

Berkeley Unified School District

Board Bylaw 9124

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 collaborative legal efforts with other agencies and districts.

Duties of Legal Counsel

The district's legal counsel may:

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 may initiate a Request 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 may 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

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 shall 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 and/or the President of the Board.

Updated: January 27, 2016