



Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates
Protecting the Legal and Civil Rights of Students with Disabilities and their Families



MISSION

COPAA's mission is to protect and enforce the legal and civil rights of students with disabilities and their families. Our primary goal is to secure high quality educational services and to promote excellence in advocacy.

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Denise Stile Marshall, M.S., CEO
Selene A. Almazan, Esq., Legal Director
Mandy Favaloro, Esq. (CA), Chair of the Board of Directors

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Strategic Goals and Initiatives

IMPACT Litigation: Protecting Rights and Making Changes

Keeping ALL Students Safe

Equity in Education Fellowship Program

Cultivate New Champions of Rights

Future of Civil Rights in Education "Think Tank"

Strengthen and Grow Resources

Reach Underserved Communities/
Partner with Others



With your help, COPAA is making great strides in the advancement of rights of the 7.1 million students with disabilities who are in public schools across the country. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and throughout COPAA has been the go-to-source and the seminal voice regarding the threats to success and equity posed to students with disabilities.

We successfully reminded the nation of the continued obligation for schools to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education, shutdown notwithstanding, and for the need for individualized compensatory education for students who did not receive services or who failed to make expected progress because of pandemic disruptions.

As schools went online throughout the pandemic, we doubled down on our work in collaboration with others such as Education for All; The Center for Learner Equity; Education Civil Rights Alliance; and The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights to disseminate information and resources in support of families, teachers, and school leaders to assure continued learning and accessibility for students with a wide range of disabilities.

COPAA filed amicus briefs in several cases across the country stating that a categorical bar on mask mandates of any kinds is inconsistent with the Supreme Court's command that the ADA requires that "an individualized inquiry must be made to determine whether a specific modification for a particular person's disability would be reasonable under the circumstances."

COPAA continues to sound the alarm that students in communities of color are disproportionately denied an education through inequitable access to internet or electronic devices; school push out and exclusionary and harsh discipline; and the imposition of restraint and seclusion.

COPAA continues to push a bold and ambitious policy agenda. We are plaintiffs in systemic impact litigation, and we filed 17 amicus briefs aimed at creating more fair, equitable, and just education opportunities for students with disabilities.

We invest in the next generation of advocates, attorneys, parents, and related service professionals to champion the rights of students with disabilities through training, mentoring, and sharing of best practice. This past year we partnered with the Native Center for Behavioral Health/University of Iowa to produce a customized, culturally relevant training for Native Families on education rights.

Our expert staff and tireless, knowledgeable committee volunteers support members in representation efforts and policy advocacy efforts every day.

COPAA voices are everywhere the voices of students and their families need to be heard. We continue to do everything possible to further the fight for justice for students with disabilities nationwide. You will see in this report that we have several initiatives planned and we continue to need your help.

This is why we do what we do. Join us.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Denise S. Marshall". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Denise S. Marshall, CEO



BY THE NUMBERS

2,930+

Number of COPAA members in every state, Washington D.C. and several territories

62,000+

Families receive services per year from COPAA members

6,104

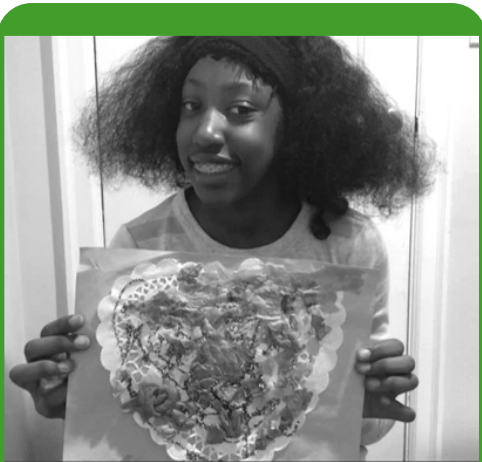
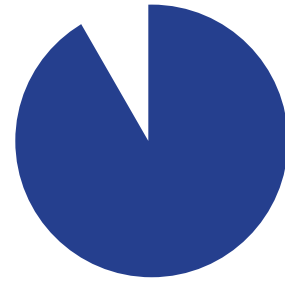
Members, partners, and families receive weekly mail from COPAA

12,000 +

Follow COPAA on social media platforms

90%

More than 90% of our members either identify as having a disability or are parents or family members of individuals with disabilities.



Over 5 years, staff restrained Shirley at least 96 times and put her in seclusion 146 times.

78%

More than 78% who are locked in seclusion rooms are students with disabilities and or students of color

7,100,000

Students with disabilities and their families nationwide

Only a small percent of these students are in disagreement with school systems

Many of whom are families of color, being disproportionately disciplined, or pushed out of school, or students with more challenging or complex disabilities

807 attend Annual Virtual Summit

Trainings for special education advocacy each year

17

Amicus Curiae briefs filed in Federal, State, and USSC by COPAA this past year

100,000

students are locked in seclusion rooms and/or held down and restrained by 4 to 5 adults each year in our nation's schools. 78% are students with disabilities and or students of color

25%

Members and participants in training are people of color

Why we do what we do.

Your support is critical. We are thankful you care, thankful you give.

Did you know . . . "Reading disabilities are the most understood and effectively corrected learning disability ... if the correct intervention is provided early "

(ABC to ADHD: What Every Parent Should Know About Dyslexia and Attention Problems Paperback – Eric Triadas)



Our members make a difference for kids and their families every day. And COPAA provides the support they need to do so. One recent example is the resounding win for the family of a child with learning disabilities—and for their attorneys, COPAA members Catherine Merino Reisman and Hillary Freeman —the United States District Court for the District of Nevada. The Court entered judgment for the plaintiff parents in the amount of \$456,990 as reimbursement for several years of private programming at parental expense. In *O.R. v. Clark County School District*, the federal district court found that the school district failed to provide research-based reading instruction, which the parents had established was required for their child to receive a FAPE. Not only did the parents prevail on their IDEA arguments, but also on their claims under Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. This case is important for all students with disabilities because of its emphasis on the key roles that professional evaluations and their recommendations for needed structured curriculum / methodology play in designing an individualized program. The Court stated: "O.R.'s parents had presented compelling professional evidence that was unrefuted or challenged by the district which established that O.R. required a teaching methodology with particular facets. The district failed to provide any response to the specific needs of O.R. except to essentially say to parents—trust us to provide her with what she needs. This is not sufficient." In addition to finding a violation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), he also found that the school district's

"deliberate indifference" violated both Section 504 and the ADA and accordingly, "Compensatory damages are available under both Title II of the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act."

Of course, the real winner here is young O. R. and other children facing similar challenges.

This is why we do what we do.



“I was restrained every single day. I was thrown into a padded seclusion room. I could hear other students screaming throughout the hallways, I can’t express how horrifying it was... My only coping mechanism was to sleep on the floor at school. I didn’t learn, I gained no skills. I did not grow. I retreated into myself. I

thought I was going to die there.” ~ Sam Maloney, Keeping All Students Safe Act Briefing, Nov. 18th

Did you know . . . Sam was alone in the seclusion room, but he is not alone in having this traumatic experience at school. Over 100,000 students are locked in seclusion rooms or held down and restrained by 4-5 adults each year in our nation’s schools; over 78% are students with disabilities and/or students of color. There is no federal law to protect school children from this abuse. COPAA is working hard to pass federal legislation that would outright ban locking a student alone in a space from which they cannot exit in school, limit restraint to the situations presenting the most imminent danger of harm and provide training/resources to teachers and staff to stop these harmful practices. Sam and his peers deserve to be safe at school.

This is why we do what we do.

Did you know... When a court is considering the facts of a case they often allow “amici” or friends of the court to submit a brief in support of either the plaintiff or the defendant. COPAA submitted 17 of these briefs in collaboration with other civil rights organizations every year at



the state, federal and Supreme Court levels. We help to shape the body of law to protect parent and student rights. Because of recent wins students with disabilities can bring service dogs to school to support independence.; are entitled to receive meaningful and challenging educational programs instead of programs that confer just some benefit; and, parents are entitled to receive a cogent and responsive explanation from the school regarding the program they are offering.

This is why we do what we do.



Did you know? Federal law, such as the IDEA create rights for parents to be equal members of their child’s educational program team and to have a meaningful say in their education. COPAA provides hundreds of scholarships each year to underserved individuals assure that parents can advocate for themselves and

have access to trained and knowledgeable representation if necessary. Data shows that if you are a student with disabilities and/or a student of color, especially black, native American you are more likely to be segregated, harshly disciplines, pushed into the school to prison pipeline. Empowered parents can make the difference towards a bright future made possible by quality education.

This is why we do what we do.



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Champion - \$5,001 and above

Margy Kohn General Donation

Benefactor - \$1,000 - \$5,000

Jesse Cutler Beth Goodman Scholarship Fund
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Mandy Favaloro General In Memory of Alice K. Nelson



2021 IMPACT SUPPORTERS

Katrina Fryklund	General Donation in honor of Alice K Nelson, a fierce fighter for the rights of those with special needs.
Ann M. Fuller	General Donation
Mark Gross	General Donation
Network For Good	General Donation
Allison Hertog	Beth Goodman Scholarship Fund in honor of Alice K. Nelson's tremendous contribution to this community.
Andi Hill	General Donation
Network For Good	General Donation
Kimberly Griffie Jackson	General Donation
David Jefferson	General Donation
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Jennifer Laviano	General Donation
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Jodi Siegel	General Donation
Ann E. Simun	Beth Goodman Scholarship Fund. I love that you give scholarships for this critically important conference!!!
Denise Smith	General Donation
Torin Togut	General Donation
Torin Togut	Beth Goodman Scholarship Fund
Maureen van Stone	General Donation
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Supporter \$50-99

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Melissa Alexander	General Donation
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Michael Gilberg	General Donation



2021 IMPACT SUPPORTERS

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Marcie S. Hipple	General Donation in loving memory of Alice K. Nelson. She was a wonder and a joy and will be missed SO much by SO many!
Loretta Jay	General Donation
Nadia Kiyani	Beth Goodman Scholarship Fund
Pamela Ann Labellarte	General Donation
Deborah Lombardi	General Donation
Carolyn Makens	General Donation
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Cindy Mitchell	Donation made in recognition of Netta Anderson
Network For Good	General Donation
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Deberah Schlagel	General Donation
Alice Smith	General Donation in honor of Alice K. Nelson.
Rick & Kathy Stile	General Donation
Shari Helene Stupp	General Donation in Honor of a lifetime of friendship with Alison Lehan Allman

Ally - up to \$49

Teresa Swanson	General Donation
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Diane Willcutt	General Donation
Queen Young	General Donation

IMPACT Litigation: Protecting Rights and Making Changes

We spend thousands of hours teaching parents their rights under the law. But-many students and families are still missing out on an education through harsh and exclusive discipline. Fifty years of individual action has not brought about systemic change. COPAA has successfully participated in several impact litigation cases as member organizational plaintiffs. We need to significantly ramp up our infrastructure to bring systemic lawsuits focused on enforcing the rights of students with disabilities to receive an equitable and meaningful education.

Keeping ALL Students Safe

Across this country, thousands of children are locked in dark rooms, pinned to the floor, and subject to traumatizing practices in response to challenging behaviors. There is a better way.

- Pass federal legislation to end the use of locked seclusion in schools and provide a bright-line for emergency-only use of restraint.
- Ignite the grassroots at the state level to take a position of power in local decision-making bodies; partner with practitioners such as Dr. Ross Greene to make schools positive, evidence- based, and equitable.

Equity in Education Fellowship Program -

If family with great economic means, you cannot access rights under the law to an equitable education for your child. We aim to connect new, passionate attorneys with the opportunity to fight for justice in underserved regions or populations. We aim to create a targeted program of six named fellowships at legal services host organizations in Maryland, Nevada, and Louisiana that will provide no-cost legal services. The fellowships will focus on educational equity and civil rights for students with disabilities and their families. Individuals can apply with a host of their choice to design a Fellowship program that addresses an unmet legal need, or they can apply to work at an existing host organization site.

Champion of Rights -

Black and Brown children with disabilities are disproportionately sent home from school, arrested, and denied an education. It is well recognized that the voice of oppressed peoples must be amplified to drive change. COPAA's Social Racial Equity Committee is working with communities across the country to bring the voices of brown and black families into the quest for equity. COPAA is a leader in training parents and advocates to protect rights. We need to do much more.

Future of Civil Rights in Education

COPAA is recognized as a thought leader. We will organize a think tank to accelerate the path to creative yet practical solutions from experts in field of education and the law. Seeking to reduce the achievement gap as individualized educational programs continue to fail, COPAA wants to strengthen the implementation of the law, and increase child outcomes. This session brings together innovators and thought leaders



7,100,000

Students with disabilities and their families nationwide

Only a small percent of these students are in disagreement with school systems

Many of whom are families of color, being disproportionately disciplined, or pushed out of school, or students with more challenging or complex disabilities

100,000

More than 100,000 students are locked in seclusion rooms and/or held down and restrained by 4 to 5 adults each year in our nation's schools

78%

More than 78% who are locked in seclusion rooms are students with disabilities and or students of color

THE COUNCIL OF PARENT ATTORNEYS AND ADVOCATES, INC.
STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
December 31, 2021 and 2020

	2021	2020
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash	\$ 257,446	\$ 138,188
Accounts receivable	10,331	6,723
Prepaid expenses	58,106	33,775
Total current assets	325,883	178,686
Investments	554,496	515,473
Property and Equipment		
Computer equipment	7,267	3,913
Website	14,839	14,839
	22,106	18,752
Less accumulated depreciation and amortization	18,643	17,592
Total property and equipment	3,463	1,160
Total assets	\$ 883,842	\$ 695,319
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable	\$ 40,084	\$ 35,351
Accrued expenses	24,349	17,234
Deferred revenue	407,101	256,655
Total current liabilities	471,534	309,240
Commitments		
Long-term Liabilities		
Refundable advance	45,145	-
Net Assets		
Without donor restrictions:		
Undesignated	245,317	269,930
Board designated	100,000	100,000
	345,317	369,930
With donor restrictions	21,846	16,149
Total net assets	367,163	386,079
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 883,842	\$ 695,319

THE COUNCIL OF PARENT ATTORNEYS AND ADVOCATES, INC.
STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES
Years Ended December 31, 2021 and 2020

	2021	2020
NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS		
Support and Revenue		
Donated services	\$ 665,380	\$ 541,076
Conference fees, net of refunds of \$225 in 2021 and \$1,425 in 2020	279,150	407,503
Membership dues	242,423	240,971
Webinar training, net of refunds of \$5,220 in 2021 and \$3,255 in 2020	231,193	242,777
Grants and contracts	23,250	2,595
Contributions	68,639	79,769
Interest and dividends	10,598	6,340
Realized and unrealized gain on investments	28,594	9,635
Other	1,040	5,157
	<u>1,550,267</u>	<u>1,535,823</u>
Net Assets Released from Restriction		
Satisfaction of restriction	-	7,949
Total unrestricted support and revenue	<u>1,550,267</u>	<u>1,543,772</u>
Expenses		
Program services	1,451,810	1,347,439
Management and general	110,670	102,711
Fundraising	12,400	20,400
Total expenses	<u>1,574,880</u>	<u>1,470,550</u>
	<u>(24,613)</u>	<u>73,222</u>
NET ASSETS WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS		
Contributions	5,697	14,161
Net Assets Released from Restriction		
Satisfaction of restriction	-	(7,949)
Change in net assets with donor restrictions	<u>5,697</u>	<u>6,212</u>
	<u>(18,916)</u>	<u>79,434</u>
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	<u>386,079</u>	<u>306,645</u>
Net Assets, End of Year	<u>\$ 367,163</u>	<u>\$ 386,079</u>

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