



Job Title: General Counsel

Position Description

The position manages legal matters related to education in the Escambia County School District. The position requires interpretation, rendering legal opinion, and advice on laws, rules, and regulations as they pertain to schools, students, parents, teachers, supervisors, school boards, and Florida school districts. To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform the essential job functions consistently and to the satisfaction of the employer. Reasonable accommodations may be made for qualified disabled individuals. This job description is not an exhaustive list, as employees may be required to perform duties not specifically designated within this document, at the employer's discretion. The Escambia County School Board reserves the right to modify or interpret this job description as needed.

FLSA Status: Exempt
Reports to: School Board
Supervises: Assigned Staff
Pay Grade: Administrative – 1

APPROVED
ESCAMBIA COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
DEC 15 2020
DR. TIMOTHY A. SMITH, SUPERINTENDENT
VERIFIED BY RECORDING SECRETARY

JOB SUMMARY

The purpose of this position is to render professional legal advice to the School District; to serve as an effective advocate in administrative court proceedings; and to keep the School Board and the Superintendent informed of changes in laws, legislation, and their impact on the School District. The General Counsel facilitates the acquisition of real property; ensures that all contracts are legally sufficient and enforceable, and coordinates and provides oversight on litigation with a goal of ensuring compliance in claims against the District. The General Counsel also provides supervision for a small staff. The General Counsel shall remain current in Florida laws and regulations and facilitate training to School Board representatives, and district administrators and employees as appropriate. The General Counsel is expected to be a positive team member while providing sound legal advice on all legal matters. The General Counsel attends and provides legal advice during all School Board meetings and serves as parliamentarian.

ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS

- Renders legal advice to the School Board, Superintendent, and District staff in matters relating to the interpretation or application of statutes, charters, ordinances, contracts, and federal and state regulations.
- Attends and provides legal advice in all regular or special School Board meetings and such workshops as are deemed appropriate by the Chair for the School Board.
- Represents the School District in administrative hearings, including appeals of administrative action as authorized by the School Board or recommends and supervises outside counsel for such representation.
- Reviews annually the policies and procedures manual of the School Board to determine compliance with state and federal law and regulations.
- Informs the School Board and the Superintendent as to those policies which should be changed and recommends appropriate content of the change.
- Oversees the sale or acquisition of all real property or other School District property, including arranging for title insurance when necessary and arranges for representation of the School Board in condemnation proceedings or other real property litigation.

- Prepares or approves as to form all contracts entered into on behalf of the School Board.
- Coordinates any litigation to which the School Board is a party, including appeals, by assigning cases to outside counsel as approved by the School Board or by retaining the cases personally.
- Delivers information concerning any litigation to the appropriate trial attorney and monitors the progress and costs of any litigation to which the School Board is a party.
- Renders legal services as the School Board requires including serving as lead counsel in selected cases involving the School Board.
- Sends written reports to the School Board on a quarterly basis or more frequently if required by the School Board as to the progress of litigation.
- Assists in the interpretation of rules and policies of the District to staff, students, and the community.
- Interacts with parents, outside agencies, businesses, and the community to enhance understanding of District initiatives and priorities and to elicit support and assistance.
- Responds to inquiries or concerns in a timely manner.
- Disseminates information and current research to appropriate personnel.
- Maintains a network of peer contacts through professional organizations.
- Attends training sessions, conferences, and workshops to keep abreast of current practices, programs, and legal issues.
- Supervises assigned personnel, conducts annual performance appraisals, and makes recommendations for appropriate employment action.
- Prepares or oversees the preparation of all required reports and maintains appropriate records.
- Serves on District, state, or community councils or committees as assigned or appropriate.
- Represents, consistently, the School Board and District in a positive and professional manner.
- Conducts seminars and/or individual training of the School Board, members of the School Board, employees of the School Board or District, as to legal issues faced by the School Board and District.
- Performs other incidental tasks consistent with the goals and objectives of this position.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

- Juris Doctorate Degree from an accredited law school, and a member in good standing of the Florida Bar.
- Five (5) years of experience as an attorney.
- Qualifications may vary from the above requirements to such a degree as the Board determines is necessary and appropriate to ensure properly qualified personnel in each specialized assignment.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

Requires the ability to:

- Demonstrate skill in governmental and administrative law and laws applicable to Florida School Districts.
- Demonstrate acquired, effective trial experience.
- Effectively supervise.

- Utilize experience in Parliamentary Procedures and knowledge of Roberts Rules of Order as revised.
- Plan, organize and prioritize activities.
- Communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing.
- Develop policies and determine strategy as well as long range goals for the organization.
- Perform work that involves high level issues, processes, or organizational needs.
- Make recommendations that impact the budget and manage the budget within assigned department.
- Use small office equipment and computers.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Light Work: Exerting up to 20 pounds of force occasionally and/or up to 10 pounds of force as frequently as needed to move objects. The work also requires the following physical abilities in order to perform the essential job functions: hearing, mental acuity, repetitive motion, speaking, talking, and visual acuity.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Employees in this position work in a safe and secure work environment that may periodically have unprecedented requirements or demands.

Date of Board Approval: June 20, 2017, effective July 1, 2017

Date of Revision: December 15, 2020

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