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NEWS ADVISORY

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Pacifica Law Group Expands Its School Districts Practice

Partners Carlos Chavez, Chris Hirst and Denise Stiffarm Join Seattle Office

Seattle—January 9, 2015—Pacifica Law Group is very pleased to announce that partners Carlos Chavez, Chris Hirst and Denise Stiffarm have joined the firm, further strengthening the firm's active education law practice with their extensive experience working with school districts and other public entities on a wide range of issues, including municipal law; real estate, land use and construction; litigation and dispute resolution; and public policy.

[Carlos Chavez](#) represents public school districts and other municipal agencies and educational entities. He focuses on representing school districts in special education matters, including counseling, advice and all phases of dispute resolution. He also assists school districts in navigating their complex and ever-changing obligations under state and federal education law, including issues of employee and student discipline, privacy, due process, equity, and nondiscrimination. Carlos routinely provides in-service trainings for school districts on these issues and has also served as adjunct faculty and panelist in the area of school law for the University of Washington's Danforth Educational Leadership and Leadership for Learning programs and for the University of Washington-Bothell and Seattle University teacher certification programs.

[Chris Hirst](#) practices in the areas of municipal and education law, and represents a variety of public school districts and other public entities, both directly and through a major school district risk retention pool. He represents public entities in student-related disputes, public owners in construction disputes, and public employers in employment disputes. In addition, he represents public entities in various forms of administrative disputes and provides primary outside counsel advice to them. Chris is a frequent speaker and presenter at seminars and client training sessions. He is a member of the Capital Projects Advisory Review Board (CPARB), which is comprised of Governor-appointed representatives of various stakeholders in the construction industry. CPARB evaluates public capital projects construction processes and advises the State Legislature on policies related to public works delivery methods.

[Denise Stiffarm](#) practices in the areas of municipal, land use, and education law. She spends a significant portion of her practice providing land use, real estate, general municipal, and public policy advice to school districts. She also has experience working on a variety of public/private joint ventures and regularly advises several special purpose, entrepreneurial public entities.

Denise has worked with clients on a range of issues, including growth management, land use planning and permitting, environmental (NEPA/SEPA) review, feasibility and site selection, facilities planning, and development and implementation of impact fee programs. In addition, she regularly counsels clients on compliance with the State Open Public Meetings Act and the Public Records Act. She has also drafted and negotiated a variety of complex real estate documents and development agreements. Denise is an experienced advocate before state and local legislative bodies. She has drafted interlocal agreements and prepared text and comment for numerous proposed ordinances and legislation.

“We are delighted to again work with these three exceptional lawyers,” said Pacifica’s Managing Partner, [Gerry Johnson](#). “They bring decades of experience working with large and small school districts and other public entities in the Pacific Northwest, are deeply committed to our local and regional communities, and are wonderful colleagues.”

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Pacifica Law Group LLP is a law firm committed to serving public and private clients in the Pacific Northwest with focused and sophisticated talent, intellect, creativity and unwavering integrity. The firm helps clients address their most pressing needs with a range of legal services, including appellate and civil litigation, constitutional law, construction law, public financing, public/private project counseling and real estate law. Representative clients include Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Co., City of Seattle, Pike Place Market, Port of Seattle, Seattle Art Museum, Sound Transit, Teachers Insurance & Annuity Association, Washington State Housing Finance Commission, Woodland Park Zoo and numerous cities, counties, municipalities, public utility districts, school districts and universities. www.pacificallawgroup.com