

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
WISCONSIN

Ryne Jon Schnell v. Waukesha County Technical College, Michelle
Skinder, Jonathan Pedraza, Sam Saeger, Michael Lango, and Lindsey
Davis

Schnell · No. 26-CV-499-JPS-JPS · Decided May 15, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin addresses procedural issues in Ryne Jon Schnell’s pro se civil action, including his unauthorized second amended complaint, motions to proceed without prepaying fees, appoint counsel, seal filings, and obtain disability-related relief. The court accepts the second amended complaint for the present but directs Schnell to submit documentation concerning any legal guardianship and to file that documentation with a motion to seal. The court also explains the potential consequences of parallel proceedings before the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights and permits voluntary dismissal without prejudice under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(a)(1)(A).

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin
WRITING FOR THE COURT	J.P. Stadtmueller
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin
DECIDED	May 15, 2026
DOCKET	26-CV-499-JPS-JPS
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff filed a federal civil-rights action and successive amended complaints while the original complaint remained subject to screening under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2). The court addressed Plaintiff’s motions to proceed without prepaying the filing fee, appoint counsel, seal filings, and obtain miscellaneous disability-related relief, and ordered him to provide guardianship documentation and a related motion to seal before the court determined how to proceed.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Nonprecedential district-court order

PARTIES

Ryne Jon Schnell v. Waukesha County Technical College, Michelle Skinder, Jonathan Pedraza, Sam Saeger, Michael Lango, Lindsey Davis

TOPICS

motion to amend

guardianship procedure

guardian ad litem

civil procedure

ada / disability

PRACTICE AREAS

Civil procedure

Civil rights

Disability law

Guardianship and representation

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the court should accept Plaintiff's second amended complaint despite his failure to obtain leave to amend or comply with the local rule requiring identification of proposed changes.
2. Whether information concerning Plaintiff's alleged guardianship and competency is necessary before the court can decide how to handle his motion for appointment of counsel and his ability to represent himself.
3. Whether Plaintiff may voluntarily dismiss the federal action without prejudice while a related Office for Civil Rights proceeding is pending.

HOLDINGS

1. Although Plaintiff was required to obtain leave of court before filing a second amended complaint and failed to comply with the applicable local rule, the court excused the noncompliance once because Plaintiff was proceeding pro se and treated the second amended complaint as the operative pleading. The court warned that future failures to follow applicable amendment rules would result in the filings being stricken.
2. The court required Plaintiff to submit documentation concerning any legal guardianship, including court documents and statements from his parents, accompanied by a motion to seal, so the court could determine whether appointment of counsel or another protective measure was necessary and whether Plaintiff could represent himself.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"A party may amend its pleading once as a matter of course"

"In all other cases, a party may amend its pleading only with the opposing party's written consent or the court's leave."

"appoint a guardian ad litem—or issue another appropriate order—to protect a minor or incompetent person who is unrepresented in an action."

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff alleged that his parents are his legal or court-appointed guardians and also alleged that he has a disability. He is an adult, apparently born in 1985, and is enrolled in or otherwise participates in community college. His filings referenced a parallel proceeding before the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights concerning related facts.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The action was filed in late March 2026. Plaintiff filed an amended complaint on April 10, 2026, and a second amended complaint on May 12, 2026, without seeking leave for the second amendment. The court excused the pro se plaintiff's noncompliance for that instance, treated the second amended complaint as operative, and directed Plaintiff to submit documentation concerning any legal guardianship by June 15, 2026.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Ryne Schnell v. Party Sealed by Judge Horlacher, Waukesha Cnty. Cir. Ct. Case No. 2026CV000412
- Vlasek v. Nemitz, 70 F. App'x 363, 367 (7th Cir. 2003)
- T.W. by Enk v. Brophy, 124 F.3d 893, 895 (7th Cir. 1997)
- Navin v. Park Ridge Sch. Dist., 270 F.3d 1147, 1148–49 (7th Cir. 2001) (per curiam)
- Henson v. CSC Credit Servs., 29 F.3d 280, 284 (7th Cir. 1994)