



SARA HELLSTEDT

Partner

Portland, ME

207.477.9121

Service Focus

- Counseling and Advice
- Employment Discrimination and Harassment
- Workplace Investigations

Industry Focus

- Higher Education
- K-12 Institutions

OVERVIEW

Sara Hellstedt, a former teacher with nearly two decades of experience in labor and employment law, represents educational institutions – including K-12 schools, colleges, and universities – in New England and across the country in sensitive investigations and complex workplace matters. Her background in managing labor relations and overseeing investigations for a major public university system informs her pragmatic, client-centered approach, enabling her to deliver clear, actionable advice that empowers employers to resolve even the most challenging workplace issues with confidence.

Sara counsels employers on a broad spectrum of issues, from handling sexual assault, harassment, discrimination, and civil rights allegations to guiding clients through compliance with Title IX, FMLA, ADA, and other key statutes. She is nationally recognized for managing sensitive misconduct investigations, conducting

trauma-informed interviews – including those involving minors – and coordinating with law enforcement when necessary. Sara delivers practical, defensible solutions that help educational and other employers navigate regulatory challenges, mitigate risk, and maintain safe, inclusive learning environments.

She has conducted, directed and overseen hundreds of investigations into employee and student conduct, bullying, and workplace discrimination, often serving as a neutral third-party investigator. Sara also has acted as a neutral hearing officer or adjudicator for educational institutions to address allegations of misconduct against faculty, staff and students. She has conducted Title IX hearings both at the initial decision-making level and as an appeal officer.

Drawing on her broad experience advising and serving as a neutral investigator and adjudicator, Sara regularly advises both public and private educational employers on policy development, compliance strategies, and crisis response, ensuring that internal protocols align with the latest legal requirements and best practices. She also drafts handbooks, conducts preventative training, and provides day-to-day guidance to help clients avoid litigation and resolve disputes swiftly and effectively.

Before joining Fisher Phillips, Sara was a senior director at an investigations-focused boutique law firm, where she performed advisory work and served as an external investigator and adjudicator for educational institutions nationwide. She previously was a partner in one of the largest multi-service law firms in Maine.

Credentials

Education

- University of Maine School of Law, J.D., *summa cum laude*, 2007
- Middlebury College, B.A., *cum laude*, 2000

Bar Admissions

- Maine
- Vermont

Court Admissions

- U.S. District Court for the District of Maine

Affiliations

Professional Activities

- Maine State Bar Association, Labor & Employment Law Section
- National Association of College and University Attorneys (NACUA)

INSIGHTS

News

Mar 9, 2026

Fisher Phillips Continues Strategic Growth in Portland, ME with Sara Hellstedt