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Landing the Job You Actually Want After Law School
By John Carreras

First, you need to understand there will be setbacks, rejections and moments where it will seem nothing is going right. However, it is important to persevere with positivity, open-mindedness and a proactive, multi-dimensional approach. Since graduating from law school in 2012, I have spoken to hundreds of law students and recent graduates about increasing their opportunities to land the job they really want after law school. While there are, undoubtedly, a large number of contributing factors, I would like to share a few helpful tips.

STAY POSITIVE
This one is easier said than done but it stems from having faith that things are going to work out for you as long as you do not let the setbacks and rejections dampen your spirit. People notice non-verbal cues in emails, interviews, and social interactions, which has a big effect on their first impression of you. Without having the appropriate positive attitude for the “right” job, it will make landing it much more difficult.

KEEP AN OPEN MIND
Many of us thought we knew what we wanted to do after law school, but ended up doing something completely different and love it. Oftentimes, all it takes is applying to jobs that are outside of the practice area you think you want to work in. Not only will this help you land your next job (as the first job is always the hardest to get), but it will also help give you more practical experience to refine and hone in on exactly what it is you want to do (or don’t want to do).

CAST A WIDE NET THROUGHOUT YOUR NETWORK
As much as it is a blessing as a curse, most legal jobs I have had and seen others land in the early stages of their careers have resulted from recommendations from a friend, acquaintance, or colleague. Put yourself in a position to meet as many legal peers in your community as possible. This can be done by reaching out to your law school to volunteer as a panelist, attaining membership in and attending networking events for specialty bar associations, volunteering through your local pro bono clinics or legal aid organizations, and getting involved in an American Inn of Court. Even hanging out socially with friends and acquaintances on a regular basis can benefit you in this regard. The more exposure you have to members of the legal community – whether they are students, young attorneys, experienced attorneys, non-practicing law graduates, or other professionals – the better position you will put yourself in to get your foot in the door for an interview where you can show off your newfound positivity and open-mindedness.

John Carreras is Corporate Counsel at Catholic Health Initiatives and is an alumnus of the University of Denver, Strum College of Law. John is actively involved in the Young Lawyers Division and currently serves as Vice Chair of the Minorities in the Profession Committee, a Commission Member on the Commission on Interest on Lawyer’s Trust Accounts (IOLTA), and a Member of the Public Service Team.
What Level of Educational Benefit is Required under IDEA?
By Melissa Little


**Facts and Procedural History in Endrew F.**

In this case, Endrew was attending public school in Douglas County, Colorado. Since preschool Endrew qualified for an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and was receiving special education services. Endrew’s parents, unhappy with their child’s lack of progress and the goals set forth in Endrew’s IEP, withdrew Endrew from public school and placed him in a specialized private school. The parents later filed a lawsuit with the State Department of Education against Douglas County Public Schools claiming Endrew was denied a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). The hearing officer ruled on behalf of the school district, finding that “some academic progress” had been made. The case was filed in Federal District Court and then appealed to the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals. Both courts found on behalf of the school. The 10th Circuit reasoned FAPE only required an educational benefit that was “merely more than de minimis.” In essence, as long as a student receiving special education services received “some educational benefit,” then the school district had met its burden. The court’s reasoning was based on its interpretation of the *Rowley* decision.

**A Quick Look at the Rowley Decision**

In *Bd. of Educ. of Hendrick Hudson Cent. Sch. Dist., Westchester Cty. v. Rowley*, 458 U.S. 176 (1982), a child with minimal residual hearing had an IEP. The school district provided the student with a special hearing aid for classroom use and a tutor for additional assistance. The parents requested that the school also provide the student with a sign-language interpreter for all classes. The school denied the parents’ request, and the parents filed suit claiming a violation of FAPE. The District Court found on behalf of the parents. The court reasoned that although the student was performing better than average in her classes, and advancing in grade levels, the student was not able to reach her maximum potential due to her disability, and lack of a sign language interpreter. The 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the lower court’s decision. The United States Supreme Court reversed that ruling, and the case was remanded for further proceedings. In its opinion, the Court looked at the legislative intent of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, and concluded, “the Act was more to open the door of public education to handicapped children on appropriate terms than to guarantee any particular level of education once inside.”

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2 *Id.* at 1332.
3 *Id.* at 1338-43.
4 The EHA was revised and renamed the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA).
5 *Rowley*, 458 U.S. at 192.
The court further stated that the “requirement that a State provide specialized educational services to handicapped children generates no additional requirement that the services so provided be sufficient to maximize each child’s potential ‘commensurate with the opportunity provided other children.’”\(^6\)

**The Court Clarifies the Rowley Decision and the Meaning of FAPE**

In *Endrew F.*, the Supreme Court narrowly tailored the decision of *Rowley* to the facts of that case. “Accordingly, for a child fully integrated in the regular classroom, an IEP typically should, as Rowley put it, be ‘reasonably calculated to enable the child to achieve passing marks and advance from grade to grade.’”\(^7\) However, *Rowley* did not discuss what standard should be applied for students not participating in the general curriculum, and unable to achieve on grade level. For those students, an IEP must still provide an educational program that is “appropriately ambitious in light of the circumstances.”\(^8\) “The goals may differ, but every child should have the chance to meet challenging objectives.”\(^9\) This standard is more stringent than the “more than de minimis” standard applied in the 10\(^{th}\) Circuit. The court vacated the decision of the 10\(^{th}\) Circuit Court of Appeals, and the case was remanded for further proceedings consistent with its opinion.

**Melissa Little** is an education law attorney at Blankingship & Keith, Chair of the ABA YLD Minorities in the Profession Committee, and is a Commissioner of the Children, Youth, and Families Collaborative Commission in Alexandria, VA.

**NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Committee Spotlight**

Check out the Minorities in the Profession Committee Spotlight by Peggy Liu, an ABA YLD Emerging Leader. Learn more about the committee’s work and ways to get involved:

[http://www.americanbar.org/groups/young_lawyers/publications/Affiliate/2017/04/committee Spotlight.html](http://www.americanbar.org/groups/young_lawyers/publications/Affiliate/2017/04/committee_Spotlight.html)

**Upcoming Events:**

Looking for the hottest ticket in town?! MIPC is co-sponsoring a meet-up at the *National Museum of African American History and Culture* in Washington, D.C. with the Women in the Profession Committee on **May 22, 2017**.

Tickets are limited and on a first come, first serve basis. Contact Melissa Little at **mlittle170@gmail.com** to reserve your tickets.

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\(^6\) *Id.* at 198

\(^7\) *Endrew F.*, 137 S.Ct. at 992.

\(^8\) *Rowley*, 458 U.S. at 198 (emphasis added).

\(^9\) *Id.*
Celebrate the end of the 2016 - 2017 bar year and ring in the 2017 – 2018 bar year at the 2017 ABA Annual Meeting.

**Dates:** August 10 – 15, 2017  
**Location:** The Big Apple a/k/a New York, NY

The YLD will be hosting events at the Annual Meeting – engage with your fellow ABA members and explore New York City.

Register now: [http://www.americanbar.org/groups/young_lawyers/events_cle/2017-annual-meeting.html](http://www.americanbar.org/groups/young_lawyers/events_cle/2017-annual-meeting.html)

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**Job Opportunities**

Check out the ABA Job Board for thousands of job postings - [ABA Legal Career Central](http://jobs.americanbar.org/jobseeker)

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**YLD Resources**

Are you looking to develop leadership, management, and business development skills? Check out the Growing Lawyers Growing Leaders initiative developed by the YLD and the Law Practice Division:

Take advantage of the Young Lawyer Toolkit – a curated collection of eBooks, tutorials, and online resources free to ABA Members.

The toolkit is divided by years in practice: 0 to 3 years, 4 to 7 years, and 8 to 12 years. Learn about the practical aspects of practicing law, the mechanics of opening your own practice, and navigating the legal scene.

Put your membership to use:
http://www.americanbar.org/groups/young_lawyers/initiatives/young_lawyer_toolkit.html

Get Involved:

If you are looking for inspiration for diversity programs and projects to implement in your own community, check out the Next Steps Diversity Database. The database is a joint project by the YLD and the ABA Council for Racial & Ethnic Diversity in the Educational Pipeline. The Next Steps Diversity Database contains a catalog of program items, database of expert speakers and information on creating written materials for your event. The database is updated regularly so be sure to check it out when brainstorming about diversity and inclusion events for your community.

http://www.americanbar.org/groups/young_lawyers/diversity_and_inclusion/next_steps_project_database.html

If you are a young lawyer who wants to help combat implicit bias, but are unsure where to begin, here are a few suggestions to get you started:

- Teach a CLE on implicit bias.
  http://www.americanbar.org/groups/litigation/initiatives/task-force-implicit-bias.html

- Determine whether your state includes a separate CLE credit program on diversity and inclusion, and the elimination of bias, in the legal profession. If not, write an advocacy letter to your local or state bar association. To help you in your advocacy, take a look at ABA Resolution 107: http://www.americanbar.org/news/reporter_resources/midyear-meeting-2016/house-of-delegates-resolutions/107.html

Additional suggestions and an article detailing how to be an advocate for change, can be found in the most recent edition of TYL:
http://www.americanbar.org/publications/tyl/topics/professional-development/implicit_bias_be_advocate_change.html