

# California LAWYER

## EDUCATION LAW



### CALIFORNIA LAWYER ATTORNEY OF THE YEAR

**Mark Holscher**

KIRKLAND & ELLIS, LOS ANGELES

Holscher volunteered to represent a group of low-income parents in San Bernardino County who were bucking local school authorities in an effort to improve their children's school by invoking the state's "trigger" law, a provision of the education code that allows parents to petition to transform a failing school. But the Adelanto School Board rejected the parents' petition to turn the Desert Trails Elementary School into a charter school, claiming that not enough signatures had been collected. Holscher filed suit against the school district in April, and by October he had won court orders that the petition was valid and the district had to act on it. Later that month a charter school operator was

selected, and the reforms sought by the parents—and achieved through Holscher's pro bono legal work—will finally be in place when the 2013–14 school year begins next fall. "It's a huge victory for our kids," said Doreen Diaz, one of the leaders of the parents group.

When the school board unanimously approved the shift to a charter school in January 2013, it

was the first time any aspect of parent-trigger implementation had been approved.

Holscher was assisted by Kirkland & Ellis lawyers in Los Angeles, including partner Elizabeth M. Kim and associates Sasha K. Danna (now a partner), David A. Klein, and Kristin E. Rose.

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AWARDS