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SCHLUTER & HUGHES UNVEILS NEW ADVOCACY SERVICE FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

Fueled by her own experience as a parent navigating the educational system, firm co-founder Kristin Hughes is working to ensure families know their options and rights

BLOOMFIELD HILLS, Mich. (July 28, 2025) — As families across Michigan gear up for back-to-school season, Schluter & Hughes Law Firm is launching a new Education Counseling practice area to ensure parents get the help they need when their children experience difficulties in school that may be related to a disability.

Reports indicate 1 in 5 children, or an estimated 70 million people across the U.S., have learning disabilities. Approximately 16% of students in Michigan have disabilities. Yet most families are left to navigate the special education system alone, without professional support. Schluter & Hughes is changing that.

The firm's co-founder Kristin Hughes has experienced it all firsthand. By third grade, her daughter faced a handful of educational and learning challenges.

"At one point, I even took a leave of absence to address this full-time," she says. "It's unfortunate that it took a leave of absence for me to gain a clear understanding of the special education process. If I had help and guidance at the beginning, perhaps the struggle would have been less daunting."

Kristin found herself in the same scenario as too many parents throughout Michigan and across the country. She was thrust into the confusing and sometimes adversarial world of special education, forced to navigate a maze of meetings, evaluations, and denials, all while watching her child continue to struggle. Today, after finally finding the right partners and solutions, her daughter is on a trajectory to graduate from high school and attend college.

"I had no idea what my rights were," Kristin continues. "I want to ensure other children and families have the information and support they need because the right support and partnerships can change the trajectory of a child's educational journey. My child is proof of that."

Her 15-year journey from powerlessness to empowered advocacy is now the foundation for the Education Counseling practice area. With deep legal expertise and lived

experience, the firm offers a rare blend of empathy and advocacy — guiding parents through the complex process of obtaining IEPs, 504 plans, and other critical educational supports.

The Schluter & Hughes Education Counseling team includes Brad Dembs, JD, a nationally recognized disability and civil rights attorney who recently returned to Michigan to expand support for families statewide. The team provides everything from legal advice to in-person advocacy at school meetings to customized back-to-school checklists — meeting families where they are and helping them advocate effectively.

“Public schools have many programs and services available to help children learn and reach their potential,” Brad says. “Accessing these special education services and supports is easier when families know what’s available and what they may be entitled to. Being well-informed helps level the playing field.”

“We can be an ally and an advocate providing information and helping families understand their rights, connecting them with resources in their community, and working together with the school system to develop a plan for their child’s education,” he added.

Here are 3 tips for parents:

1. To the greatest extent possible, communicate with your school in writing or by email. If you do talk in person or by phone, keep a dated log of notes.
2. If you have private clinicians, service providers, or tutors who work with your child, ask them to write letters explaining their services and any recommendations for school. These providers can collaborate with the schools' service providers to ensure continuity of care.
3. It is important to understand what you may be entitled to and what you are trying to accomplish before making a request of your school.

Did you know? Special education does not just mean academic support. A child may qualify for services for many different reasons like physical therapy to help with walking, speech therapy due to a lisp, or accommodations for testing to account for anxiety.

If you disagree with an evaluation completed by your school, you can request that they pay for a private evaluation as a "second opinion."

If your school makes a decision you disagree with, such as changing your child's IEP services or placement, there are steps you can take to challenge those changes and block them from taking effect while a challenge is pending.

People who are interested can contact Schluter & Hughes for a consultation at (248) 692-7392 or via schluterhugheslaw.com

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About Schluter & Hughes Law Firm

Schluter & Hughes Law Firm, PLLC is a Bloomfield Hills, Michigan-based law firm redefining estate planning through innovation, compassion, and bold leadership. The rapidly growing woman-owned firm is pioneering a holistic model that integrates legal services with in-house care coordination, bringing attorneys, nurses, and care specialists together under one roof.

Dedicated professionals in the areas of Estate Planning, Estate & Trust Administration, Care Coordination, Elder Law, Probate, Fiduciary Tax & Accounting and Education Counseling, help clients find peace of mind with customized estate plans that allow for growth, change and the unexpected. Every life's a journey that takes a village to support it. To learn more, visit: schluterhugheslaw.com