**Michigan Education Law Writing Competition**

**CLIENT LETTER RUBRIC**

Judges: Score each category out of a possible five points, considering the bulleted items. Use points awarded in scoring formula on the last page to tally total points.

### Overall format:
- Uses a standard business letter format
- Uses a readable font, spacing
- Looks neat and professional

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Much less than what is expected | Less than what is expected | What is expected | Slightly more than what is expected | Significantly more than what is expected

### Writing style and mechanics:
- Offers sentences of readable length
- Uses active-voice verbs unless there is a good reason to use passive
- Uses transitional words and phrases
- Writes in appropriate tone (appropriately balances professional with conversational)
- Contains no grammatical, punctuation, or spelling errors
- Does not contain overly long paragraphs OR too many annoyingly short ones
- Uses roadmaps and signposts
- Uses legal citations appropriately

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### Opening paragraph:
- Avoids form letter feel
- Avoids giving too much information too early
- Accurately reflects situation AND encourages client to read entire letter
- Expresses predicted outcome as a probability, not a certainty

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### Facts:
- Reviews relevant facts and other facts important to client
- Uses easy-to-follow organizational scheme
- Gives facts accurately
- Does not give too many facts

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### Law and application:
- Offers appropriate coverage (not too much detail, but sufficient for client to understand and participate in decision making)
- Presents the law accurately
- Sufficiently covers each element
- Translates legal terms and concepts for the lay reader
- Gives both sides so that client can understand opposing party’s arguments

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### Client Options:
- Gives sufficient detail on client’s options
- Gives pros and cons for each option
- Respects that client makes the final decision
- Evaluates and advises as to best option in attorney’s opinion
- Double checks with client to verify client’s intent and goals

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Concluding paragraph:
- Tells the client what the writer will do next and what the client is expected to do next
- Develops/maintains a positive relationship

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Judges’ Notes (not shared with entrant):

Comments for entrant:

After each category is scored, please fill in this formula to reach a final total score (please note that points for both “facts” and “law and application” are multiplied by two:

____ points for overall format x 1 = ___
____ points for writing style and mechanics x 1 = ___
____ points for opening paragraph x 1 = ___
____ points for facts x 2 = ___
____ points for law and application x 2 = ___
____ points for client options x 1 = ___
____ points for concluding paragraph x 1 = ___

Total points _____