

Lippes Mathias Partners Brendan P. Kelleher and Nathaniel J. Kuzma Present at Western New York Education Law Conference



August 7, 2024 | **PRESS RELEASES**

Lippes Mathias is pleased to announce that Brendan P. Kelleher and Nathaniel J. Kuzma, partners, and co-leaders of the firm's education practice team, recently spoke at the Western New York Education Law Conference. Both Kelleher and Kuzma have formally served as general counsel to Buffalo Public Schools, bringing firsthand experience in managing the legal complexities of one of New York State's largest school districts to their practice and presentations.

Brendan P. Kelleher presented a session titled "Just What Does 'Transparency' Mean Under FERPA, FOIL, and the Open Meetings Law" alongside Melanie Beardsley of Webster Szanyi LLP. As school districts face increasing demands for information and grapple with public misconceptions regarding information access, Kelleher provided an essential update on district obligations under the New York Open Meetings Law, the Freedom of Information Act, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. His session offered crucial insights into how school districts can navigate the complexities of transparency while ensuring compliance with legal requirements.

Nathaniel J. Kuzma's session, "Collective Negotiations Update for 2024," provided attendees with an overview of

the current landscape of collective bargaining in education. Joined by Brian Hartmann, Senior Labor Relations Specialist and Deputy General Counsel for Erie 2-Chautauqua-Cattaraugus BOCES, Kuzma discussed the ongoing challenges of collective bargaining in a post-pandemic environment. The presentation highlighted emerging issues, such as teacher shortages, proposed changes to foundation aid, and the impact of minimum wage increases, offering practical advice on avoiding common pitfalls in negotiations.

About Brendan P. Kelleher

Brendan P. Kelleher's practice focuses on the representation of employers in all areas of employment law, including the negotiation of employment and separation agreements, counseling employers regarding their obligations under federal and New York State labor and employment laws, and representing employers before federal and state courts, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the New York State Division of Human Rights, the United States and State Departments of Labor, and other federal and state agencies. He also regularly conducts workplace investigations for employers, including investigations of allegations of discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and other alleged employee misconduct. His practice includes a focus on representing management in all areas of labor relations, including collective bargaining, grievances, arbitrations, and before the National Labor Relations Board. Drawing on his experiences as the general counsel to the City of Buffalo School District and his representation of school districts for over two decades, Kelleher also devotes a significant portion of his practice to representing and counseling school districts in all areas of their operations and the unique challenges they face. Prior to practicing law, Kelleher served on the foreign policy staff in the Washington, D.C., office of United States Senator Edward M. Kennedy.

About Nathaniel J. Kuzma

Nathaniel J. Kuzma's legal career, spanning 18 years, is dedicated to the intricacies of education-related legal matters. His most recent and distinguished role was serving as general counsel for the Buffalo City School District for the past seven years. Preceding this pivotal appointment, he held the position of the District's Executive Director of Labor Relations and Counsel on Special Education, contributing over three years to this role. Kuzma dedicated his early career to the zealous advocacy of families in their pursuit of specialized education programming and services. Kuzma's legal skills also extend to the realm of employment law. His extensive portfolio encompasses comprehensive advisory services to employers on various aspects of employment relationships, policies, and practices. For his clients, he conducts workplace investigations and defends clients facing potential legal claims, including allegations of discrimination, harassment, wrongful termination, state and federal wage and hour laws, the Family and Medical Leave Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

About Lippes Mathias LLP

Lippes Mathias is a full-service law firm with nearly 200 attorneys serving clients regionally, nationally, and internationally. With offices in Buffalo, Clarence, Albany, Long Island, New York, Rochester and Saratoga Springs, N.Y.; Greater Toronto Area; Chicago, Ill.; Jacksonville, Fla.; Cleveland, Ohio; San Antonio, Texas; Oklahoma City, Okla. and Washington, D.C., the firm represents publicly and privately-owned companies, private equity and venture capital firms, real estate developers, financial institutions, municipalities, governmental entities, and individuals.

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