

ATTORNEY

The Governing Board recognizes the complex legal environment in which districts operate and desires reliable, high-quality legal advice at reasonable rates. In order to meet the district's legal needs, the Board may contract with county counsel, attorneys, in private practice, or appoint legal counsel as a district employee or independent contractor. The Board also supports pursuing collaborative legal efforts with other agencies and districts as appropriate.

Duties of Legal Counsel

The district's legal counsel may: (Education Code 35041.5)

1. Render legal advice to the Board and the Superintendent or designee
2. Serve the Board and the Superintendent or designee in the preparation and conduct of district litigation and administrative proceedings
3. Render advice on school bond and tax increase measures and prepare the necessary forms for the voting of these measures
4. Perform other administrative duties as assigned by the Board and Superintendent or designee

Retaining Legal Counsel

When the district is seeking legal advice or representation, the Superintendent or designee shall initiate a Requests for Proposals (RFP) to advertise and solicit proposals for legal services. In evaluating the proposals, the Board and Superintendent shall consider the firm's or attorney's background, experience, and reputation in education law; experience advising or representing school districts in California; fees; and experience of attorneys at the firm who will provide legal services.

The Board and Superintendent shall annually evaluate the performance of the firm and/or attorneys providing legal services in such areas as efficiency and adequacy of advice; results obtained for the district; reasonableness of fees; and responsiveness to and interactions with the Board, administration, and community. Upon a successful evaluation, the Board may renew the agreement with legal counsel without initiating an RFP.

The Board may also contract for temporary, specialized legal services without initiating an RFP when a majority of the Board determines that the unique demands of a particular issue or emergency situation so requires.

Contacting Legal Counsel

ATTORNEY (continued)

At his/her discretion, the Board president or Superintendent may confer with district legal counsel subject to any limits or parameters established by the Board. In addition, the Superintendent or Board president may contact district legal counsel to provide the Board with legal information or advice when so directed by a majority of the Board.

Individual Board members other than the Board president may not seek advice from district legal counsel on matters of district business unless so authorized by a majority of the Board.

Policy References Disclaimer: These references are not intended to be part of the policy itself, nor do they indicate the basis or authority for the board to enact this policy. Instead, they are provided as additional resources for those interested in the subject matter of the policy.

State References

Ed. Code 35041	Administrative adviser
Ed. Code 35041.5	Legal counsel
Ed. Code 35161	Board delegation of any powers or duties
Ed. Code 35200-35214	Liabilities
Ed. Code 35204	Contract with attorney in private practice
Ed. Code 35205	Contract for legal services
Gov. Code 26520	Legal services to school districts
Gov. Code 53060	Special services and advice
Gov. Code 814-895.8	Liability of public entities and public employees
Gov. Code 995-996.6	Defense of public employees

Description**Management Resources References**

CSBA Publication	The Brown Act: School Boards and Open Meeting Laws, rev. 2019
National School Boards Association Publication	Selecting and Working with a School Attorney: A Guide for School Boards, 1997
Website	CSBA District and County Office of Education Legal Services
Website	State Bar of California
Website	California Council of School Attorneys
Website	National School Boards Association
Website	CSBA

Description**Cross References**

1160	Political Processes
1312.3	Uniform Complaint Procedures
1312.3-E(1)	Uniform Complaint Procedures
1312.3-E(2)	Uniform Complaint Procedures
1340	Access to District Records
2121	Superintendent's Contract
3311.2	Lease-Leaseback Contracts
3312	Contracts
3400	Management of District Assets/Accounts
4312.1	Contracts
9000	Role of the Board
9200	Limits of Board Member Authority
9260	Legal Protection
9321	Closed Session

Description

ATTORNEY (continued)

9321-E(1)

Closed Session

9321-E(2)

Closed Session