

Title of Conference: Education Law Association's 62nd Annual Conference: Equality and Freedom in Education, November 3-5, 2016.

My Presentation: *National Trend to Restore Equity by Decriminalizing Discipline and Attendance.*

Summary of the Presentation: The room was full for this presentation which indicates that the School-to-Prison topic on which I spoke is still a very hot topic. There were many Florida school administrators present. Florida like Texas has many districts that are currently implementing new federal grants that shift the discipline paradigm from removal and punishment to positive behavior intervention and prevention. There were many questions about how to implement the new discipline approach and it would have been helpful to have at least another hour to present, given the interest. I was partnered with Delia B. Allen a Ph.D. student from University of Georgia who studied the Broward County, Florida implementation of their federal grant on this topic. This was an excellent match because I primarily spoke on recently released statistics on implementation on the new programs and decriminalization laws that have been enacted in all 50 states. Overall, I was very pleased with the presentation. I also met with Delia several times and believe that we will publish more in the future on this topic. Also, I was approached by the editor of the Brigham Young University Education and Law Journal, who attended the presentation. He would like me to submit the paper for publication in the journal. This is quite a prestigious and scholarly education law journal and I will be submitting a paper on this topic to them in the near future.

Summary of the Conference: I arrived for the Preconference on Nov. 2nd and attended the Legal Ethics conference. The presenters were the Director of Professional Education from Stetson College of Law and the Associate General Counsel for St. Petersburg College. The presentation was helpful and they made ethics interesting which is a high compliment for this difficult topic.

That evening there was a welcome meeting, and Nov. 3rd there was a Roundtable breakfast which provided great networking. I attended the Roundtable on new laws regarding reporting child abuse. I was unaware of these recent developments so it was very helpful. It is a topic that is very important as well for my students who are all future school administrators. The presenter was Kathleen Conn, Ph.D., J.D., and LL.M. Kathleen is a nationally renowned expert and her presentation was excellent.

After the Roundtable breakfast, I attended a presentation on Diversity through Admissions by Laura Rothstein from Brandeis School of Law which focused on recent Supreme Court cases and settlements regarding admissions.

Then, I attended a presentation on School Prayer. I enjoyed visiting at the presentation with Catherine Robert who is working with David Thompson at UT San Antonio. The presentation was excellent too, and a really hot topic in Texas in the last few years. I cover this topic extensively in my school law course, so this was a helpful presentation. I also attended another Religion panel presentation the next day, as well, for the same reasons.

In the afternoon, I jumped around to several presentations that are relevant to my upcoming textbook (to be published in 2017). It will take a thorough study of the papers of course to be really helpful but of particular help were the presentations on Immigrant, Migrant students and ELL learns by Erin Gilsbach and the School Bullying Litigation update by Diane Holben and Perry Zirkel. Zirkel is the leading expert on this subject and special education law.

In addition to presenting on Friday, I also attended the Role-Alike Breakfast, the “attorney” section. I was so pleased to see how many female attorneys were present. I also attended the presentation on voucher programs and marginalized populations which was presented by many including Suzanne Eckes a leading education law scholar. Later that morning, I attended a panel presentation which included the leading 1st Amendment legal experts in the country, Charles Russo, Uni. Of Dayton, Martha McCarthy, Marymount, and David Schimmel, from UofM in Amherst. It was excellent but they could not provide much help for what is happening to school administrators in Texas with the conflict between the Supreme Court and the RVAA.

The ELA Committee Meeting for School Law Reporters was late that afternoon and ran to 5:45. I discussed with Brad the fact that my host school no longer provides Lexis or Westlaw preventing me from doing legal research. I may have to give up my decade long position as school law reporter if a remedy for this problem is not found soon. I also recruited a new reporter to assist with the federal cases.

On Saturday morning, Nov. 5, I attended the poster presentations which were primarily doctoral student presentations. One was on the School-to-Prison pipeline so I discussed the topic at great length with the author, Spencer Sims, who is a doctoral student at University of Arkansas. Spencer is also someone with whom I discussed future publishing opportunities. Later that morning I attended a presentation on the new ESSA statute (Title I) by Brian Dassler which will help my textbook preparation and a presentation on drug testing for legal marijuana by school administrators in Colorado. Along with them, David Thompson from UTSA presented on his research work compiling educator misconduct cases. It was good to see David again and I really enjoyed brainstorming with the doctoral student he presented with, Catherine Robert.

I have struggled with how to create a presentation to the committee because of the great diversity of presentations that I attended. Perhaps one thing that might be productive and beneficial to Sul Ross would be to take 2 or 3 of the papers on Higher Education Law and conduct a presentation for Sul Ross administrators. If you are interested in such a presentation, please let me know.