

Criselda (Chris) Garza Elizalde

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Current work status: Retired from law practice as of December 31, 2016

Education

DOCTOR OF JURISPRUDENCE (JD)

AWARDED DECEMBER 1980

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SCHOOL OF LAW

- Included coursework: Civil rights, employment law, legislative processes, constitutional law, contract law, personal injury/torts, civil (trial) procedure
- Licensures: State Bar of Texas since 1981, New Mexico State Bar since 2007
- Professional memberships: Texas Council of School Attorneys, National Council of School Attorneys, School Law Section of the Texas State Bar, U. S. Supreme Court, Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, Federal District Court for the Southern District of Texas

BACHELOR OF ARTS

AWARDED DECEMBER 1970

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

- Major: English
- Minor: Journalism
- Related coursework: Education
- Licensure: Texas Teacher Certificate, Secondary English and Journalism (still current)

Experience

ATTORNEY, SHAREHOLDER/PARTNER

WALSH, GALLEGOS, TREVINO, RUSSO, & KYLE, P. C.

APRIL 1990—NOVEMBER 1995 AND JUNE 2002—DECEMBER 2016

- Legal practice focused on public schools
- Private practice of law throughout Texas and New Mexico serving more than 200 school districts at various times ranging in size from 60 to more than 100,000 students
- Advising school board members, school administrators, and school staff on a variety of legal issues that arise in day-to-day school district operations in order to avoid or minimize legal liability and maintain focus on the educational functions
- Representation of individual school districts, administrators, and staff in state and federal courts, before state and federal agencies such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, in mediations, in grievances, and at local hearings before independent hearing officers

- Presenting and conducting training sessions in hundreds of settings for public educators and elected public officials such as school board members
- Adjunct professor of School Law in the Educational Administration Department at The University of Texas at Austin (3 semesters), using case studies of actual disputes and situations, detailed analysis of risks for school administrators, and methods for minimizing risks without losing sight of educational priorities
- Guest lecturer at the University of Texas at Dallas, Southwest Texas State University (now, Texas State University), and A & I University (now, Texas A & M University at Kingsville)

**ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DIRECTOR OF LEGAL SERVICES, STAFF ATTORNEY
TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS**

MAY 1981—APRIL 1990 AND NOVEMBER 1995—JUNE 2002

- Staff attorney and Director of Legal Services
- Advising and training local school board members and administrators in the areas of employment contracts, employee and student rights, Open Meetings and Public Information Act issues, local policies and related considerations, practical effects of legal issues, and a variety of emerging legal issues
- Research for and preparation of policy updates and local policies for school districts throughout Texas
- Preparation of standard contract forms for administrators and teachers, meeting agenda forms for school boards, training guides on the Open Meetings Act and the Public Information Act, model policy statements in the areas of student and employee issues
- Associate Executive Director duties related to specific tasks and goals established by the Executive Director and Board of Directors, including oversight of multiple departments, such as Legal, Legislative/Governmental Relations, Superintendent Search, Policy, Human Resources, and Educational Research Departments

TEACHER OF ENGLISH AND JOURNALISM

OKALOOSA COUNTY SCHOOLS, FT. WALTON BEACH, FLA.

SAN BENITO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT, SAN BENITO, TX

HARLINGEN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT, HARLINGEN, TX

NOVEMBER 1971—MAY 1978

- Sponsored the student yearbook, student newspaper, and student magazine at each district

PUBLICATIONS AND TRAINING SESSIONS

- Article and training topics: student records and privacy, teacher contracts, public records and meetings, superintendent contracts, professional ethics and responsibilities for educators, student admission policies, overtime and related issues under the Fair Labor Standards Act, legislative updates, civil rights liability issues, First Amendment issues in schools, sexual harassment related to students and staff, contract terminations, school board's role in personnel oversight, administrators' guide to avoiding liability, personal injury claims