

UPDATE ON SCHOOL LAW 101 – JULY 2023

In an effort to educate today's law students about fulfilling careers in the school law practice area, the School Law Section created the School Law 101 Committee. The Committee, the brain child of Chris Gilbert and chaired by Leila Henderson Gary, is charged with outreach and educational programs at law schools in Texas and Oklahoma (and beyond) to reach students early in their law school careers in hopes of creating a pipeline of tomorrow's school law practitioners and leaders.

During its inaugural year, the Committee met regularly to sketch out plans for outreach and development of programs at targeted law schools. During last summer, the Committee created and launched the School Law 101 tab on the School Law Section's website which went live last year at the retreat. Thank you, Meredith Walker for creating the new tab on the website! Also, a big thanks to members of the Committee who spent some of their summertime last year creating the context for the website for each practice area with school law. Another group of committee members put a lot of time and effort into a PowerPoint presentation that Committee members can use for presentations at law schools. And, through leveraging our personal connections at our alma maters and a Committee letter on awesome Section letterhead, we were able to schedule presentations at Texas Tech, SMU, UT Austin, OU, and UNT law schools, reaching over 100 1L and 2L students. Through those presentations, students also reached out directly to members of the Committee, resulting in at least one summer clerkship at Thompson & Horton's Dallas office.

After the SL101 presentation at SMU earlier this spring, Leila Gary was asked to return to SMU Law to participate on a panel for the Rising Scholars program, a program for high school students interested in attending law school. Leila represented the school law world to about 25 high school students and had several students stay to visit with her after the panel session . . . some even asking if she'd ever go back to teaching . . . the jury is out on that.

The Committee's next project is Clerkships for Credit – a resource to facilitate more clerkship opportunities across the state for law students interested in pursuing education law. Clerkships for Credit will provide in-house counsel with the forms and resources needed to prepare a clerkship posting for career services offices, the forms required for the student to earn credit hours, and other resources to create meaningful, rewarding summer clerkship opportunities for students and affordable clerks for school districts, educational institutions, and non-profits. If you serve as in-house counsel to a school district, please keep an eye out for these materials, coming early this fall. We really hope Clerkships for Credit will help streamline and increase opportunities for law students to experience working in school law directly with school districts, community colleges, and universities. The Committee hopes to post the resources online for students and hiring entities. If you work for a school district, community college, university, or non-profit and are interested in hosting an extern, please contact Leila Henderson Gary at Thompson & Horton for further information.

Here are some pictures from spring SL101 presentations:





Dr. Sarah Flournoy, Leila Henderson Gary, Justin Gobert, and Christie Hobbs at SMU Law.



Leila Henderson Gary, Beth Lee (SMU Career Services), Ashley Ellis (SMU Alumni Director) at the SMU Women in Law Spring Tea where Leila networked with students about school law. Leila also networked with SMU women law students during the SMU Mentor Speed networking in February.