Mail: 'Sunshine,' and Public Records," American School Board Journal, July 2000;
- School Employers Association Annual Management Conferences on Collective Bargaining, 1982-Present, Presenter at NSBA Council of School Attorneys Annual Meetings, California Council of School Attorneys Continuing Education Seminars, Association of California School Administrators, California Association of School Business Officials and California School Boards Association;
- Presenter, ACSA Superintendents' Academy, 1995-2017, Superintendent Contracts and School Governance Issues;
- Presenter, Oxford University Round Table on Education Policy, 2000, Saint Antony's College;
- Presenter, California Council of School Attorneys, "From Findings to Facilities: The High Stakes Nuances of Analyzing the Charter School Petition," September 2011.
- Presenter, National School Boards Association Council of School Attorneys, 2012 School Law Practice Seminar, "*Can Schools be Both Safe and Free? New National Guidelines on Harassment, Bullying, and Freedom of Expression*";
- Presenter, School Employers Association of California: School Management Certification Program, 2014-2019, "*The Legal Framework for Collective Bargaining*";
- Presenter, California School Boards Association, "*Cutting Edge Legal Issues in Charter Petition Renewal*," November 2017;
- Presenter, 2017 Leadership Conference, USC Rossier School of Education;

Presenter, 2019 California Council of School Attorneys Annual Workshop, *"Prayer and Other Religious Statements at Public School Board Meetings."*

Foreign Language: Spanish

Education Experience:

California Administrative Services Credential;  
Bilingual Certificate of Competence, Spanish;  
Fisher K-8 Credential and E.C.E. Credential;  
Bilingual teacher, grades K-6: Santa Ana Unified School District, Oceanside Unified School District, Fallbrook Elementary School District;  
University of Southern California, Delta Epsilon, Best Dissertation Award, Rossier School of Education, 1995: Superintendent Employment Contracts: Legal and Pragmatic Considerations that Affect the Board-Superintendent Relationship;  
Adjunct Faculty, Educational Leadership and Organizational Change Leadership, Ed. D. Programs, University of Southern California, Rossier School of Education, 1995-present;  
Member, Phi Delta Kappa, USC Chapter;  
Past President, Delta Epsilon, USC Rossier School of Education;  
Member, USC Rossier School of Education, Board of Councilors (2000 - present);  
Member, USC Alumni Association Board of Governors, 2004-2005.

**STEVEN R. CHIDESTER**

B.A., San Diego State University, (Psychology);  
B.A., cum laude, San Diego State University, (Sociology);  
J.D., Western State University College of Law, Fullerton California;

Honors: Golden Key National Honor Society (3.5+ G.P.A.);  
American Jurisprudence Awards: Family Law and Criminal Law;  
Western State University College of Law, President's Scholarship.

Legal Experience:

Managing Partner, Law Offices of Margaret A. Chidester & Associates, commencing September 2000, practice limited to representation of school districts and education agencies;

Solo practice, 1992-2000, Law Offices of Steven R. Chidester; Associate attorney, Law Offices of Neben & Starrett, Inc., Newport Beach, 1991-1992.

Education Experience:

Emeritus Institute Instructor, "Law for the Layman" course, Irvine Valley College, Irvine, 1998 to 2010; and Paralegal Instructor, American Career College, Irvine, 1997-1998.

Publications and Presentations:

Presenter, 2019 California Council of School Attorneys Annual Workshop, "*Prayer and Other Religious Statements at Public School Board Meetings.*"

Steven Chidester has represented school districts in all aspects of charter school law, including review and analysis of charter petitions and advice to the governing board as to how petitions can be lawfully denied, when denied petitioners appeal to the County Board of Education, and identifying oddities for the school district to support its position, as well as at the state level. Before the California Charter Schools Advisory Commission and the State Board of Education, Steven Chidester has appeared and represented school districts on multiple occasions when petitioners have appealed denial. Additionally, Steven Chidester has appeared in Superior Court and has participated as counsel in defending appeals from charter school petitions denied at the local, county, state, and Superior Court levels.

Steven Chidester has taught multiple workshops for educational administrators, including, but not limited to, responding to and analyzing subpoenas for production of records and appearances, analysis and advice on child custody orders, ASB fund management, and best practices to avoid fraud, nonprofit organizations including foundations supporting school districts and the explicit requirements for application and obtaining state and federal tax exemptions and filing with the Secretary of State, pupil expulsions, and other discipline.

Steven Chidester was a community college instructor for over ten years of a class for laypersons on an introduction to the law, including basic elements of state and federal constitutions, due process, consumer law issues, and related challenges.

Steven Chidester has had extensive experience in school facilities, including but not limited to assisting districts in responding to Proposition 39 charter school facilities entitlement, limiting facilities to that required by law. He has had extensive experience in public contracts code requirements concerning the lowest, responsible bidder and hearings that may result.

Steven Chidester has over twenty years of experience in supporting school districts with charter school oversight requirements to comply with their legal obligations and to avoid school district liability for failure to comply with statutory oversight obligations. His expertise at the local and appellate levels, including before the California Supreme Court, demonstrate his deep knowledge of charter school issues and how chartering entities may address them.

**LESLIE J. KIM**

B.A., University of California, Irvine, CA (Political Science, Psychology and Social Behavior);

M.A., University of California, Irvine, CA (Education);

J.D., University of San Diego School of Law, San Diego, CA.

**Legal Experience:**

Associate, Law Offices of Margaret A. Chidester & Associates,  
June 2018 - present;

Legal Intern, Superior Court of California, San Diego, CA,  
May 2015 - August 2015.

Prior to being admitted to practice, Leslie Kim taught elementary grades in a California public school.

Leslie Kim has investigated multiple allegations of unlawful harassment, discrimination, and hostile work environment. She has investigated and written reports concerning petitions for grade change by parents and students.

Leslie Kim reviews the criminal history of school district employees and reports status of such matters to school district employers in conjunction with current employment matters.

Her thorough legal research informs our clients' collective bargaining decisions.

**OLIVIA L. BENVENUTO**

B.A., California State University, Fullerton, CA (English);  
J.D., Chapman University Dale E. Fowler School of Law,  
Orange, CA.

Legal Experience:

Associate, Law Offices of Margaret A. Chidester & Associates,  
August 2021 - present;  
Law Clerk, Law Offices of Margaret A. Chidester & Associates,  
April 2021 - August 2021;  
Law Clerk, Orange County District Attorney's Office, Newport  
Beach, CA, January 2020 - March 2020;  
Law Clerk, SEYB Law Group, Tustin, CA, March 2019 - July 2019;  
Law Clerk, Orange County District Attorney's Office, Newport  
Beach, CA, January 2019 - March 2019;  
Legal Intern, Pedersen Law, Irvine, CA, May 2018 - August  
2018;  
Legal Intern, Orange County District Attorney's Office, Santa  
Ana, CA, January 2017 - April 2017.

**ALEXANDRA T. REYNOSO**

B.A., California State University, Fullerton, CA (History);  
J.D., Chapman University Dale E. Fowler School of Law,  
Orange, CA.

Legal Experience:

Associate, Law Offices of Margaret A. Chidester & Associates,  
December 2021 - present;  
Law Clerk, Law Offices of Margaret A. Chidester & Associates,  
August 2021 - November 2021;  
Law Clerk, Los Angeles City Attorney's Office, Los Angeles,  
CA, May 2020 - July 2020;  
Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, San Fernando,  
CA, May 2019 - July 2019.

**SUMMARY OF EDUCATION LAW EXPERTISE**

The firm has over 60 years of collective experience in all legal and policy matters pertaining to governance and operation of public schools and community college districts, charter schools, joint powers agencies, and regional occupational programs.

We are invited speakers on pupil, governance, labor, and employment law issues at national and state conferences of the ACSA, NSBA, CASBO, CSBA, SEAC, the American Association of School Personnel Administrators the National Organization of Legal Problems in Education, and the Cal Poly Pomona Ed.D. program. We have extensive experience in representing school districts in compliance investigations by the Office for Civil Rights, the California Department of Education, and other state and federal agencies.

We have over 40 years of collective expertise in charter school representation, formation, renewal, revocation, governance, collective bargaining, and litigation.

Our attorneys have experience in litigation involving public entities before all levels of the California state courts, including the California Supreme court, California Courts of Appeal, the Federal District courts, and the United States Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit, as well as before numerous administrative agencies such as the Office for Civil Rights, the Public Employment Relations Board, the Department of Fair Employment and Housing, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the California State Board of Education, Commissions on Professional Competence, and numerous arbitrators and hearing panels.

Our litigation experience includes the following published appellate decisions:

Newport-Mesa Unified School District v. Hubert (1982) 132  
Cal.App.3d 724, 183 Cal.Rptr. 334;

Gardner v. Commission on Professional Competence, Board of  
Education of the Tustin Unified School District (1985) 164  
Cal.App.3d 1035, 210 Cal.Rptr. 795;

El Camino Community College District v. Superior Court (1985)  
173 Cal.App.3d 606, 219 Cal.Rptr. 236;



Jones v. Palm Springs Unified School District (1985) 170  
Cal.App.3d 521, 216 Cal.Rptr. 75;

Bassett Unified School District v. Commission on Professional  
Competence (1988) 201 Cal.App.3d 1444, 247 Cal.Rptr. 865;

Choice-In-Education League v. Los Angeles Unified School  
District (1993) 17 Cal.App.4th 415, 21 Cal.Rptr.2d 303  
(Amici Curiae for Education Legal Alliance for the Los Angeles  
Unified School District);

Gallup v. Alta Loma School District Board of Trustees (1996) 41  
Cal.App.4th 1571, 49 Cal.Rptr.2d 289;

Summerfield v. Windsor Unified School District  
(2002) 95 Cal.App.4th 1026, 116 Cal.Rptr.2d 233 (Amici Curiae  
for the Education Legal Alliance);

Culbertson v. San Gabriel Unified School District  
(2004) 121 Cal.App.4th 1392, review denied 2004 Cal. Lexis  
(Amici Curiae for the Education Legal Alliance);

Bakersfield Elementary Teachers Association v. Bakersfield City  
School District (2006) 145 Cal.App.4th 1260 (Amici Curiae for  
the Education Legal Alliance);

Corales, et al., v. Bennett, et al. Ninth Circuit Case No: 07-  
55892, D.C. No. CV-06-00849-SGL;

North Orange County Regional Occupational Program v. Regional  
Occupational Program Educational Association of North Orange  
County CTA/NEA - PERB Decision No. 857;

Temple City Educators Association CTA/NEA v. Temple City USD -  
PERB Decision No. 1972;

Castaic Union School District v. California School Employees  
Association, Chapter 401 - PERB Order No. Ad-384; and

Scott B. v. Board of Trustees of Orange County High School of  
the Arts (2013) 217 Cal.App.4th 117.

Margaret A. Chidester is "A.V." rated by Martindale-Hubbell, the  
highest rating given to California attorneys.

