



Robbins Schwartz
One Team. Making Your Mission Ours.

Purchasing & Construction Virtual Conference

April 23, 2026

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Champaign

301 North Neil Street, Suite 400
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550 Warrenville Road, Suite 460
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Contents

Schedule-at-a-Glance	3
Topics Sessions	
Bid Challenges: How to Avoid Them and How to Successfully Resolve Them if They Arise.....	4
Creative Contracting: Using Intergovernmental Agreements, Cooperative Purchasing, Public-Private Partnerships, and Other Strategies to Meet Your Purchasing and Operational Needs.....	4
Key Considerations in Choosing Your Construction Team and Other Strategies for Public Project Owners	4
Biographies	5

Schedule at a Glance

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

GENERAL SESSION

Bid Challenges: How to Avoid Them and How to Successfully Resolve Them if They Arise

Presented by: Kenneth M. Florey and Howard A. Metz

10:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

Creative Contracting: Using Intergovernmental Agreements, Cooperative Purchasing, Public-Private Partnerships, and Other Strategies to Meet Your Purchasing and Operational Needs

Presented by: Matthew J. Gardner and Katie N. DiPiero

10:45 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Break

11:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

RESUME GENERAL SESSION

Key Considerations in Choosing Your Construction Team and Other Strategies for Public Project Owners

Presented by: Matthew J. Gardner and Danielle B. McNamara

Session 1 | 9:00 a.m.

Bid Challenges: How to Avoid Them and How to Successfully Resolve Them if They Arise

While infrequent, bid challenges can pose significant problems for public bodies. Oftentimes a bid challenge may just be an aggressive letter from an unsuccessful bidder, but bigger problems can ensue if the challenger brings the dispute to a board meeting or, worse, files litigation that could lead to project delays. Join our presenters to discuss the legal requirements for bidding, how public bodies can prepare bid packages to prevent bid challenges, and what rights public bodies have when a bid challenge arises.

Presenters:

[Kenneth M. Florey](#), Partner and [Howard A. Metz](#), Partner

Session 2 | 10:00 a.m.

Creative Contracting: Using Intergovernmental Agreements, Cooperative Purchasing, Public-Private Partnerships, and Other Strategies to Meet Your Purchasing and Operational Needs

A practical discussion with Robbins Schwartz's commercial transaction lawyers on innovative procurement and service-delivery tools. Topics include structuring intergovernmental agreements, cooperative purchasing consortia, public-private partnerships, and alternative contracting strategies—highlighting legal considerations, risk allocation, compliance, and general best-practices to protect public interests.

Presenters:

[Matthew J. Gardner](#), Partner and [Katie N. DiPiero](#), Partner

Session 3 | 11:00 a.m.

Key Considerations in Choosing Your Construction Team and Other Strategies for Public Project Owners

When planning a construction project, one of the most important decisions that an owner will make is how to structure the project and the construction professionals that it selects to perform the design and construction. Join our construction lawyers for a discussion on primary construction planning issues such as choosing the right construction delivery method and strategies for selecting the right construction team for your project.

Presenters:

[Matthew J. Gardner](#), Partner and [Danielle B. McNamara](#), Associate

Biographies



KENNETH M. FLOREY

Partner, Chicago & Lisle

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PRACTICE AREAS

Arbitration/Mediation
Board Governance
Commercial Transactions
Construction
Education
Energy
Litigation
Mediation
Municipal
Public Finance &
Taxation
Real Estate
Zoning, Planning &
Land Use

EDUCATION

J.D., DePaul University
College of Law;
*Managing Editor, DePaul
Journal of Art and
Entertainment Law*

B.A., University of
Illinois at Urbana
Champaign

Ken Florey concentrates his practice representing public and private clients, including municipalities, school districts, community colleges, townships, libraries, private owners, contractors and design professionals regarding land use, municipal law, construction, tax, finance and litigation. Ken has also started offering his services as a mediator with an emphasis on construction disputes.

Ken was the Chair of the DuPage County Bar Association's Local Government Committee. He was appointed Special Assistant Attorney General to prosecute and defend construction litigation claims on behalf of the Illinois Capital Development Board. Ken is also a member of the Illinois ASBO Service Associate Advisory Committee. He served as a Trustee for the Village of Lombard for eight years and is a member of the Lombard Fire and Police Commission.

Mediator Certificate: Northwestern University 2017

Recognitions

Illinois Leading Lawyer, Construction Law; Governmental, Municipal, Lobbying & Administrative Law; Land Use, Zoning & Condemnation Law; and School Law

Illinois Association of School Business Officials, Above and Beyond Award

Illinois Institute for Local Government Law, Litigation Award

Publications

Author, "Navigating the Future of School Purchasing, The Final Word," *Update Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2025)

Co-author, "Navigating the Evolving Map of School Purchasing," *Update Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2025)

Contributing author, "School Property and Environmental Issues," *School Law: Organization, Finance, and Property*, IICLE (2025)

Contributing author, "Competency in ADR: Assuring Ethical Practice through Competency and Communication," *DCBA Brief*, The Journal of the DuPage County Bar Association (2024)



ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

U.S. District Court for
the Northern District of
Illinois

Supreme Court of Illinois

Contributing author, “Navigating Construction Disputes: The inevitable construction disputes can be navigated with a combination of knowledge, preparation, and outside guidance,” *School Business Affairs* (2023)

Contributing author, “Diving into ADR Ethics: Exploring the Ethical Obligation of Attorneys as Advisors, Advocates, and Third-Party Neutrals,” DCBA Brief (2023)

Contributing author, “Joint Purchasing Everything You Want to Know but Are Afraid to Ask!” *UPDATE Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2019)

Contributing author, “How Far Does the Law Allow Schools to Go?” *UPDATE Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2018)

Contributing author, “Top 11 Public Bidding Questions & Solutions” *UPDATE Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2018)

Co-author, “School Construction from Start to Finish: A Project Checklist,” *School Business Affairs Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2018)

Contributing author, “Mediation a Win-Win for Clients and their Attorneys in Construction Litigation,” *Chicago Daily Law Bulletin* (2018)

Presentations

Best Practices in the Purchasing, Contracting and the Competitive Bidding Process, Illinois ASBO Administrative Academy (November 2025)

Construction 101: Understanding Money from Start to Finish, Wisconsin ASBO Midwest Facility Masters Conference (October 2025)

Advanced Land Use and Zoning Disputes with Local Governments, National Business Institute Webinar (October 2025)

Construction 101: Understanding Money from Start to Finish, Illinois ASBO Rising Leaders in School Business (July 2025)

Mastering the Complex World of Public Bidding, Illinois ASBO Annual Conference (April 2025)

Eminent Domain – Key Challenges: Advanced Development Agreement Drafting Techniques; and Legal Ethics, National Business Institute National Seminar (February 2025)

Taking Action: Administration Red Flags During Construction, IASB/IASA/IASBO Joint Annual Conference (November 2024)

Contract Pitfalls to Avoid, Emerging SBO Summit (July 2024)

Building Better Bid and RFP Documents, Illinois ASBO Annual Conference (April 2024)





HOWARD A. METZ

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PRACTICE AREAS

Board Governance
Commercial Transactions
Construction
Education
Energy
Litigation
Municipal
Public Finance &
Taxation
Real Estate
Zoning, Planning & Land
Use

EDUCATION

J.D., IIT Chicago-Kent
College of Law

B.S., Political Science,
University of Iowa

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

U.S. District Court for
the Northern District of
Illinois

Supreme Court of
Illinois

Howard A. Metz is an experienced legal professional known for his expertise in advising and representing various private and public entities, including school districts, community colleges, park districts, and municipalities. His legal practice spans a range of areas, with a primary focus on real estate, commercial transactions, construction law, and land use and zoning matters.

Howard has made significant contributions, particularly in resolving complex construction cases. His expertise includes handling disputes related to architectural fees, construction defects, bidding issues, and construction delays. Additionally, Howard has been actively involved in litigating matters pertaining to zoning laws and municipal control over school property.

Howard's legal practice is diverse and includes areas such as commercial law, construction law, education law, energy law, litigation, municipal law, public finance and taxation, real estate law, and zoning, planning, and land use.

As a prolific writer, Howard has contributed to various publications, sharing his insights on topics crucial to his practice.

Publications

Co-author, "The Art of Preparing Bid Specifications," *UPDATE Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2025)

Contributing author, "School Property and Environmental Issues," *School Law: Organization, Finance, and Property*, IICLE (2025)

Contributing author, "School District Emergency Purchasing," *UPDATE Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2024)

"Navigating Public Bidding Under the Illinois School Code" *UPDATE Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2022)

Contributing author, "Joint Purchasing Everything You Want to Know but Are Afraid to Ask!" *UPDATE Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2019)

Contributing author, "Public Body Social Media Rules Make Retention, Ready Retrieval Imperative," *Chicago Daily Law Bulletin* (2019)



ORGANIZATIONS

Illinois Association of
School Business Officials

Illinois Council of School
Attorneys

Contributing author, “How Far Does the Law Allow Schools to Go?” *UPDATE Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2018)

Co-author, “School Construction from Start to Finish: A Project Checklist,” *School Business Affairs Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2018)

Contributing author, “Organization, Finance, and Property,” *Illinois School Law*, IICLE (2017)

“Look Before You Leap: Evaluating Your Joint Purchasing Options,” *UPDATE Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2016)

Contributing author, “School Property and Environmental Issues,” *Illinois School Law*, IICLE (2010 and 2012)

Presentations

Best Practices in the Purchasing, Contracting and the Competitive Bidding Process, Illinois ASBO Administrative Academy (November 2025)

Bidding 101, Illinois ASBO Rising Leaders in School Business (July 2025)

Building Better Bid and RFP Documents, Illinois ASBO Annual Conference (April 2024)

Innovative Solutions to Student Transportation Challenges, Illinois ASBO School Business Essentials Lunch & Learn Series (January 2024)





MATTHEW J. GARDNER

Partner, Chicago

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PRACTICE AREAS

Board Governance
Commercial Transactions
Construction
Real Estate
Public Finance & Taxation

EDUCATION

J.D., University of
Wisconsin Law School

B.A., University of Utah

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

U.S. District Court for the
Northern District of
Illinois

Supreme Court of Illinois

Supreme Court of Utah

Supreme Court of
Wisconsin

Matthew J. Gardner is a partner at Robbins Schwartz, where he specializes in construction, commercial transactions, real estate, public finance, and board governance. Matt represents public and private project owners, contractors, subcontractors, and material suppliers over the course of construction projects. He regularly counsels clients through the public bid and procurement process, including drafting bid packets to comply with the assortment of laws impacting public project owners. He also drafts and negotiates a variety of construction contracts involving project owners, architects and design professionals, contractors and construction managers, and project general conditions. Additionally, Matt works with project owners throughout the project to quickly resolve any problems or conflicts that often arise on construction projects to help the project continue smoothly without delays or cost overruns. If a project does go wrong, Matt regularly represents clients on mechanics lien matters, construction defect cases, and other construction-related litigation.

Matt's commercial real estate practice involves representing public and private clients in a wide variety of real estate and land use matters. He represents clients throughout the purchase or sale of property, from drafting and negotiating a purchase and sale agreement, due diligence review of lease, environmental, and title matters, zoning, and ultimately through closing. Throughout the process, Matt seeks to ensure a smooth closing to fulfill the parties' desired goals, while at the same time keeping his client fully informed of any nuances and risks, and making sure his client's interests are protected. Matt also represents clients on commercial and education-related leases, large and small, and other land use issues such as licenses and easements, zoning, impact fees, or title disputes.

In addition to construction and real estate, Matt represents school districts, colleges, and private companies on a wide assortment of commercial transactions, including drafting and negotiating data privacy agreements, software license agreements, and service agreements. As educational technology and artificial technology tools and products become more prevalent, Matt frequently presents on student privacy-related issues and compliance with the litany of laws and regulations impacting the same. He also counsels and helps clients navigate and respond to data breaches or ransomware attacks if they occur.

Beyond his practice, Matt is actively involved in the legal community. He has served as the past Chair of the Chicago Bar Association Construction Law and Mechanics lien Subcommittee, is an active member of the Chicago Bar Association Judicial Evaluation Committee, and a member of the Illinois State



ORGANIZATIONS

Illinois State Bar
Association

Chicago Bar Association

Illinois Association of
School Business Officials

LEADERSHIP

Commercial, Construction,
and Real Estate Practice
Group Leader

Bar Association. Within Robbins Schwartz, Matt serves on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Leadership Committee and is Co-Chair of the Diversity & Awareness Planning Subcommittee.

Recognitions

Illinois “Rising Star”, by Super Lawyers Magazine, in the area of Construction Litigation (2021-2022)

Publications

Co-author, “The Evolution of Intergovernmental Agreements in Illinois,” *UPDATE Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2025)

Contributing author, “School Property and Environmental Issues,” *School Law: Organization, Finance, and Property*, IICLE (2017, 2021, 2025)

Contributing author, “Industrial and Engineering, Procurement, Construction Projects” *Construction Law: Transactional Considerations*, IICLE (2025)

Contributing author, “Environmental Issues” *Construction Law: Transactional Considerations*, IICLE (2025)

Contributing author, “School Property and Environmental Issues” *School Law: Organization, Finance, and Property*, IICLE (2017, 2021)

Contributing author, “Turner on Illinois Mechanics Liens,” *Chapter III – Making a Lien Against Private Property Enforceable* (2019)

Presentations

Bidding and Managing a Successful Construction Project, IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference (January 2026)

More Data, More Responsibility: Navigating Data Retention and Privacy in K-12 Education, SecurED Schools K-12 Data Privacy & Cybersecurity Conference (January 2026)

Perfecting Public Project Claims, Chicago Bar Association Construction/Mechanics Lien Subcommittee Annual Mechanics Lien and Construction Claims Seminar (December 2025)

Federal Reform Initiatives: Updates and Guidance, Illinois Council of Community College Presidents Annual Retreat (October 2025)

Ed Tech Contracts in 2025: Industry-Wide Acceptance of the NDPA, Evolving AI Technologies, and Risks and Best Practices that School Attorneys Should Consider, ICSA In-House Counsel Networking Meeting (May 2025)

Bridging SOPPA and NDPA: Key Changes to Student Data Agreements in Illinois, SecurED Schools K-12 Data Privacy & Cybersecurity Conference (January 2025)

Construction Project Delivery Methods, IASB/IASA/IASBO Joint Annual Conference (November 2024)





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Partner, Chicago

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PRACTICE AREAS

Board Governance
Commercial Transactions
Construction
Public Finance &
Taxation
Real Estate

EDUCATION

J.D., *cum laude*, Seattle
University

M.B.A., Seattle
University

B.A., University of
Kansas

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

Supreme Court of Illinois

Katie N. DiPiero is a versatile attorney who focuses her practice on public finance and taxation, commercial law, construction law, and real estate. Her legal practice primarily centers around assisting and representing school districts, community colleges, and municipalities in public finance and commercial matters. She is also well-versed in tax rate objections, real property taxation, valuation, and assessment appeals before the circuit court, Property Tax Appeal Board, and boards of review. Furthermore, Katie's proficiency extends to drafting and negotiating contracts in commercial transactions, assisting with nonprofits and foundations, as well as handling litigation and alternative dispute resolution.

In her role as an attorney, Katie finds immense satisfaction in writing and negotiating contracts, as well as tackling finance-related issues. Her strengths as a legal professional are exemplified through her exceptional writing and research skills, which have proven invaluable in her career.

Before her role at Robbins Schwartz, Katie assisted clients in tax planning and corporate reorganizations. She also gained valuable experience working for government entities and non-profit organizations.

Katie's impressive educational background led her to realize her calling – to assist others in navigating the legal system, particularly those with limited exposure to complex legal processes. Her desire to help people and her love for writing were the driving forces behind her decision to become a lawyer.

Katie's background, characterized by a journey from Kansas to Seattle, followed by work in Washington, D.C., has molded her into a well-rounded and empathetic attorney. Her ability to understand different perspectives, influenced by the myriad of experiences from her travels, significantly contributes to her capacity for finding creative solutions in her legal practice.

Outside her professional life, Katie is dedicated to staying active with her family and is working on refining her golf skills through lessons. An interesting facet of her life that many may not know is her background as a competitive pianist during her childhood.

Publications

Contributing author, “Environmental Issues,” *Construction Law: Transactional Considerations*, IICLE (2021, 2025)



Contributing author, "Opening Your Mind to Closed Sessions," *UPDATE Magazine*, Illinois ASBO (2024)

Presentations

Community College Legal Updates, Illinois Community College Chief Financial Officers Conference (October 2025)

School Legal Update, Illinois ASBO WILCO (September 2025)

Navigating the Maze: Understanding District Funds vs. Student Activities vs. 501(c)(3) Not-for-Profits, Illinois ASBO Annual Conference (May 2025)





DANIELLE B. MCNAMARA

Associate, Chicago

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PRACTICE AREAS

Commercial Transactions
Construction
Public Finance & Taxation
Real Estate

EDUCATION

J.D., Loyola University
Chicago

B.A., University of
Illinois

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

Supreme Court of Illinois

ORGANIZATIONS

Chicago Bar Association

Danielle B. McNamara is an Associate at Robbins Schwartz, where she practices in Commercial Transactions, Construction Law, and Real Estate Development.

Prior to joining Robbins Schwartz, Danielle gained valuable experience in the legal field. She worked for a residential real estate firm during her college years, where she gained insights into the intricacies of property transactions. Subsequently, she transitioned to a commercial real estate firm, where she handled a wide range of tasks, including purchases and sales of commercial properties. These experiences equipped her with a comprehensive understanding of real estate law, laying a solid foundation for her career as an attorney.

Danielle is an active member of the Chicago Bar Association, where she remains committed to staying updated on the latest developments in the legal field and connecting with fellow legal professionals. Her involvement in professional associations underscores her dedication to continuous learning and professional growth.

During her time at Loyola University's Business Law Clinic, Danielle had the opportunity to assist individuals and businesses in starting and expanding their ventures. This hands-on experience, coupled with her innate passion for helping others, solidified her decision to pursue a career in law.

Outside of her legal pursuits, Danielle enjoys spending time with her family and engaging in outdoor activities. She values work-life balance and strives to maintain a healthy and fulfilling lifestyle.

Publications

Contributing author, "School Property and Environmental Issues," *School Law: Organization, Finance, and Property*, IICLE (2025)

Contributing author, "Competency in ADR: Assuring Ethical Practice through Competency and Communication," *DCBA Brief*, The Journal of the DuPage County Bar Association (2024)

Presentations

More Data, More Responsibility: Navigating Data Retention and Privacy in K-12 Education, SecurED Schools K-12 Data Privacy & Cybersecurity Conference (January 2026)



Bridging SOPPA and NDPA: Key Change to Student Data Agreements in Illinois,
SecurED Schools K-12 Data Privacy & Cybersecurity Conference (January 2025)

